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Title: Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, No. 449

Author: Various

Editor: Robert Chambers

Editor: William Chambers

Release date: June 26, 2007 [eBook #21939]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Malcolm Farmer, Richard J. Shiffer and the  
Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CHAMBERS'S  
EDINBURGH JOURNAL, NO. 449 \*\*\*

# CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

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CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF  
'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S  
EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

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No. 449. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1852. PRICE 1½*d.*

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### THE SULTAN'S BEAR. [1]

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THE sultan being one day rather out of sorts, sent for his Jewish physician, a man very eminent for skill in his profession, and not less distinguished by his love of his own nation and his desperate enmity to the Christians. Finding that his patient had not really much the matter with him, and thinking a little gossip would not only be more agreeable, but more likely to do him good, than

any medicine which could be prescribed, the doctor began to discourse on the very familiar topic of his highness's favourite bear, which was lying at his feet, and whose virtues and abilities he was never tired of extolling.

'You would wonder,' said the sultan, 'not only at the natural sagacity of the creature, and the tact which he shews in a thousand different ways, but at the amount of knowledge he has collected, and the logical correctness with which he uses it. He is really a very knowing beast.' The Jew politely acquiesced in all this and much more; but at length added: 'It is well that such a clever animal is in such good hands. If his extraordinary talents are not developed to the utmost, they are at least not perverted and made a bad use of.'

'I hope not, indeed,' said the sultan. 'But what do you mean by his talents not being developed? or in what way would they be likely to be perverted in bad hands?'

'Pardon me,' said the Jew; 'I have spoken rashly before your sublime highness—such things should not be talked of; but it is natural that, although I know very little about them, I should consider the practice and the purpose bad, when they belong to what I consider a bad people: at the same time, if your sublime highness thinks fit to tolerate them, it is not for your faithful slave to say a word about it. I should be sorry that your sublime highness should not extend to your Christian subjects the same toleration and paternal kindness my own people enjoy.'

'What in the world do you mean?' said the sultan. 'What have the Christians to do with my bear?'

'Nothing at all,' replied the Jew with great earnestness; and he added, with a sigh, 'that is the very thing I am thankful for. It is such a remarkable creature, that there is no saying what might come of it.'

'Come of what?' said the sultan.

'Why,' said the Jew, in a humble and very confidential tone, 'your sublime highness is of course aware