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# CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

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## ECONOMY IN DISTRIBUTION.

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We had lately occasion to proceed by an omnibus from a country town to a station on a railway, by which we were to return to the city where we have

our customary abode. On arriving at the station, we learned that we should have to wait an hour for an *up* train, the omnibus being timed in relation to a *down* one, which was about to pass. Had this arrangement been the only one readily practicable, in the case, we should have felt it necessary to submit uncomplainingly to the loss of our hour; but it really was not so. We had come in one of three omnibuses, none of which had more than two or three passengers. Why should not one have come at this hour with *down* passengers, and another come an hour later with *up* ones, thus by the same trouble giving more accommodation? We found that the three omnibuses are run by so many hotels, and that an arrangement for general convenience was impossible, as it might have interfered with the hotel business. On the continent, the government would have ordered matters otherwise: with us, the genius of *laissez faire* permits them to be as we describe.

It is in the same part of the country that a system exists amongst bakers, which we described many years ago in these pages. There are three towns, triangularly arranged, about ten miles from each other. One or more bakers in each has a van, in which he sends bread every day to the other two. As there is no witchcraft in the making of bread, it might be as well for the inhabitants of each town to be supplied by the bakers of their own place exclusively, and then the expense of the carriage would be saved. Such, however, is the keenness of competition in the case, that each baker strives to get supporters in the neighbouring towns, and willingly pays for van, horse, and driver in order to retain their custom. We presume each van goes thirty miles a day, and that there is not much less than 2000 miles of this unprofitable travelling weekly in connection with the three towns.

Any one who has a sincere respect for the principle of untrammelled industry, must lament to see these its abuses or drawbacks. But our commercial world is full of such anomalies. The cause is readily traced in the excessive number of persons engaged in the various trades. Not many years ago, the number of bakers in a town known to us, of the same size as one of those above referred to, was fourteen, while everybody acknowledged that four might have sufficed. In such circumstances, it is not wonderful that expedients like that of the van are resorted to, notwithstanding that it can only diminish the aggregate of profit derived by an already starving trade.

Few persons who walk along a street of nicely-decorated and apparently well-stocked shops, have the slightest conception of the hollowness of many of the appearances. The reality has been tested in part by the income-tax inquisition, which shews a surprising number of respectable-looking shops not reaching that degree of profit which brings the owner within the scope of the exaction. It may be that some men who are liable, contrive to make themselves appear as not so; but this cannot be to such an extent as greatly to affect the general fact. In the assessing of the tax, no result comes out oftener than one of this kind: Receipts for the year, L.2200; estimated profit at 15 per cent., L.330; deductions for rent of shop, taxes, shopmen's wages, and bad debts, L.193; leaving, as net profit, L.137. The commissioners are left to wonder how the trader can support his family in a decent manner upon so small a return, till they reflect that possibly a son brings in a little as a shopman, or a daughter as a day-governess; or that possibly an old female relative lives with the family, and throws her little income into the general stock. It is, after all, a fact capable of the clearest demonstration, that a vast number of shopkeepers' families maintain decent appearances upon an income below that enjoyed by many artisans—what goes, in the one case, for the decent appearances, being enjoyed in substantial comforts in the other, or else misapplied, to the degradation of body and mind.

The evil primarily lies in an erroneous distribution of industry. Where twenty men offer themselves to do a duty to society for which three are sufficient, it cannot be good for any party; whereas, were the extra seventeen to apply themselves to other departments of the labour required for all, it would be better times for the whole twenty. The light, easy, and pleasant occupations are those most apt to be beset by superfluous hands. Shopkeeping is generally easy, and often pleasant; hence the excessive number of individuals applying themselves to it. In the difficulties of the case, conspicuousness of situation, extravagant decoration, and abundant advertising, are resorted to, as means of obtaining a preference. Many, to help out profits, resort to tricks and cheating. The expense thus incurred, above what is necessary, in distributing certain goods, must be enormous. To bring most articles to the hands of the consumer should be a simple business. Every member of the public must feel that his clothes will be as good, coming from a wareroom on a third floor at L.30 a year, as from a flashy corner shop which costs L.300. He will feel that to make him buy a new hat when he needs one, it is not necessary that an advertising van should be continually rumbling along the streets. His tea and

sugar from the nearest grocer cannot be any better because of there being fifty other grocers within two miles of his residence, and forty of these not required. Yet, by reason of the great competition in nearly all trades, these vast expenses, which do nothing for the public, are continually incurred. Means misapplied are means lost. The community is just so much the poorer. And we must pronounce the superfluous shopkeepers, those who live by the rents of fine shops, and those who are concerned in the business of advertising beyond what is strictly necessary for the information of the public, as incumbrances on the industry of the country.

One unfortunate concomitant of competition is, that it prompts in the individual trader an idea which places him in a false position towards the general interest. It is the general interest that all things fit for use should be abundant; but when a man is concerned in producing any of those things, he sees it to be for his immediate interest that they should be scarce, because what he has to sell will then bring a greater price. It is the general interest that all useful things should be produced and distributed as cheaply as possible; but each individual producer and distributor feels that the dearer they are, it is the better for him. It is thus that a trade comes to regard itself as something detached from the community; that a man also views his peculiar trading interest as a first principle, to which everything else must give way. It might, indeed, be easily shewn, that whatever is good for the whole community, must be in the long-run beneficial to each member. He either cannot look far enough for that, or he feels himself unable to dispense with the immediate benefit from that which is bad for the public. In short, each trade considers the world as living for it, not it as living for the world—a mistake so monstrous, that there is little reason to wonder at the enormous misexpenditure to which it gives rise.

The idea essentially connected with these false positions, that *because* there are certain persons in a trade in a particular place, they *ought* to be there, and that the primary consideration regarding them is how to enable them to continue living by that trade—as if they were fixed there by some decree of Providence—is one of the most perverse and difficult to deal with in political economy. The assertion of any principle ruling to the contrary purpose, seems to the multitude of superficial thinkers as a kind of cruelty to the persons, the severity of the natural law being, by an easy slide of thought, laid to the charge of the mere philosopher who detects and announces its operation. In reality, those are the cruel people who would contentedly see a great number of their fellow-creatures going on from year to year in a misery, which, being brought upon themselves by ignorance, and the want of a right spirit of enterprise, can only be banished or lessened by their being rightly informed, and induced to enter upon a proper course.

If there were a right knowledge and just views of these subjects diffused through the community, a man would be ashamed to enter upon a business in which a sufficient number of persons was already engaged, knowing that he was thereby trifling with his time and fortunes, and perhaps encouraging in himself a love of ease, or some other desire which he was not entitled to gratify. He would rather go to some new country, where he might eat in rough independence the rewards of an actual toil. What is really required, however, is not that men should leave their own country, but enter upon such pursuits there as may preserve an equal instead of an unequal distribution of industry throughout the various fields in which there is something to be done for the general advantage. Distribution should be less a favourite department, and production more so. With more producers and fewer distributors, the waste we have endeavoured to describe would be so far saved, and there would be fewer miserable people on the earth.

Even amidst all the delusions which prevail upon the subject, it is curious to observe that there is a strong current towards a rectification of what is amiss. The interests of the individual, which produce so much fallacy, after all bring a correction. The active, original-minded tradesman, seeing that, with an ordinary share of the entire business of his department, he can scarcely make bread and butter, bethinks him of setting up a leviathan shop, in which he may serve the whole town with mercery at a comparatively small profit to himself, looking to large and frequent returns for his remuneration. The public, with all its sentimentalisms, never fails to take the article, quality being equal, at the lowest price, and accordingly the leviathan dealer thrives, while nearly all the small dealers are extirpated. Now this is a course of things which produces partial inconveniences; but its general effect is good. It lessens the cost of distribution for the consumer, and it decides many to take to new and more hopeful courses, who otherwise might cling to a branch of business that had become nearly sapless. Underselling generally has the same results. When in a trade in which distribution usually costs 43 per cent., one

man announces himself as willing to lessen this by 15 or 20 per cent., his conduct is apt to appear unbrotherly and selfish to the rest; but the fact is, that for goods of any kind to cost 43 per cent., in mere distribution, is a monstrosity; and he who can in any measure lessen that cost, will be regarded by the community as acting in the spirit of a just economy, and as deserving of their gratitude. These may be considered as the rude struggles of competition towards a righting of its own evils. The public sees two selfishnesses working in the case, and it naturally patronises that which subserves its own interest.

The waste arising from an over-costly system of distribution, will probably lead to other correctives of even a more sweeping kind than that of underselling, or the setting up of leviathan shops. For the greater number of the articles required for daily use, men begin to find that a simple co-operative arrangement is sufficient. A certain number agree to combine in order to obtain articles at wholesale prices; after which a clerk, shopman, and porter suffice to distribute them. They thus save, in many trades, as much as 15 per cent. So far from their being under any peculiar disadvantage as to the quality of the articles, they are rather safer than usual in that respect; and indeed a freedom from the danger of getting adulterated or inferior goods is one of the recommendations of the system. It would probably extend more rapidly, were it not for the difficulties attending the law of partnership, which, however, will in all likelihood be speedily removed.

We make these remarks on distribution mainly in the hope of saving individuals from entering upon a career in which, not being truly useful to their fellow-creatures, they have little to expect of good for themselves. At present, shopkeeping is limited by what an able writer of the day calls the *bankruptcy check*;<sup>[1]</sup> that is, men go into it, and remain in it, while they can just barely sustain themselves, not regarding that they do not and cannot thrive, and that they are only adding to a mass of idleness already burdensome to the community. What we desire is, to see men so far enlightened in the principles of economy, that they will be at least less apt to rush into fields where their help is not wanted. We wish to assist in creating a public opinion on this subject, which, fixing on shopkeeping in such circumstances the odium of a masked idleness, will tend to send the undecided into courses of real activity and serviceableness; thus securing their own good by the only plan which can be safely depended upon—that of first securing the good of the entire community.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[1] Mr F. O. Ward.

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## THE VENDETTA.

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IN the morning, we were off the coast of Sardinia, steaming rapidly along for the Straits of Bonifacio. The night had been tranquil, and the morning was more tranquil still; but no one who knew the capricious Mediterranean felt confident of continued fair weather. However, at sea the mind takes little thought for the morrow, or even for the afternoon; and as we sat in the warm shade of the awning, looking out to the purple horizon in the east, or to the rocky and varied coast to the west, I felt, and if the countenance be not treacherous, all felt that it was good even for landsmen to be moving over waters uncrispd except by the active paddles, beneath a sky all radiant with light. My companions were chiefly Levant merchants, or sallow East Indians; for I was on board the French packet *Le Caire*, on its way from Alexandria, of Egypt, to Marseille.

I had several times passed the Straits, each time with renewed pleasure and admiration. It would be difficult to imagine a scene more wild and peculiar. After rounding the huge rock of Tavolara—apparently a promontory running boldly out into the sea, but in reality an island, we are at once at the mouth of the Straits. The mountains of Corsica, generally enveloped in clouds, rise above the horizon ahead, and near at hand a thousand rocks and islands of various dimensions appear to choke up the passage. The narrow southern channel, always selected by day, is intricate, and would be dangerous to strangers; and indeed the whole of the Straits are considered so difficult, that the fact of Nelson, without previous experience, having taken his fleet through, is cited even by French sailors as a prodigy.

On one of the rocky points of the Sardinian coast, I observed the ruins of a building, but so deceptive is distance, I could not at first determine whether it

had been a fortress or a cottage. I asked one of the officers for his telescope; and being still in doubt, questioned him as I returned it. He smiled and said: 'For the last five or six years, I have never passed through the Straits by day without having had to relate the story connected with that ruin. It has become a habit with me to do so; and if you had not spoken, I should have been compelled, under penalty of passing a restless night, to have let out my narrative at dinner. You will go down to your berth presently; for see how the smoke is weighed down by the heavy atmosphere upon the deck, and how it rolls like a snake along the waters! What you fancy to be merely a local head-wind blowing through the Straits, is a mistral tormenting the whole Gulf of Lions. We shall be tossing about presently in a manner unpleasant to landsmen; and when you are safely housed, I will come and beguile a little time by relating a true story of a Corsican Vendetta.'

The prophecy was correct. In less than a quarter of an hour, *Le Caire* was pitching through the last narrows against as violent a gale as I ever felt. It was like a wall of moving air. The shores, rocks, and islands were now concealed by driving mist; and as the sea widened before us, it was covered with white-crested waves. Before I went below, a cluster of sails ahead was pointed out as the English fleet; and it was surmised that it would be compelled to repeat Nelson's manœuvre, as Sardinia and Corsica form a dangerous lee-shore. However, the atmosphere thickened rapidly; and we soon lost sight of all objects but the waves amidst which we rolled, and the phantom-like shores of Corsica.

The officer joined me, and kept his promise. By constant practice, he had acquired some skill in the art of telling at least this one story; and I regret that I do not remember his exact words. However, the following is the substance of his narrative:—Giustiniani and Bartuccio were inhabitants of the little town of Santa Maddalena, situated on the Corsican side of the Straits. They were both sons of respectable parents, and were united from an early age in the bonds of friendship. When they grew up, Giustiniani became clerk in a very humble mercantile establishment; whilst Bartuccio, more fortunate, obtained a good place in the custom-house. They continued on excellent terms till the age of about twenty-one years, when an incident occurred, that by making rivals of them, made them enemies.

Giustiniani had occasion to visit the city of Ajaccio, and set out in company with a small party mounted upon mules. Bartuccio went with him to the crest of the hill, where they parted after an affectionate embrace. The journey was fortunately performed; in about a month Giustiniani was on his way back, and reached without incident, just as night set in, a desolate ravine within a few leagues of Santa Maddalena. Here a terrific storm of wind and rain broke upon the party, which missed the track, and finally dispersed; some seeking shelter in the lee of the rocks, others pushing right and left in search of the path, or of some hospitable habitation. Giustiniani wandered for more than an hour, until he descended towards the plain, and, attracted by a light, succeeded at length in reaching a little cottage having a garden planted with trees. The lightning had now begun to play, and shewed him the white walls of the cottage streaming with rain, and the drenched foliage that surrounded it. Guided by the rapidly succeeding gleams, he was enabled to find the garden gate, where, there being no bell, he remained for some time shouting in vain. The light still beamed gently through one of the upper windows, and seemed to tell of a comfortable interior and cosy inmates. Giustiniani exerted his utmost strength of voice, and presently there was a movement in the lighted chamber—a form came to the window; and, after some delay, the door of the house was opened, and a voice asked who demanded admittance at that hour, and in such weather. Our traveller explained, and was soon let in by a quiet-looking old gentleman, who took him up stairs into a little library, where a good wood-fire was blazing. A young girl of remarkable beauty rose as he entered, and received him with cordial hospitality. Acquaintance was soon made. Giustiniani told his little story, and learned that his host was M. Albert Brivard, a retired medical officer, who, with his daughter Marie, had selected this out-of-the-way place for economy's sake.

According to my informant, Giustiniani at once fell in love with the beautiful Marie, to such an extent that he could scarcely partake of the supper offered him. Perhaps his abstinence arose from other reasons—love being in reality a hungry passion in its early stage—for next day the young man was ill of a fever, and incapable of continuing his journey. M. Brivard and his daughter attended him kindly; and as he seemed to become worse towards evening, sent a messenger to Maddalena. The consequence was, that on the following morning Bartuccio arrived in a great state of alarm and anxiety; but fate did not permit him again to meet his friend with that whole and undivided passion of friendship in his breast with which he had quitted him a month before.

Giustiniani was asleep when he entered the house, and he was received by Marie. In his excited state of mind, he was apt for new impressions, and half an hour's conversation seems not only to have filled him with love, but to have excited the same feeling in the breast of the gentle girl. It would have been more romantic, perhaps, had Marie been tenderly impressed by poor Giustiniani when he arrived at night, travel-stained and drenched with rain, in the first fit of a fever; 'but woman,' said the sagacious narrator, as he received a tumbler of grog from the steward, 'is a mystery'—an opinion I am not inclined to confute.

In a few days, Giustiniani was well enough to return to his home, which he reached in a gloomy and dissatisfied state of mind. He had already observed that Bartuccio, who rode over every day professedly to see him, felt in reality ill at ease in his company, spoke no longer with copious familiarity, and left him in a few minutes, professing to be obliged to return to his duty. From his bed, however, he could hear him for some time after laughing and talking with Marie in the garden; and he felt, without knowing it, all the pangs of jealousy: not that he believed his friend would interfere and dispute with him the possession of the gem which he had discovered, and over which he internally claimed a right of property, but he was oppressed with an uneasy sentiment of future ill, and tormented with a diffidence as to his own powers of pleasing, that made him say adieu to Marie and her father with cold gratitude—that seemed afterwards to them, and to him when reflection came, sheer ingratitude.

When he had completely recovered his strength, he recovered also to, a certain extent his serenity of mind. Bartuccio was often with him, and never mentioned the subject of Marie. One day, therefore, in a state of mingled hope and love, he resolved to pay a visit to his kind host; and set out on foot. The day was sunny; the landscape, though rugged, beautiful with light; a balmy breeze played gently on his cheek. The intoxication of returning strength filled him with confidence and joy. He met the old doctor herborising a little way from his house, and saluted him so cordially, that a hearty shake of the hand was added to the cold bow with which he was at first received. Giustiniani understood a little of botany, and pleased the old man by his questions and remarks. They walked slowly towards the house together. When they reached it, M. Brivard quietly remarked: 'You will find my daughter in the garden,' and went in with the treasures he had collected. The young man's heart bounded with joy. Now was the time. He would throw himself at once at Marie's feet, confess the turbulent passion she had excited, and receive from her lips his sentence of happiness, or— No, he would not consider the alternative; and with bounding step and eager eye, he ran over the garden, beneath the orange and the myrtle trees, until he reached a little arbour at the other extremity.

What he saw might well plunge him at once into despair. Marie had just heard and approved the love of Bartuccio, who had clasped her, not unwilling, to his breast. Their moment of joy was brief, for in another instant Bartuccio was on the ground, with Giustiniani's knee upon his breast, and a bright poniard glittered in the air. 'Spare him—spare him!' cried the unfortunate girl, sinking on her knees. The accepted lover struggled in vain in the grasp of his frenzied rival, who, however, forbore to strike. 'Swear, Marie,' he said, 'by your mother's memory, that you will not marry him for five years, and I will give him a respite for so long.' She swore with earnestness; and the next moment, Giustiniani had broken through the hedge, and was rushing frantically towards Santa Maddalena.

When he recovered from his confusion, Bartuccio, who, from his physical inferiority, had been reduced to a passive part in this scene, endeavoured to persuade Marie that she had taken an absurd oath, which she was not bound to abide by; but M. Brivard, though he had approved his daughter's choice, knew well the Corsican character, and decreed that for the present at least all talk of marriage should be set aside. In vain Bartuccio pleaded the rights of an accepted lover. The old man became more obstinate, and not only insisted that his daughter should abide by her promise, but hinted that if any attempt were made to oppose his decision, he would at once leave the country.

As may well be imagined, Bartuccio returned to the city with feelings of bitter hatred against his former friend; and it is probable that wounded pride worked upon him as violently as disappointed passion. He was heard by several persons to utter vows of vengeance—rarely meaningless in that uncivilised island—and few were surprised when next day the news spread that Giustiniani had disappeared. Public opinion at once pointed to Bartuccio as the murderer. He was arrested, and a careful investigation was instituted; but nothing either to exculpate or inculpate him transpired, and after some

months of imprisonment, he was liberated.

Five years elapsed. During the first half of the period, Bartuccio was coldly received by both M. Brivard and his daughter, although he strenuously protested his innocence. Time, however, worked in his favour, and he at length assumed the position of a betrothed lover, so that no one was surprised when, at the expiration of the appointed time, the marriage took place. Many wondered indeed why, since Giustiniani had disappeared, and was probably dead, any regard was paid to the extorted promise; whilst all augured well of the union which was preceded by so signal an instance of good faith. The observant, indeed, noticed that throughout the ceremony Bartuccio was absent and uneasy—looking round anxiously over the crowd assembled from time to time. 'He is afraid to see the ghost of Giustiniani,' whispered an imprudent bystander. The bridegroom caught the last word, and starting as if he had received a stab, cried: 'Where, where?' No one answered; and the ceremony proceeded in ominous gloom.

Next day, Bartuccio and his young wife, accompanied by M. Brivard, left Santa Maddalena without saying whither they were going; and the good people of the town made many strange surmises on the subject. In a week or so, however, a vessel being wrecked in the Straits, furnished fresh matter of conversation; and all these circumstances became utterly forgotten, except by a few. 'But this drama was as yet crowned by no catastrophe,' said the officer, 'and all laws of harmony would be violated if it ended here.' 'Are you, then, inventing?' inquired I. 'Not at all,' he replied; 'but destiny is a greater tragedian than Shakspeare, and prepares *dénouements* with superior skill.' I listened with increased interest.

The day after the departure of the married couple, a small boat with a shoulder-of-mutton sail left the little harbour of Santa Maddalena a couple of hours before sunset, and with a smart breeze on its quarter, went bravely out across the Straits. Some folks who were accustomed to see this manœuvre had, it is true, shouted out to the only man on board, warning him that rough weather was promised; but he paid no heed, and continued on his way. If I were writing a romance, if, indeed, I had any reasonable space, I would keep up the excitement of curiosity for some time, describe a variety of terrific adventures unknown to seamen, and wonderful escapes comprehensible only by landsmen, and thus make a subordinate hero of the bold navigator. But I must be content to inform the reader, that he was Paolo, a servant of Giustiniani's mother, who had lived in perfect retirement since her son's disappearance, professing to have no news of him. In reality, however, she knew perfectly well that he had retired to Sardinia, and after remaining in the interior some time, had established himself in the little cottage, the ruins of which had attracted my attention. The reason for his retirement, which he afterwards gave, was that he might be enabled to resist the temptation to avenge himself on Bartuccio, and, if possible, conquer his love for Marie. He no longer entertained any hope of possessing her himself; but he thought that at least she would grow weary of waiting for the passage of five years, and would marry a stranger—a consummation sufficiently satisfactory, he thought, to restore to him his peace of mind. Once a month at least he received, through the medium of the faithful Paolo, assistance and news from his mother; and to his infinite discomfiture learned, as time proceeded, that his enemy, whilom his friend, was to be made happy at last. His rage knew no bounds at this; and several times he was on the point of returning to Santa Maddalena, to do the deed of vengeance from which he had hitherto refrained. However, he resolved to await the expiration of the five years.

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Paolo arrived in safety at the cottage some time after dark, and communicated the intelligence both of the marriage and the departure of the family. To a certain extent, both he and the mother of Giustiniani approved the projects of vengeance entertained by the latter, but thought that the honour of the family was sufficiently cleared by what was evidently a flight. Paolo was disappointed and puzzled by the manner of the unfortunate recluse. Instead of bursting out into furious denunciations, he became as pale as ashes, and then hiding his face in his hands, wept aloud. His agony continued for more than an hour; after which he raised his head, and exhibited a serene brow to the astonished servitor. 'Let us return to Santa Maddalena,' he said; and they accordingly departed, leaving the cottage a prey to the storms, which soon reduced it to ruins, and will probably ere long sweep away every trace.

Giustiniani reached his mother's house unperceived, and spent many hours in close conversation with his delighted parent. He did not, however, shew himself in the town, but departed on the track of the fugitives the very next day. He traced them to Ajaccio, thence to Marseille, to Nice, back to



Marseille, to Paris, but there he lost the clue. Several months passed in this way; his money was all spent, and he was compelled to accept a situation in the counting-house of a merchant of the Marais, and to give up the chase and the working out of the catastrophe he had planned for his Vendetta.

A couple of years afterwards, Giustiniani had occasion to go to one of the towns of the north of France—Lille, I believe. In its neighbourhood, as my narrator told me—and on him I throw the whole responsibility, if there seem anything improbable in what is to come—the young man was once more overtaken by a storm, and compelled to seek refuge in a cottage, which the gleams of the lightning revealed to him. This time he was on foot, and after knocking at the door, was admitted at once by a young woman, who seemed to have been waiting in the passage for his arrival. She was about to throw herself into his arms, when suddenly she started back, and exclaimed: 'It is not he!' Taking up a candle, which she had placed on the floor, she cast its light on her own face and that of the stranger, who had remained immovable, as if petrified by the sound of her voice. 'Madam,' said he, brought to himself by this action, 'I am a stranger in these parts, overtaken by the storm, and I beg an hour's hospitality.'

'You are welcome, sir,' replied Marie, the wife of Bartuccio, for it was she; but she did not at the moment recognise the unfortunate man who stood before her.

They were soon in a comfortable room, where was M. Brivard, now somewhat broken by age, and a cradle, in which slept a handsome boy about a year old. Giustiniani, after the interchange of a few words—perhaps in order to avoid undergoing too close an examination of his countenance—bent over the cradle to peruse the features of the child; and the pillow was afterwards found wet with tears. By an involuntary motion, he clutched at the place where the poniard was wont to be, and then sat down upon a chair that stood in a dim corner. A few minutes afterwards, Bartuccio came joyously into the room, embraced his wife, asked her if she was cold, for she trembled very much—spoke civilly to the stranger, and began to throw off his wet cloak and coat. At this moment the tall form of Giustiniani rose like a phantom in the corner, and passions, which he himself had thought smothered, worked through his worn countenance. Brivard saw and now understood, and was nailed to his chair by unspeakable terror, whilst Bartuccio gaily called for his slippers. Suddenly Marie, who had watched every motion of the stranger, and, with the vivid intuition of wife and mother, had understood what part was hers to play, rushed to the cradle, seized the sleeping child, and without saying a word, placed it in Giustiniani's arms. The strong-passioned man looked amazed, yet not displeased, and, after a moment's hesitation, sank on his knees, and embraced the babe, that, awaking, curled its little arms round his head—

A tremendous crash aloft interrupted the well-prepared peroration of the narrator; and, to say the truth, I was not sorry that a sail was carried away, and one of our boats stove in at this precise moment, for I had heard quite enough to enable me to guess the conclusion of the history of this harmless Vendetta.

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## WRECK-CHART AND LIFE-BOATS.

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MANY of our readers are probably aware that Prince Albert, in his capacity of president of the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, suggested that lectures should be delivered on the results of the different classes of the Great Exhibition, by gentlemen peculiarly qualified by their several professions and pursuits. This suggestion has been admirably carried out; but we propose at present to direct attention only to one of the twenty-four lectures in question—namely, that on life-boats, by Captain Washington, R. N.; our individual calling in early life having been such as to enable us to understand thoroughly the technical details, and judge of the accuracy of the views and opinions propounded by the gallant and intelligent lecturer.<sup>[2]</sup>

First, we will speak of the wreck-chart of the British islands prefixed to the lecture. Round the entire coast is a prodigious number of *black dots*, of two kinds—one a simple round dot, and the other having a line drawn through it. They all point out the locality of shipwrecks during the year 1850, and the latter dot shews the wreck to have been total. The English coasts are most thickly dotted, but this is to be expected from the greater proportion of shipping; next in the scale is Ireland, and then Scotland, which has comparatively few black dots, the densest portion being on the west coast,



from Ayr to Largs, where we count eleven, nine indicating total wrecks. In the Firth of Forth there are but three, one total. A sprinkling of dots is seen among the Eastern Hebrides, but not so many as one would expect. Turning to England, we count about forty-five wrecks in the Bristol Channel alone, by far the greater number being total. On the Goodwill Sands there are fourteen, all total but one. On the Gunfleet Sands there are nine, four total. They are numerous on the Norfolk and Lincolnshire coasts, especially off Yarmouth and the Washway. On the Welsh coast, particularly around Beaumaris, Holyhead, &c., the number is very great. In the firth leading to Liverpool, we count no less than twenty-one, of which twelve are total. On the north coast of England the numbers are appalling. Off Hartlepool are fifteen, eight being total. Off Sunderland are twelve, all total but three. Off Newcastle are fifteen, eight total. Ah, that fearful, iron-bound coast of Northumberland! We have hugged it close in calm weather, with a fair breeze, and the views we caught of its shores made us shudder to think of what would befall a vessel on a stormy night and the shore alee. The following is the awful summary of 1850:—'The wrecks of British and foreign vessels on the coasts and in the seas of the United Kingdom were 681. Of these, 277 were total wrecks; sunk by leaks or collisions, 84; stranded and damaged so as to require to discharge cargo, 304; abandoned, 16. Total wrecks, &c., 681; total lives lost, 784.'

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Certain peculiar marks on this chart indicate the spots where life-boats are kept. In the vicinity of Liverpool we count no less than seven, and not one too many; but in many parts of the coast, where numerous wrecks occur, there are none. In all England there are eighty life-boats; in Ireland, eight; in Scotland, eight. A most portentous note on the chart informs us, that '*about one-half of the boats are unserviceable!*' Think of Scotland, with its rocky seaboard of 1500 miles: only eight life-boats, and some of these 'quite unserviceable!' The boats at St Andrews, Aberdeen, and Montrose, have saved eighty-three lives; and the rockets at eight stations, sixty-seven lives. 'Orkney and Shetland are without any provision for saving life; and with the exception of Port Logan, in Wigtonshire, where there is a mortar, the whole of the west coast of Scotland, from Cape Wrath to Solway Firth—an extent of 900 miles, without including islands—is in the same state.' With regard to the chief distribution of English life-boats, there is one to every eight miles on the Northumberland coast; one to every ten miles in Durham and Yorkshire; one to fifteen miles in Lincolnshire; and one to five miles in Norfolk and Suffolk—a fact which, the lecturer well observes, is highly creditable to the county associations of the two last counties. But 'from Falmouth round the Land's End, by Trevoze Head to Hartland Point, an extent of 150 miles of the most exposed sea-coast in England, there is not one really efficient life-boat.' On the Welsh coasts are twelve boats, some very defective. At the five Liverpool stations are nine good boats, 'liberally supported by the dock trustees, and having permanent boats' crews.' These Liverpool boats have, during the last eleven years, assisted 269 vessels, and brought ashore 1128 persons. As to the Isle of Man, situated in the track of an enormous traffic, with shores frequently studded with wrecks, we are told that there is not a single life-boat; for the four boats established there by Sir William Hillary, Baronet, 'have been allowed to fall into decay, and hardly a vestige of them remains!' The paltry eight life-boats for the whole Irish coast of 1400 miles are stated to be likewise inefficient.

On the whole, it appears to us that the present number of efficient life-boats is not more than one-fourth of what ought to be constantly kept ready for immediate service. Only think of the amount of wrecks occurring occasionally in a single gale: On the 13th January 1843, not less than 103 vessels were lost on the British coasts. In 1846, nearly forty vessels were driven ashore in Hartlepool Bay alone. In the month of March 1850, the wrecks on our coasts were 134; in the gale of the 25th and 26th September 1851, the number wrecked, stranded, or damaged by collision, was 117; and in January of the present year, the number was 120. The above are the numbers actually ascertained; but it is well known that *Lloyd's List* is an imperfect register, although at present the best existing.

A secondary mode of communicating with a stranded vessel is by firing rockets with a line attached to them, by which means a hawser may be drawn from the ship and fastened to the shore. Mortars are likewise used for the same purpose; the latter plan having been invented by Sergeant Bell, and first tried in 1792. Bell's plan was very greatly improved by Captain Manby; and all the mortars now in use for the purpose are called after him. Mr Dennett, of the Isle of Wight, first introduced the rocket-plan in 1825. Rockets or mortars, or both, are kept at most of the coast-guard stations; but in numerous cases were found worthless on trial, owing to the lines breaking, or the rockets being old and badly made. Nevertheless, at twenty-two stations, 214 lives have been saved by them. The evil is, that neither rockets nor mortars are of

any use unless the wreck lies within a short distance of the shore; for the maximum range attained is only 350 yards, and in the teeth of a violent wind, often not above 200 to 300 yards. If a ship, therefore, is stranded on a low shelving shore, she is almost certain to be beyond the range of the life-rocket or of Manby's mortar. The main reliance, therefore, is the life-boat, and to it we return.

The Duke of Northumberland recently offered a reward for the best model of a life-boat. This offer was responded to by English, French, Dutch, German, and American boat-builders; and the amazing number of 280 models and plans was sent in. About fifty of the best of these were contributed by the duke to the Great Exhibition; and he had also a report and plans and drawings of them printed, of which he distributed 1300 copies throughout the world. Baron Dupin, chairman of the Jury of Class VIII., thus summed up the award of the jury concerning them:—'These models figure among the most valuable productions in our Great Exhibition, and furnish an example of liberality in the cause of humanity and practical science never surpassed, if ever equalled. Such are the motives from which we have judged his Grace the Duke of Northumberland worthy of receiving the Council Medal.'

The inventor of life-boats, as is well known, was Henry Greathead, of South Shields, in 1789. His boat was 30 feet long, with 10 feet breadth of beam, 3¼ feet depth of waist, stem and stern alike nearly 6 feet high, and pulled ten oars (double-banked.) A cork lining went fore and aft 12 inches thick, on the inside of the boat, from the floor to the thwarts; and outside was a cork fender, 16 inches deep, 4 inches wide, and 21 feet long. 'She could not free herself of water, nor self-right in the event of being upset.' She was launched in 1790, and in the year 1802, the inventor was rewarded by the Society of Arts with its gold medal and fifty guineas; and parliament voted him L.1200, 'in acknowledgment of the utility of his invention.' Many presumed improvements and modifications of the original boat have been effected, with more or less success. James Beeching, a Yarmouth boat-builder, has carried off the prize offered by the duke, and we may therefore suppose his was the best of the models submitted. Captain Washington thus describes Beeching's model sent to the Exhibition: 'It may be seen from the model of that boat, that from her form she would both pull and sail well in all weathers; would have great stability, and be a good sea-boat. She has moderately small internal capacity under the level of the thwarts for holding water, and ample means for freeing herself readily of any water that might be shipped; she is ballasted by means of water admitted into a tank or well at the bottom after she is afloat; and by means of that ballast and raised air-cases at the extremities, she would right herself in the event of being upset. It will thus be seen, that this model combines most of the qualities required in a life-boat; and the boat which has since been built after it, and is now stationed at Ramsgate, is said to answer her purpose admirably.'

M. Lahure, of Havre, sent a full-sized boat of *iron*; and Mr Francis, of New York, also sent a model life-boat of corrugated galvanised iron. Captain Washington thinks, that if metal is used at all, it should be copper in preference to any other. For our own part, we can only say, that we have helped to build boats, though not life-boats, and we have helped likewise to man boats, but we should like to have good sound timber beneath our feet in preference to any metal whatever; and we should prefer cork for the floating substance to air-tight cases, or copper tubing, or any of the other contrivances that have been adopted to give buoyancy to a swamped boat. Air-cases are very liable to leak, or may be stove in by the sea, or be crushed by coming in contact with the wreck or rocks, but cork can never be injured. And as to metal air-cases, it was found on opening the sides of a life-boat at Woolwich Dockyard, that her copper tubes, supposed to be air-tight, were corroded into holes; for copper will corrode when in contact with sea-water, especially when alternately wet or dry, as is the case in life-boats.

We cannot here follow Captain Washington through his critical and technical details, but we think it right to express our strong suspicion, that the much-lauded *self-righting* power of certain new life-boats is obtained only at the cost of greater liability to upset. Doubtless a boat can be made to right herself after a capsizing, but this really seems to us something like locking the stable-door when the steed is stolen; for even if she rights the very instant after upsetting, three-fourths of the crew are almost certain to perish. We think it far more important to construct a boat that will hardly capsize at all, than to build one that will right itself *after* capsizing; for we repeat our opinion, that the latter boat will prove liable to upset just in proportion to her capability of self-righting.

Many fatal accidents have happened to life-boats; and the details of some

mentioned by the lecturer are peculiar and interesting. On the coast of Northumberland, in 1810, one of Greathead's boats, after saving several crews of fishing-cobles, was returning to the shore, when a heavy sea overwhelmed her, and by its sheer weight and force broke her in two, and the whole of the crew, thirty-four in number, perished. In 1820, Greathead's original life-boat, after saving the crew of the ship *Grafton*, at Shields, struck on a rock, and swamped; nevertheless, the brave old boat—although she had not the boasted power of self-righting—preserved her centre of gravity, and brought both crews to land. At Scarborough, in 1836, the life-boat, in going out to a vessel, turned completely end over end, 'shutting up one of the crew inside, where he remained in safety, getting fresh air through the tubes in the bottom, and was taken out when the boat drifted, bottom upwards, on the beach: ten lives were lost.' In 1841, the life-boat at Blyth, Northumberland, capsized, and ten men were drowned. At Robin Hood's Bay, Yorkshire, in 1843, the life-boat capsized, three men remaining under her bottom, while others got upon it. The accident was seen from the shore, and five men put off in a coble, fitted with air-cases like a life-boat; but she almost immediately turned end over end, and two men were drowned. The life-boat herself drifted ashore, and the three men under her bottom were saved. In all, twelve lives were lost. But the most lamentable disaster that ever befell a life-boat was at South Shields, on December 4, 1849, when twenty-four men, all pilots, went off to rescue the crew of the *Betsy*, stranded on Herd Sand. 'The boat had reached the wreck, and was lying alongside with her head to the eastward, with a rope fast to the quarter, but the bow-fast not secured. The shipwrecked men were about to descend into the life-boat, when a heavy knot of sea, recoiling from the bow of the vessel, caught the bow of the boat and turned her up on end, throwing the whole crew and the water into the stern-sheets. The bow-fast not holding, the boat drove in this position astern of the vessel, when the ebb-tide, running rapidly into her stern, the boat completely turned end over end, and went on shore bottom up. On this occasion, twenty out of twenty-four—or double the proper crew—were drowned under the boat. On seeing the accident, two other life-boats immediately dashed off from North and South Shields, saved four of the men, and rescued the crew of the *Betsy*.' It is added, that the life-boats have been in constant use at Shields since Greathead first launched his boat there in 1790, and excepting the above accident, no life has ever been lost in them, or from want of them. Between 1841 and 1849, they saved 466 lives. But good is frequently deduced from evil, and it was this very disaster at Shields that induced the Duke of Northumberland to offer a premium for the best life-boat; and his Grace has now, with princely liberality, undertaken to place a well-built life-boat at each of the most exposed points of the coast of his own county, with rockets or mortars at every intermediate station.

As to dimensions, the existing life-boats are of three classes: from 20 to 25 feet long, from 25 to 30 feet, and from 30 to 36 feet. Some are only 18 feet long, and on thinly-inhabited coasts are the best, as unless a regular crew is provided, it is often difficult to man a large boat—at least efficiently. The largest boats are used at Caistor and Corton, in Norfolk, and are 40 to 45 feet long, weigh from four to five tons, and cost L.200 to L.250 each. They are said to be admirable vessels of the kind, and well manned. The 36 feet boat is used at Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Deal, &c., and always goes off under sail. The 30 feet boat is used at Liverpool, Shields, Dundee, &c.; and one of those at Liverpool brought sixty people ashore on one occasion. Some of the models sent to the Exhibition were of boats that did not weigh more than half a ton; but we fully agree with the lecturer, that a boat so light as that would never be able to pull out to sea in a head-wind. A life-boat ought to possess a certain weight, or momentum, or it will be driven back by the winds, or sucked back by the sea, like a feather.

It is exceedingly desirable that all life-boats should have regularly trained crews, for an ordinary sailor or fisherman is by no means competent to do properly the duty of a life-boatman. The cockswain, especially should be well trained.

Captain Washington remarks, that 'a careful examination of the returns of wrecks by the Coast-guard officers, forcibly impresses on the mind the painful conviction, that the greater part of the casualties that occur are not occasioned by stress of weather, but that they are mainly attributable to causes within control, and to which a remedy might be applied.' This has long been our own opinion, and we have again and again expressed it. 'Wherever the boats have been looked after, and the crews well trained, as at Liverpool, Shields, and on the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, the most signal success has rewarded their exertions. The first step is to insure a safe and powerful life-boat, and this, we feel confident, has been accomplished; the next is to build a sufficient number of such boats, place them where required, organise and

train the crews, and provide for their supervision and maintenance.... There seems no reason why a very few years should not see a life-boat stationed at each of the exposed points on the most frequented parts of the coasts of the United Kingdom; by means of which—with the blessing of Divine Providence upon the endeavours of those who undertake the work—the best results to the cause of humanity may confidently be anticipated.'

## FOOTNOTES:

[2] Published by Bogue, Fleet Street.

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## THE SALONS OF PARIS.

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NEWS has just reached us from Paris of the death of Madame Sophie Gay. She was a writer of the half-historical, half-sentimental school of French fiction, of which Madame de Genlis, the Duchess d'Abrantes, and Madame de Souza were specimens more or less worthy; but in ease and grace, Madame Gay was superior to all we have mentioned. It is, in our minds, very affecting to witness the last lights of the ancient salons of Paris dropping out one by one. M<sup>me</sup> Gay has herself, in a single volume published in 1837, entitled *Salons Célèbres*, left us a very beautiful picture of them as they were in their prime. We have translated—abridging, however, as we went—the opening chapters of this work, and may add a notice of more modern salons, as given by the lively pen of M<sup>me</sup> Emile de Girardin—*née* Delphine Gay—daughter of M<sup>me</sup> Sophie. The reader will judge whether the fashionable Frenchmen and Frenchwomen have really profited much by the storms and tempests that have gone over their heads. To be sure, M<sup>me</sup> de Girardin's pictures were given twelve years ago; but we believe they would require little change, at least up to the conclusion of the Orleans reign in 1848. The volume from which these last extracts are made, is entitled *Lettres Parisiennes*. It has all the wit and talent of the cleverest of fashionable Frenchwomen. The tone is sometimes extremely good—better than we were led to expect; but the picture it presents is about as mournful a one as pictures of French frivolity usually are. We will, however, leave them to make their own impression. First, then, for M<sup>me</sup> Sophie Gay and the ancient *salons*.

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Now that the empire of the salons, she observes, has passed away with that of women, it would be difficult to convey to our youthful France an idea of the influence which certain of these were wont to exercise, in state affairs and in the choice of men in power. To have a salon is far from an easy thing; a crowd of people may, and do every day, give concerts and balls in their gilded apartments, and yet they may never have salons. Essential conditions are required which can rarely be found in conjunction. The most important of all is the talent and character of the lady who does the honours. Without being old, she must have passed the age in which a woman is chiefly spoken of for her prettiness or her dress, and be at that point of time when a woman's mind may rule over the self-love of a man more than her youthful attractions enabled her to rule over his heart.

Rank and fortune were important items, not quite indispensable, however; for M<sup>me</sup> du Deffand was poor, and M<sup>me</sup> Geoffrin was the wife of a manufacturer. In the salons of these two women edicts were framed, and academicians reared; but the questions discussed there were not nearly of the importance of those to which M<sup>me</sup> de Staël's salon gave rise. It was essential that the mistress of the house should have a decided and superior taste in a variety of ways; also a total absence of those little, envious feelings which might have tended to exclude the fashionable woman or successful author. She must know how to bear enemies in her presence, to place talents according to their worth, to shew the tiresome the way to the door—things which require address and courage.

The salon of M<sup>me</sup> de Staël, during three different periods of her life, took considerable modification from the changes of the time; but it was always the same in power, if not in brilliancy.

Under the first Revolution, it was the scene of most momentous deliberations. Barnave, Talleyrand, Lameth, Dupont, Boissy d'Anglas, Portalis, Chénier, Rœderer, and Benjamin Constant, discussed at the place of familiar meeting many a half-formed decree, and many important state nominations. The only member of the Directory who visited there was Barras; and it was a common saying, that every visit cost him a good deed; for M<sup>me</sup> de Staël never slackened in her intercessions for the victims of the tribunals. She infused

courage into the hearts of those who were pleaders for them. Through her means, Talleyrand was recalled, and even named minister of foreign affairs. 'He wanted some help,' she said, 'in order to arrive at power, but none to enable him to keep it when gained.' Her sagacity was at fault, if she persuaded herself that the returned emigrant-priest would bring harmony into public counsels. On these evenings, pregnant with deeds both evil and good, it was said that some very foul conspiracies were concocted, and some of these were directly imputed to M<sup>me</sup> de Staël; but she earnestly denied the truth of such surmises. Her salon, not herself, was guilty. Most generously did she exert herself in behalf of those who suffered after such conspiracies; but some one was heard to say: 'She is a good woman, but would push any of her friends into the water for the delight of fishing them up again with her own tackle.'

When the Consulate was established, M<sup>me</sup> de Staël's salon empire was watched by the rising influence of the day with a jealous eye. It was certainly a turbulent scene. Very bitter were the complaints of the men of the Revolution. They had risked so much; they had fought so courageously for liberty! They saw the disorders of the time, but they could not bear to lose all the fruits of their toil; and Garat and Andrieux, Daunon and Benjamin Constant, urged on by the eloquence of M<sup>me</sup> de Staël, framed powerful appeals on these occasions for the morrow. Bonaparte could not tolerate this. His power was too recently gained—his projects too unripe. In vain did the friends of M<sup>me</sup> de Staël say, that a *salon* could never be dangerous to a rule like his. 'It is not a salon,' said he; 'it is a club.' It was, in fact, the antagonism between mind and physical force. The First Consul had said before, of the orators of the Tribune: 'I have no time to answer these refractory speechifiers: they *do* nothing but perplex all things; they must be silenced.' And one great point of attack was M<sup>me</sup> de Staël's salon. It was necessary she should abdicate her throne. A sentence of banishment condemned the brilliant lady to lay down the sceptre. Exiled to Geneva, surrounded by friends, sharing her father's lot, occupied with her daughter's education, she had, it may be thought, plenty of objects: she was unquestionably the first literary woman in Europe, too, and as such, Geneva was as her salon, where she received the homage of royalty and talent. Yet, a true Frenchwoman, unable to bear separation from the peculiar atmosphere in which she had been reared, she pined after it—pined still more for the friends who visited her only to be partakers of her exile; and so she passed the whole period of the Napoleon dynasty.

Meanwhile, in the interval between the banishment of M<sup>me</sup> de Staël and her return, the most captivating mistress of a Paris salon appears to have been M<sup>me</sup> de Beaumont. She was the daughter of M. de Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs, who had immediately followed Necker. She married early, and not happily. She lived with her father, separated from her husband, and was intrusted to transcribe some of the very important correspondence between Mirabeau and the court. In the Reign of Terror, her father, and it is thought others of her family, fell by the guillotine; but she herself was spared, even against her will. She retired for awhile into the country, visiting among her friends, who did all they could to console her. She was the object of the strongest attachment on the part of Châteaubriand, Joubert, Fontanes, Molé, and many others; and when, once more, quiet and order were restored, even at the sacrifice of much of liberty, she came to Paris again. Her old friends rallied about her, her spirits seemed to revive for awhile, and her salon was for a year or two a scene of remarkable enjoyment. One who truly appreciated her, and who was worthy to be himself the centre of a social circle—M. Joubert, the author of some beautiful thoughts on literature and divers other subjects—thus tenderly commemorates the evenings to which we have alluded: 'Peaceful society! where none of those disuniting pretensions which spoil enjoyment could come; where acknowledged talent was not divorced from good temper; where praise was given to whatever was praiseworthy; where nothing was thought of but what was really attractive. Peaceful society! whose scattered members can never unite again without speaking of her who was the connecting link that brought them all together.'

To our minds, there seems something unique and infinitely touching in this bursting out, though but for a short time, of the slumbering fires of an older society, from underneath the heaps of hard and alien material which had gone far to extinguish every spark of gentleness and refinement. The relics of families—their hearts still bleeding from their wounds—came to forget, if possible, the terrible past, and indulge their quiet hopes for the future. Very soon, indeed, the dream was dispelled; the tyranny proved to some unbearable; and some it vanquished in their highest part—their inward conscience—making them subservient when they might have shunned the danger altogether. But while the quiet interval lasted, it was like an Indian

summer, prolonging the intellectual and tasteful beauty which was soon to be overwhelmed by the vulgar splendours of the Empire.

The greatest loss this circle could have had was the first. M<sup>me</sup> de Beaumont died at Rome in 1804—attended only by Châteaubriand—who has given an account of the closing scene in his memoirs, and thenceforth it does not appear that the same society reassembled.

But another and third edition of the salon, under M<sup>me</sup> de Staël, was witnessed at the Restoration. Hitherto we have sketched from M<sup>me</sup> Sophie Gay's pictures. At this period, she declares herself unable to bear the mortification of mingling with the public of Paris: she could not see the Cossacks without shuddering. She shut herself up in her house, and knew what passed only through the kindness of friends, who wrote narratives for her amusement of any remarkable incidents they might note. Among these communications, M<sup>me</sup> Sophie Gay has preserved one from the Marquis de Custine, and she has given it as a faithful picture of one of the last of M<sup>me</sup> de Staël's soirées in Paris.

'I am just returned, and will not go to bed without telling you what has most amused me—not that *amused* is the right word, for M<sup>me</sup> de Staël's salon is more than a scene of amusement: it is a glass in which is reflected the history of the time. What we see and hear there is more instructive than books, more exciting than many comedies....

'You know that the Duke of Wellington was to visit her this evening for the first time. I went in good time; she was not yet in the room: several others were also waiting—such as the Abbé de Pradt, Benjamin Constant, La Fayette. They were conversing; I remained in one corner, as if listening to them.... At length M<sup>me</sup> de Staël came in. "I am late," she said; "but it is not my fault. I was invited to dine at—, and was obliged to go." A great many of the guests were come: all were looking for the hero of the evening—we had seen him only as part of a show, now we wanted to hear him converse. At length he entered. The nobleness of his figure and simplicity of his manners produced a most agreeable impression on us. His pride, as it ought, has nearly the grace of timidity. M<sup>me</sup> de Staël, impressed by a style and manner so little like that of our countrymen, said: "He carries his glory as if it were a nothing." Then, by a quick recall of patriotism, she whispered in my ear: "One must admit, however, that nature never made a great man at less expense." It seemed to me that the whole man was portrayed in these brief remarks.

'You would suppose, after this *début*, that we had a very pleasant evening: you shall judge. The Duke had not reached the end of the salon, when the Abbé de Pradt fastened on him, and actually forced him to listen for at least three-quarters of an hour, while he expressed his ideas—the ideas of the Abbé de Pradt!—upon military tactics. Conceive the wrath of M<sup>me</sup> de Staël, and the annoyance of everybody there! M. Schlegel said, that he could fancy he was listening to that rhetorician who pronounced a discourse on the art of war to Hannibal.

'This remark did not make amends for the nuisance of hearing in good French what we all knew before, when what we wanted was to listen to new things, in a foreign accent. Among the very few words which the English general was allowed to put in, I caught one sentence which struck me. While the abbé took breath, or coughed, the warrior had just time to tell us, that the most awful day in the life of a commander is that in which he has gained a battle; because, before having passed a night on the ground, and being assured on the morrow of the departure of the enemy, the conqueror cannot even know whether he is not conquered.

'Everything has its cost in this world, and if every man told us his secret, we should see that the most dazzling triumphs are paid for at their full price. However that may be, I thought there was sense and good taste in the Duke's remark. It seemed as if he tried to make us forgive him for exciting our curiosity so much.

'Many people went away discouraged by the bad manners of M. de Pradt. The hero himself was thinking of a retreat, when M<sup>me</sup> de Staël came to release him from the ambushade into which he had fallen. She retained him near the door, and there was a grave conversation on the English constitution. M<sup>me</sup> de Staël could not reconcile the idea of political liberty, with the prevalence of servile forms remaining in the individual relationships of a society so jealous of that liberty as England.

"Language and aristocratic customs do not annoy people living in a country

that is really free," said the Duke. "We use these unimportant formulæ in compliment to the past, and preserve our ceremonies as we keep a memorial, even when it has lost its primitive destination."

"But is it true," asked M<sup>me</sup> de Staël, "that your lord chancellor speaks to the king on his bended knee during the opening address or sitting of parliament?"

"Yes; quite true."

"How *does* he do it?"

"He speaks to him kneeling, as I have told you."

"But how?"

"Must I shew you? You *will* have it!" answered the Duke; and he threw himself at the feet of our Corinna.

"I wish everybody could see him," cried M<sup>me</sup> de Staël.

'And everybody there did applaud with one accord. I would not answer for the same unanimity of approbation among the same people after they had reached the foot of the staircase.

'Everybody went away, only I stayed two hours with the mistress of the house and M. Schlegel, whose anger against the abbé did not wear out. These two hours M<sup>me</sup> de Staël's conversation enchanted me, proving how much there is to attach us in one who can live at one and the same time so near and yet so far above the world.... I might pass many evenings in recounting in detail the conversation of this evening. There is more than matter for a book in a two hours' talk with M<sup>me</sup> de Staël. I had better go to bed, that I may be able to tell you to-morrow all I can only leave you to guess at now.'<sup>[3]</sup>

And now we come to a later period, and M<sup>me</sup> Sophie Gay shall give place to her lively and clever daughter Delphine, M<sup>me</sup> Emile Girardin.

'Parisian society,' she writes, 'now, in 1839, offers the strangest aspect that ever was seen—a mixture of luxury and rudeness, English propriety and French negligence, political absurdities and revolutionary terrors, of which it is hard to form a just conception. The luxury of the salons is truly Eastern, not only the salons, indeed, but the anterooms: an anteroom in a handsome hotel is more richly adorned than the most beautiful drawing-room of the provincial prefecture. There, footmen more or less powdered—for there are rebels who choose to wear so little powder, that you would rather take them for millers, in livery, than for servants of the anteroom—these self-styled powdered lackeys offer you a great book, bound in velvet, with the corners bronzed and gilt, in which you are asked to write your name. If the lady of the house is visible, you are pompously ushered into the sanctuary—that is to say, into the second salon or parlour, or closet, or *atelier*, whichever best assorts with the pretensions of the lady. A dog darts upon you, barks, makes a show of biting you; he is quieted, submits, and regains his purple cushion, growling. Dogs are very much in fashion: together with the fire, flowers, an old aunt, and two toadies, they make up part of the living accompaniments of a genteel salon. As you are an elegant person, of course you are ill-dressed: your coat is dusty, your boots speckled with mud, your hair uncombed, you exhale a strong odour of tobacco. At first glance, such things seem rather disagreeable, common, and inelegant. No such thing: this is exactly the most fashionable style we have; it seems to say: "I have just dismounted from the finest horse in Paris. I am a man of fashion, of that distinguished position in society, that I can go in a morning to call on a duchess, *dressed like a highwayman*."

'On the other hand, the mistress of the house is charming. One must do women the justice to say, that they never take a pride in ugliness; that they never make elegance to consist in appearing to the greatest possible disadvantage. The woman whom you are visiting, then, is dressed in the best taste. A beautiful lace cap covers her light hair; she wears a soft figured Gros do Naples; her stockings are of exquisite fineness; her shoes irreproachable (we doubt not they bear the mark of either Gros or Müller); her Valenciennes cuffs are irresistible: everything betokens care and fastidious nicety. The freshness of her appearance is a satire on the negligence of yours. One cannot comprehend why this elegant woman should have prepared herself in so costly a manner to receive this man; and in the evening, really the contrast is greater still. Young men no longer wear stockings when they go into a party; yet they dare not just yet present themselves in boots; and therefore they come in *brodequins*, like students. We are in the age of the *juste-milieu*; and this is appropriate enough. The *brodequin* is in its right place half-way



between shoes and boots. These ill-dressed men are surrounded by women blazing in jewels and diamonds, coronets and diadems. It is impossible to believe that such differently dressed beings can be of the same country and station in society; and yet they are all talking and chirping together: and what conversation! what a conflict of subjects! what an inexplicable picture of forethought and thoughtlessness! or rather of apathy!

"And do you also believe in a revolution, M. de P——?" inquires a charming princess, spreading out her fan.

"Certainly, madame; and I hope we shall have one sooner than some may think."

"What! monsieur—you make me tremble."

"Can you, then, be afraid of a revolution which will bring about what you wish for?"

"No; but we shall have some cruel moments to pass through."

"Some may; but not everybody."

"Bah! revolutions make no selection; and then, when once the scaffold is set up"——

"How fast you travel, madame: in our day we shall never bear with scaffolds. The days of Terror will never return!"

"I think with M. de P——," chimes in a young dandy, playing with a Chinese ape on the table: "I rather look for civil war."

"I do not expect it; we have not energy enough for a civil war." ...

"But you will have household assassinations, probably, if that will be any comfort."

"And then, the pillage of Paris!"

"Pillage!"

"Certainly." And every one cries:

"Oh, well, if there is pillage, I will be in it."

"I shall come to your house, madame," says one. "I shall carry away this beautiful vase."

"And I, the plate."

"And I, the charming portrait."

"I have no fixed idea yet. I shall come to your house to-morrow, madame, to choose," &c.

"All this will be very amusing; and yet, when the day comes, I shall not be sorry to be in Italy."

"Well, let us set out, then."

"Not yet, but soon. I will warn you when it is best to go." And so they talk on of all these horrible things, half buried under canopies of *lampas*, surrounded by flowers, by the light of thousands of wax-candles burning in golden lustres; and these women, who foresee such great catastrophes—tragical events, which may divide them from all they love, from parents, from friends—have beautiful dresses, with trimmings from England, and make the prettiest little gestures while speaking. It is because in France vanity is so deeply rooted that it leads to indifference. Presumption stands in lieu of courage. They believe in disasters, but only for others: they never seem to expect them for themselves.'

So much for national character. If all this be a truthful picture, and really we see no reason for doubt, it does but add another to the many proofs of the springing elasticity of that element of light-hearted short-sightedness which is so proverbially characteristic of the French. But we will say no more, for our paper has already exceeded the limits we had assigned to it; and the things that *are* must ever prevail in our pages over those that have been.

## FOOTNOTES:

[3] Perhaps the reader of the above will partake our own feeling of surprise at one circumstance which it records. How happened it, that the accomplished lady of a Parisian salon could not shield her chief guest, and all her guests, from the impertinence of one among them? To us this seems incomprehensible, and excites our suspicion that M<sup>me</sup> de Staël could not have been among those mistresses of the science of tact, of whom elsewhere M<sup>me</sup> Gay speaks. The whole charm of the evening was here allowed to be spoiled.

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## THE OLD CASTLES AND MANSIONS OF SCOTLAND.

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THE father of mental philosophy, Aristotle, begins his work on ethics by telling us, that nothing exists without some theory or reason attached to it. The following out of this view leads to classification—that great engine of knowledge. We see things at first in isolated individuality or confused masses. Investigation teaches us to separate them into groups, which have some common and important principle of unity, though each individual of the group may be different from the others in detail. Thus we arrive at the great classifications of natural science, with which every one is more or less familiar. But the works of men have their classification too, for in human effort like causes produce like effects. Most people know what schools of poetry, painting, and music are. In architecture, we know, too, that there are great divisions—such as classic and Gothic. But many have yet to learn how far classification may go; and it is a new feature to have the peculiar national architecture of Scotland separated from that of England, and its peculiarities traced to interesting national events and habits. The common observer is apt to think that all buildings are much alike, or that each is alone in its peculiarities. Before classification can take place, there must be a collection and comparison of leading characteristics; and this is not easily accomplished with the edifices scattered over a whole country. It may be said that it was never done for Scotland, until Mr Billings completed his great series of engravings of the baronial and ecclesiastical antiquities of Scotland.

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Taking the former—the baronial—for our text, we find ourselves now for the first time in a condition to discover the leading features of the Scottish school of architecture, and to connect it with the history of Scotland. We know that until the wars of Wallace and Bruce, the two countries, England and Scotland, could scarcely be said to be entirely separated; at all events, they did not stand in open hostility to each other. Endless animosities, however, naturally followed a war in which the one country tried to enslave the other, and where the weaker only escaped annihilation by a desperate struggle. It is not unnatural, therefore, to expect that the habits of the two countries diverged from each other as time passed on; and this process is very distinctly shewn in the character of the edifices used by the barons and lairds of Scotland. A very few of the oldest strongholds resemble those of the same period in England. The English baronial castle of the thirteenth century generally consisted of several massive square or round towers, broad at the base, and tapering upwards, arranged at distances from each other, so that lofty embattled walls or curtains stood between them, making a ground-plan of which the towers formed the angles. The doors and windows were generally in the Gothic or pointed style of architecture, and the vaulted chambers were frequently of the same. There are not above three or four such edifices in Scotland. The most complete, perhaps, is the old part of Caerlaverock, in Dumfriesshire; another fine specimen is Dirleton, in East Lothian; and to these may be added Bothwell, in Clydesdale, and Kildrummie, in Aberdeenshire.

This style was long followed in England. It is known as the baronial, and architects in all parts of the country, when building a modern mansion in the castellated manner, have invariably followed it. It is easy to see, however, that it was early abandoned in Scotland, the people not taking their forms of architecture from a nation with which they had no connection but that of hostility. The first species of national baronial architecture to which they resorted was a very simple one, characteristic of an impoverished people. It consisted of little more than four stone walls, forming what in fortification is called a blockhouse. The walls were extremely thick, with few apertures, and these suspiciously small. But these old towers or keeps were not without some scientific preparations for defence. In the more ancient baronial castles, the large square or round towers at the angles served to flank the walls or curtains between them; that is, supposing an enemy to be approaching the main gate, he could be attacked on either side from the towers at the angles. To serve the same purpose, the Scottish keeps had small bastions or turrets at

the corners, which, projecting over the wall, flanked it on each face. The simple expedient here adopted is at the root of all the complex devices of fortification. The main thing is just to build a strong edifice, and then, by flanking outworks, to prevent an enemy from getting up to it. In other respects, these square towers were scarcely to be considered peculiarly Scottish. They are to be found in all parts of the world—along the Wall of China; in the Russian steppes; in Italy, where they are sometimes remains of republican Rome; and in Central India. They constitute, in fact, the most primitive form of a fortified house.

When we come a century or two later, the difference between the English and Scottish styles becomes more distinct and interesting. Almost every one is acquainted with that beautiful style of building called in England the Tudor or Elizabethan, with its decorated chimneys, its ornamented gables, and large oriel or bow windows. It is not well suited for defence, and denotes a rich country, where private warfare has decayed. This class of edifice is rarely, if at all, to be found north of the border; but much as it is to be admired, a contemporary style sprang up in Scotland entirely distinct from it, yet, in our opinion, quite fitted to rival it in interest and beauty. It was derived, in some measure, from Flanders, but chiefly from France. The Scots naturally looked to their friends as an example, rather than to their enemies. Many of the Scottish gentry made their fortunes in the French service, and when they came home, naturally desired to imitate, on such a scale as they could afford, the châteaux of their allies and patrons. The state of the country, too, made it a more suitable pattern than the Tudor style. France was still a country of feudal warfare—so was Scotland; and it was necessary in both to have defence associated with ornament. The chief peculiarity of this new style was, the quantity of sharp-topped turrets, which form a sort of crest to the many details of the lower parts of the buildings. These are not solely ornamental; they succeeded the bastions of the old square towers, and served the same purpose. Among the secondary peculiarities of these buildings, may be counted an extremely rich and profuse ornamentation of the upper parts—probably the only portions out of the way of mischief. Indeed, the edifice is sometimes a mere square block for two or three storeys, while it is crowned, as it were, with a rich group of turrets and minarets, gables, window-tops, ornamented chimneys, and gilded vanes. In many instances, the great square block of older days received this fantastic French termination at a later time—as, for instance, the famous castle of Glammis, in Strathmore.

It almost appears as if this style, which has its own peculiar beauties, had been adopted out of a national antagonism to the contemporary style in England. The Tudor architecture has always a horizontal tendency, spreading itself out in broad open screens or wall-plates, diversified by occasional angular eminences—as, for instance, in the tops of the decorated windows. But in the Gallo-Scottish style everything tends to the perpendicular, not only in the long, narrow shapes of the buildings themselves, and their tall, spiral turrets, but in the many decorations which incrust them. This decoration has an extremely rich look, from the quantity of breaks, and the absence of bare wall or long straight lines. Thus, to save the uniform plainness of the straight gable-line, it is broken into small gradations called 'crow-steps.' Every one who looks at old houses in Scotland must be familiar with this feature, and must have noticed its picturesqueness. It appears to have been derived from the Flemish houses, where, however, the steps or terraces are much larger, and not so effective, since, instead of merely breaking and enriching the line of the gable, they break it up, as it were, into separate pieces.

The Scottish style has not, indeed, slavishly adopted any foreign model. It is, as we have remarked, chiefly adopted from the French; but it has characteristics and beauties of its own. No one, we believe, had any conception of their extent and variety, until they were brought to light by the artistic labours of Mr Billings. In some instances, to bring out the full effect of the ornamental parts of these buildings without overloading his picture with the more cumbrous plain stone-work, he brings forward, by some artistic manœuvre, the crest of the building, as if the spectator saw it from a scaffold or a balloon level with the highest storey. The effect of the rich Oriental-looking mass of decoration thus concentrated is extremely striking, and one is apt to ask, if it is possible that the country so often characterised as bare, cold, and impoverished, could have produced these gorgeous edifices. Their number and distribution through the most remote parts of the land are equally remarkable. Among Mr Billings's specimens, we have, in the southern part of Scotland, Pinkie, near Musselburgh; Auchans and Kelburn, in Ayrshire; Newark, on the Clyde; Airth and Argyle's Lodging, in Stirling. Going northward, we come to Elcho and Glammis, and to Muchalls and Crathes, in Kincardineshire. It is remarkable, that the further north we go, the French style becomes more conspicuous and complete. Many of the finest specimens

are to be found in Aberdeenshire. Fyvie Castle, which was built for a Scottish chancellor—Seton, Earl of Dunfermline—is almost a complete French château of the sixteenth century, such as the traveller may have seen in sunny Guienne or Anjou; and there it stands transplanted, like an exotic, among the bleak hills of the north. It is only natural to find in connection with such a circumstance, that Seton received his education in France, and passed a considerable part of his life there. Whether from such an example or not, the Aberdeenshire lairds seem to have been all ambitious of possessing French châteaux; and thus in the county of primitive rock, where there is certainly little else to remind us of French habits or ideas, we have some admirable specimens of that foreign architectural school in Castle Fraser, Craigievar, Midmar, Tolquhon, Dalpersie, and Udney. Nearer Inverness, we have Balveny, Castle-Stewart, and Cawdor.

The same foreign influence is exhibited in our street architecture, some specimens of which are engraved in the work to which we have referred.<sup>[4]</sup> Every one knows that the lofty Scottish edifices with common stairs—houses built above each other, in fact—give our large towns a character totally different from those of England; but it is equally clear that the practice was derived from France, where it is still in full observance literally among all classes, since the different social grades occupy separate floors of the same edifices. In the *coup d'état* of 1851, it will be remembered, that in making the arrests of the leading men supposed to be inimical to Louis Napoleon, one of the difficulties—as the affair took place at midnight—was to know the floors in which they lived; for these great statesmen and generals inhabited houses with common stairs.

We have here discussed one special feature of Mr Billings's work, on account of the remarks which it suggests; but it is only right to mention, before parting with it, that it contains engravings of every thing that is remarkable in the ancient architecture of Scotland, whether it be called civil and baronial or ecclesiastical. Certainly, the remains of antiquity in North Britain were never previously so amply and completely illustrated. Nor is it without reason, that some contemporary critics have maintained this to be the most entire collection of the sort which any nation possesses. The chief merits of the views consist in their accuracy and effect. They are wonderfully clear and minute, so that every detail of the least importance is brought out as distinctly as in a model, while this is accomplished without sacrifice of their artistic effect as pictures.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [4] *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland*. By William Burn and W. Billings. 4 vols. 4to. Blackwoods, Edinburgh.

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## AMERICAN HONOUR.

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ABOUT seventy-five years ago, there was at Charleston, in South Carolina, a family consisting of several members. It belonged to the middle class—that is to say, contained barristers, bankers, merchants, solicitors, and so on—all of them animated, at least so far as appears, by a high sense of honour and integrity. But noble sentiments are no certain guarantee against poverty. One of the members of the family in question became embarrassed, borrowed L.1000 of one of his relatives, but was soon after seized with paralysis, and, having kept his bed five years, died, leaving behind him a widow with several children. He could bequeath them no property, instead of which they received as their inheritance high principles, and a strong affection for the memory of their father. The widow also was, in this respect, perfectly in harmony with her sons. By dint, therefore, of prudence, industry, and economy, they amassed among them the sum of L.400, which they rigidly appropriated to the repayment of a part of their father's debt. The old man had, indeed, called them together around his death-bed, and told them that, instead of a fortune, he left them a duty to perform; and that if it could not be accomplished in one generation, it must be handed down from father to son, until the descendants of the B—s had paid every farthing to the descendants of the S—s.

While matters stood in this predicament, the creditor part of the family removed to England, and the debtors remained at Charleston, struggling with difficulties and embarrassments, which not only disabled them from paying the paternal debt, but kept them perpetually in honourable poverty. Of course, the wish to pay in such minds survived the ability. It would have been to them an enjoyment of a high order to hunt out their relatives in England,

and place in their hands the owing L.600. This pleasure, which they were destined never to taste, often formed the subject of conversation around their fireside; and the children, as they grew up, were initiated into the mystery of the L.600.

But that generation passed away, and another succeeded to the liability; not that there existed any liability in law, for though a deed had been executed, it had lapsed in the course of time, so that there was really no obligation but that which was the strongest of all—an uneradicable sense of right. Often and often did the B—s of Charleston meet and consult together on this famous debt, which every one wished, but no one could afford, to pay. The sons were married, and had children whom it was incumbent on them to support; the daughters had married, too, but their husbands possibly did not acquire with their wives the chivalrous sense of duty which possessed the breast of every member, male and female, of the B. family, and inspired them with a wish to do justice when fortune permitted.

It would be infinitely agreeable to collect and peruse the letters and records of consultations which passed or took place between the members of this family on the subject of the L.600. These documents would form the materials of one of the most delightful romances in the world—the romance of honour, which never dies in some families, but is transmitted from generation to generation like a treasure above all price. When this brief notice is read in Charleston, it may possibly lead to the collection of these materials, which, with the proper names of all the persons engaged, should, we think, be laid before the world as a pleasing record of hereditary nobility of sentiment.

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After the lapse of many years, a widow and her three nephews found themselves in possession of the necessary means for paying the family debt. Three-quarters of a century had elapsed. The children and the children's children of the original borrower had passed away; but the honour of the B. family had been transmitted intact to the fourth generation, and a search was immediately commenced to discover the creditors in England. This, however, as may well be supposed, was no easy task. The members of the S. family had multiplied and separated, married and intermarried, become poor and wealthy, distinguished and obscure by turns, changed their topographical as well as their social position, and disappeared entirely from the spot they had occupied on their first arrival from America.

But honour is indefatigable, and by degrees a letter reached a person in Kensington, who happened to possess some knowledge of a lady of the S. family, married to a solicitor practising with great success and distinction in London. When the letter came to hand, she at first doubted whether it might not be a sort of grave hoax, intended to excite expectation for the pleasure of witnessing its disappointment. However, the English solicitor, accustomed to the incidents of life, thought there would at least be no harm in replying to the letter from Charleston, and discovering in this way the real state of the affair.

Some delay necessarily occurred, especially as the B. family in America were old world sort of people, accustomed to transact business slowly and methodically, and with due attention to the minutest points. But at length a reply came, in which the writer observed, that if a deed of release were drawn up, signed by all the parties concerned in England, and transmitted to America, the L.600 should immediately be forwarded for distribution among the members of the S. family. Some demur now arose. Some of the persons concerned growing prudent as the chances of recovering the money appeared to multiply, thought it would be wrong to send the deed of release before the money had been received. But the solicitor had not learned, in the practice of his profession, to form so low an estimate of human nature. He considered confidence in this case to be synonymous with prudence, and at anyrate resolved to take upon himself the entire responsibility of complying with the wishes of the Americans. He accordingly drew up the necessary document, got it signed by as many as participated in his views, and sent it across the Atlantic, without the slightest doubt or hesitation. There had been something in the rough, blunt honesty of Mr B—'s letter that inspired in the man of law the utmost reliance on his faith, though during the interval which elapsed between the transmission of the deed and the reception of an answer from the States, several of his friends exhibited a disposition to make themselves merry at the expense of his chivalry. But when we consider all the particulars of the case, we can hardly fail to perceive that he ran no risk whatever; for even if the debt had not legally lapsed, the people who had retained it in their memory through three generations—who had from father to son practised strict economy in order to relieve themselves from the burden—who had, with much difficulty and some expense, sought out the heirs of their creditor in a

distant country, could scarcely be suspected of any inclination to finish off with a fraud at last.

Still, if there was honour on one side, there was enlarged confidence on the other; and in the course of a few months, the American mail brought to London the famous L.600 due since before the War of Independence. The business now was to divide and distribute it. Of course, each of the creditors was loud in expressions of admiration of the honour of the B. family, whose representative, while forwarding the money, asked with much simplicity to have a few old English newspapers sent out to him by way of acknowledgment. For his own part, however, he experienced a strong desire to behold some of the persons to whom he had thus paid a debt of the last century; and he gave a warm and pressing invitation to any of them, to come out and stay as long as they thought proper at his house in Charleston. Had the invitation been accepted, we cannot doubt that Brother Jonathan would have acted as hospitably in the character of host as he behaved honourably in that of debtor. It would have been a pleasure, we might indeed say a distinction, to live under the same roof with such a man, whose very name carries us back to the primitive times of the colony, when Charleston was a city of the British Empire, and English laws, manners, habits, and feelings regulated the proceedings and relations of its inhabitants. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the London solicitor will some day drop in quietly upon his friend in Charleston, to smoke a cigar, and discuss old times with him. He will in that case probably fancy himself chatting with a contemporary of Rip Van Winkle. Doubtless there are thousands of such men in the States, where frequently everything that is estimable in the English character is cultivated with assiduity.

How the property was distributed among the S. family in England, we need not say. Each surviving individual had his or her share. The solicitor was only connected with them by marriage; but with good old English ideas of uprightness and integrity, he was fully able to appreciate the Charleston lawyer's sentiments. He would have done exactly the same himself under similar circumstances; and therefore, had the sum been tens of thousands instead of hundreds, it could not be said to have fallen into bad hands. Whether the transaction above noticed has led or not to a continued correspondence between the families, we are unable to say; but we think the creditors in England would naturally have felt a pleasure in exchanging intelligence from time to time with their worthy debtors in Charleston. These things, however, are private, and therefore we do not intend to trench upon them.

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## THE PARLOUR AQUARIUM.

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It is not many years since Mr Ward first drew the attention of botanists to the cultivation of plants in closely-glazed cases; but the most sanguine dreams of the discoverer could not then have foretold the many useful purposes to which the Wardian Case has become applicable, nor the important influence which it was destined to obtain in promoting the pleasant pursuits of gardening and botany. The Wardian Case has been instrumental in diffusing a love of these pursuits among all classes of society. It has opened up to those whose pursuits confine them within the limits of the city's smoke-cloud, a means whereby they may obtain 'a peep at nature, if they can no more.' Far removed from green fields and leafy woods, they may, for instance, enjoy their leisure mornings in watching one of the most beautiful phenomena of vegetable development—the evolution of the circinate fronds of the fern; a plant in every respect associated with elegance and beauty. This kind of gardening has, therefore, become of late years one of the most fashionable, while at the same time one of the most pleasant sources of domestic amusement.

An interesting companion to the Wardian Case has lately been presented in the Aquatic Plant Case, or Parlour Aquarium, due to the ingenuity of Mr Warrington, and which has for its object, as its name indicates, the cultivation of aquatic or water plants. It may be described as a combination of the Wardian Case and the gold-fish globe, the object being to illustrate the mutual dependence of animal and vegetable life. Mr Warrington has lately detailed his experiments. 'The small gold-fish were placed in a glass-receiver of about twelve gallons' capacity, having a cover of thin muslin stretched over a stout copper wire, bent into a circle, placed over its mouth, so as to exclude as much as possible the sooty dust of the London atmosphere, without, at the same time, impeding the free passage of the atmospheric air. This receiver was about half-filled with ordinary spring-water, and supplied at the bottom



with sand and mud, together with loose stones of limestone tufa from Matlock, and of sandstone: these were arranged so that the fish could get below.... A small plant of *Vallisneria spiralis* was introduced, its roots being inserted in the mud and sand, and covered by one of the loose stones, so as to retain the plant in its position.... The materials being thus arranged, all appeared to go on well for a short time, until circumstances occurred which indicated that another and very material agent was required to perfect the adjustment.' The decaying leaves of the vallisneria produced a slime which began to affect the fish injuriously: this it was necessary to get quit of. Mr Warrington introduced five or six snails (*Limnea stagnalis*), 'which soon removed the nuisance, and restored the fish to a healthy state; thus perfecting the balance between the animal and vegetable inhabitants, and enabling both to perform their functions with health and energy. So luxuriant was the growth of the vallisneria under these circumstances, that by the autumn the one solitary plant originally introduced had thrown out very numerous offshoots and suckers, thus multiplying to the extent of upwards of thirty-five strong plants, and these threw up their long spiral flower-stems in all directions, so that at one time more than forty blossoms were counted lying on the surface of the water. The fish have been lively, bright in colour, and appear very healthy; and the snails also—judging from the enormous quantities of gelatinous masses of eggs which they have deposited on all parts of the receiver, as well as on the fragments of stone—appear to thrive wonderfully, affording a large quantity of food to the fish in the form of the young snails, which are devoured as soon as they exhibit signs of vitality and locomotion, and before their shell has become hardened.'

In remarking upon the result of his experiments, Mr Warrington observes: 'Thus we have that admirable balance sustained between the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and that in a liquid element. The fish, in its respiration, consumes the oxygen held in solution by the water as atmospheric air, furnishes carbonic acid, feeds on the insects and young snails, and excretes material well adapted as a rich food to the plant, and well fitted for its luxuriant growth. The plant, by its respiration, consumes the carbonic acid produced by the fish, appropriating the carbon to the construction of its tissues and fibres, and liberates the oxygen in its gaseous state to sustain the healthy functions of the animal life; at the same time that it feeds on the rejected matter, which has fulfilled its purposes in the nourishment of the fish and snail, and preserves the water constantly in a clean and healthy condition. While the slimy snail, finding its proper nutriment in the decomposing vegetable matter and minute confervoid growth, prevents their accumulation by removing them; and by its vital powers converts what would otherwise act as a poison into a rich and fruitful nutriment, again to constitute a pabulum for the vegetable growth, while it also acts the important part of a purveyor to its finny neighbours.'<sup>[5]</sup> This perfect adjustment in the economy of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, whereby the vital functions of each are permanently maintained, is one of the most beautiful phenomena of organic nature.

The Parlour Aquarium affords valuable, we might say invaluable, facilities to the naturalist in the prosecution of his researches. The botanist can now conveniently watch the development of aquatic plants under conditions *not* unnatural, throughout the entire period of their existence, from their germination to the production of flowers and the perfection of seeds; and we are in hopes that much of the obscurity that invests many aquatic vegetables will in consequence be cleared up. The zoologist is perhaps even more indebted to the invention. The habits, not only of the fishes, but of the mollusca, can be accurately studied under natural conditions, and many important facts of their history ascertained and illustrated. The water-beetles and other aquatic insects will also come in for a share of attention.

In concluding his paper in the *Garden Companion* (i. p. 7), Mr Warrington states, that he is at present attempting a similar arrangement with a confined portion of sea-water, employing some of the green sea-weeds as the vegetable members of the circle, and the common winkle or whelk to represent the water-snails. In a Report of the Yorkshire Naturalist's Club, November 5, 1851,<sup>[6]</sup> we observe it stated, that Mr Charlesworth read an extract from a letter from a gentleman in America, detailing some successful experiments on keeping marine molluscs alive in sea-water for months; but our inquiries have not been successful in eliciting any further information on the subject.

Experiments of our own have led to the conclusion, that some families of aquatic plants are altogether unsuitable for the Parlour Aquarium—such as, potamogeton, chara, &c., which very soon communicate a putrescent odour to the water in which they are grown, rendering it highly disagreeable in a sitting-room.



## FOOTNOTES:

[5] *Quarterly Journal of the Chemical Society*, iii, 52.

[6] *Naturalist*, vol. i. 239.

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## A WEDDING DINNER.

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THE English are often reproached with love of good cheer, and certainly if foreigners were to judge of us from the manner in which we celebrate our Christmas, we cannot wonder at their supposing 'biftik' to be necessary to our happiness. But high feasting has not in any age been confined to the English, and perhaps the following account, translated from an old chronicle, of a wedding-dinner given by the Milanese, in 1336, to our Duke of Clarence, son of Edward III., may prove not unamusing or unsuggestive.

Lionel of Antwerp, Duke of Clarence, was the widower of Elizabeth of Ulster, and his second wife, Zolante, was the sister of Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan. The latter nuptials were celebrated at Milan with great pomp. The most illustrious personages were invited from every part of Europe; tournaments, balls, and other diversions, occupied the guests, who were all furnished with splendid apartments, till the whole company being assembled, Giovanni Galeazzo conducted the newly-married couple from the church to his palace. In one immense hall were laid out a hundred tables for the most distinguished guests, including the mightiest princes in Italy, the most beautiful women, and the most celebrated characters of the age; among whom we must not omit to mention Francesco Petrarca. Other tables were placed in the adjoining apartments. Seneschals, in the most sumptuous dresses, brought in the massive dishes of gold and silver. The cup-bearers performed their duties on horseback, galloping round the hall and handing the choicest wines in costly vases of gold, silver, or crystal. This custom of servants waiting at table on horseback appears singular in our time, but it serves to give an idea of the splendour of other days and the enormous size of the apartments. It also tends to explain why most of the noble mansions still extant from the time of which we speak, instead of a staircase, have a gradual ascent of bricks, generally leading to a hall of large dimensions. And frequently we see evident tokens that flights of steps have been substituted in later times.

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The banquet consisted of eighteen courses; and between each course presents of various kinds were offered to the bridegroom, or distributed by him; so that before the dinner had ended, Lionel had presented every individual around him with some article of value, besides 600 richly embroidered garments which he had given to the mimes and players engaged for the occasion.

Here follows a formal account of the dinner, but we must economise our space. The first course consisted of young pigs, gilded, with flames issuing from their mouths; the second, of hares and pike, likewise gilded; the third, of gilded veal and trout; the fourth, of partridges, quails, and fish, all gilded; the fifth, of ducks, small birds, and fish, all gilded; the sixth, of beef, capons with garlic-sauce, and sturgeon; the seventh, of veal and capons with lemon-sauce; the eighth, of beef-pies, with cheese and sugar, and eel-pies with sugar and spices; the ninth, of meats, fowl and fish in jelly (potted, we presume); the tenth, of gilded meats and lamprey; the eleventh, of roast kid, birds, and fish; the twelfth, of hares and venison, and fish with vinegar and sugar; the thirteenth, of beef and deer, with lemon and sugar; the fourteenth, of fowls, capons, and tench, covered with red and green foil; the fifteenth, of pigeons, small birds, beans, salt tongues, and carp; the sixteenth, of rabbits, peacocks, and eels roasted with lemon; the seventeenth, of sour milk and cheese; and the eighteenth, of fruits of the rarest and most expensive kinds.

At each of these courses the duke received a separate gift—beginning with a pair of *leopards*, with velvet collars and gilded buckles. Then followed numberless braces of pointers, greyhounds, setters, and falcons, all with trappings and ornaments of silk, gold, and pearls; dozens of breastplates, helmets, lances, shields, saddles, and complete suits of armour, enriched with silver, gold, and velvet; numerous pieces of cloth of gold and satin; horses by half-dozens, with saddles and trappings highly ornamented; twelve beautiful milk-white oxen; 'a vest and cowl embroidered with pearls, representing various flowers; a baronial mantle and cowl lined with ermine, and richly embroidered with pearls; a large ewer of massive silver, four waistbands of wrought silver (now called *filigrane*); a clump of diamonds and rubies, with a

pearl of immense value in the centre; and a variety of specimens of the choicest wines and most elegant confectionary.'

In those times, there was little refinement of taste, and the culinary art was probably in its infancy. Hence we find the dishes in quality and number rather suited to satisfy the appetites of huntsmen than the delicate palate of a courtier of our day. Sugar and spices were used in profusion, perhaps because they were scarce and expensive, rather than on account of their flavour. Fowls were coloured red or green; while meat, and such other solid eatables as could only be boiled or roasted, were gilt all over. The expense of such an entertainment must have been immense; and when we add, that the value of most of the gifts was vastly greater than at present, and that, besides the presents to the bridegroom, Giovanni Galeazzo gave away 150 beautiful horses, and his kinsman, Bernabo, jewels and golden coins to a large amount, the whole sum disbursed on this occasion would appear so enormous as to make one doubt whether a petty sovereign could really afford such ostentatious prodigality. But when we consider that the flourishing state of the commerce of Italy attracted thither all the wealth of Europe, we are no longer surprised at an expenditure which, however great, might at that time have been borne not by a reigning duke of Milan or Florence alone, but even by many citizens of the various Italian republics.

During the repast, an innumerable crowd of jesters, mimes, and trick-players of all sorts, amused the company with their gambols; and such was the noise produced by trumpets, drums, and other martial instruments, by the vociferation of the performers and the applause of the spectators, that no single voice could be heard; and a contemporary historian compares it to the wild roar of a tempestuous sea.

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## SAVINGS-BANKS IN RUSSIA.

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UNTIL the year 1825, no kind of savings-bank existed in Russia. The farmers and peasants, residing for the most part in remote and scattered habitations, were accustomed to keep their little store of money in common earthen-pots buried in the ground, whence it was not unfrequently stolen. It also often happened that, owing to the sudden illness or death of the owner, the place of concealment was unknown to any one; thus the savings were lost, and much family trouble and difficulty arose. In March 1825, a truly patriotic young merchant, Frederick Hagedom, junior, of Libau, in Courland, perceived the advantage of savings-banks in other countries of Europe, and the disadvantages of the system pursued by his poor countrymen. He resolved, therefore, to institute a savings-bank in Libau. The patronage of the governor-general was obtained, and one of the magistrates of the town appointed superintendent: Frederick Hagedom and two other gentlemen were chosen directors. The public of the town soon testified their approbation of the good work, by bringing in their silver rubles and copper kopecks at the appointed hours—namely, from five to seven every Saturday evening, and at two periods of the year daily—from the 1st to the 12th of June and December. The peasants, however, did not display the same alacrity and confidence as indeed was to be expected. Their kind benefactor perceiving this, wrote and circulated a short pamphlet in the Lettish language of the country, explaining the intention, object, and advantages of the new savings-bank. This convinced the ignorant country-people that their old way of keeping their money, even if safe, was not profitable. The pastors of the village churches also took occasion to speak to their people on the subject, being persuaded, like the benevolent founders of the savings-bank, that it was a plan which could not fail to improve the moral and religious character of the peasantry. These exertions did not fail to produce the desired effect.

To accommodate the country-people who came from a distance, it was soon found advisable to open the savings-bank for their attendance daily from twelve to one—the Saturday evenings being reserved for the inhabitants of the town. All classes now became desirous of taking advantage of the savings-bank, and brought in silver rubles and kopecks, instead of keeping them hoarded and useless.

A sum under five rubles receives no interest—is merely saved and kept—which is, however, no slight benefit to the poor peasant. Above that sum, 4 percent, interest is paid. The owner is at liberty to withdraw the principal at will. The tables published in 1845, after twenty years' existence, afford a most satisfactory and interesting result. The increase of members who partake of the benefits has steadily advanced. One-third of the number are inhabitants of

Libau, the remainder are from the country. A very important gain was also perceived to arise from the system: a large portion of the silver rubles and Albert-dollars paid in, had evidently been for many years kept entirely out of circulation, buried in pots in the earth, and consequently in such a condition, that it was often necessary to have the coin carefully cleaned, before it was fit to be sent out into circulation again. Besides the pecuniary advantage, the improvement in the character of the people has been remarkable. The savings-bank has strengthened in a singular degree the love of order, industry, and temperance. How many cheerful hopes and anticipations are connected with savings! It has been ascertained, both in England and France, that since the establishment of savings-banks in those countries, no criminal has ever been found to have been a member of one. How true a benefactor to his country has the young merchant Hagedom proved himself to be! May he live long to direct the savings-bank of his native town of Libau! And, to conclude with the words of the last report of the institution: 'May a gracious Providence continue to prosper this first and oldest institution of the kind in the empire of Russia, and preserve this institution, so highly beneficial to the economical and moral state of the people, in its full prosperity, to future generations!'<sup>[7]</sup>

### FOOTNOTES:

[7] Communicated by a lady, as translated from a pamphlet published in Russia.

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## CALORIC SHIPS.

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The idea of substituting a new and superior motive-power for steam will no doubt strike many minds as extravagant, if not chimerical. We have been so accustomed to regard steam-power as the *ne plus ultra* of attainment in subjecting the modified forces of nature to the service of man, that a discovery which promises to supersede this agency will have to contend with the most formidable preconceptions as well as with gigantic interests. Nevertheless, it may now be predicted with confidence, that we are on the eve of another great revolution, produced by the application of an agent more economical and incalculably safer than steam. A few years hence we shall hear of the 'wonders of caloric' instead of the 'wonders of steam.' To the question: 'How did you cross the Atlantic?' the reply will be: 'By caloric of course!' On Saturday, I visited the manufactory, and had the privilege of inspecting Ericsson's caloric engine of 60 horse-power, while it was in operation. It consists of two pairs of cylinders, the working pistons of which are 72 inches in diameter. Its great peculiarities consist in its very large cylinders and pistons, working with very low pressure, and in the absence of boilers or heaters, there being no other fires employed than those in small grates under the bottoms of the working cylinders. During the eight months that this test-engine has been in operation, not a cent has been expended for repairs or accidents. The leading principle of the caloric engine consists in producing motive-power by the employment of the expansive force of atmospheric air instead of that of steam; the force being produced by compression of the air in one part of the machine, and by its dilatation by the application of heat in another part. This dilatation, however, is not effected by continuous application of combustibles, but by a peculiar process of transfer, by which the caloric is made to operate over and over again—namely, the heat of the air escaping from the working cylinder at each successive stroke of the engine, is transferred to the cold compressed air, entering the same; so that, in fact, a continued application of fuel is only necessary in order to make good the losses of heat occasioned by the unavoidable eradication of the heated parts of the machine. The obvious advantages of this great improvement are the great saving of fuel and labour in the management of the engine, and its perfect safety. A ship carrying the amount of coal that the Atlantic steamers now take for a single trip, could cross and recross the Atlantic twice without taking in coal; and the voyage to China or to California could be easily accomplished by a caloric ship without the necessity of stopping at any port to take in fuel. Anthracite coal being far the best fuel for this new engine, we shall no longer have to purchase bituminous coal in England for return-trips. On the contrary, England will find it advantageous to come to us for our anthracite. A slow radiating fire without flame is what is required, and this is best supplied by our anthracite. The *Ericsson* will be ready for sea by October next, and her owners intend to take passengers at a reduced price, in consequence of the reduced expenses under the new principle.—*Boston Transcript*.

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# VIOLETS:

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## SENT IN A TINY BOX.

LET them lie—ah, let them lie!  
Plucked flowers—dead to-morrow;  
Lift the lid up quietly,  
As you'd lift the mystery  
Of a buried sorrow.

Let them lie—the fragrant things,  
All their souls thus giving;  
Let no breeze's ambient wings  
And no useless water-springs  
Mock them into living.

They have lived—they live no more;  
Nothing can requite them  
For the gentle life they bore,  
And up-yielded in full store  
While it did delight them.

Yet, I ween, flower-corses fair!  
'Twas a joyful yielding,  
Like some soul heroic, rare,  
That leaps bodiless forth in air  
For its loved one's shielding.

Surely, ye were glad to die  
In the hand that slew ye,  
Glad to leave the open sky,  
And the airs that wandered by,  
And the bees that knew ye;

Giving up a small earth-place  
And a day of blooming,  
Here to lie in narrow space,  
Smiling in this smileless face  
With such sweet perfuming.

O ye little violets dead!  
Coffined from all gazes,  
We will also smile, and shed  
Out of heart-flowers withered  
Perfume of sweet praises.

And as ye, for this poor sake,  
Love with life are buying,  
So, I doubt not, ONE will make  
All our gathered flowers to take  
Richer scent through dying.

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## CHINESE LAUNDRY IN CALIFORNIA.

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What a truly industrious people they are! At work, cheerfully and briskly, at ten o'clock at night. Huge piles of linen and under-clothing disposed in baskets about the room, near the different ironers. Those at work dampening and ironing—peculiar processes both. A bowl of water is standing at the ironer's side, as in ordinary laundries, but used very differently. Instead of dipping the fingers in the water, and then snapping them over the clothes, the operator puts his head in the bowl, fills his mouth with water, and then blows so that the water comes from his mouth *in a mist*, resembling the emission of steam from an escape-pipe, at the same time so directing his head that the mist is scattered all over the piece he is about to iron. He then seizes his flat iron. This invention beats the 'Yankees' all to bits. It is a vessel resembling a small, deep, metallic wash-basin, having a highly-polished flat bottom, and a fire continually burning in it. Thus they keep the iron hot, without running to the fire every five minutes and spitting on the iron to ascertain by the 'sizzle' if it be ready to use. This ironing machine has a long handle, and is propelled without danger of burning the fingers by the slipping of the 'ironing rag.'

Ladies who use the ordinary flat irons will appreciate the improvement.  
—*Marysville (California) Herald*.

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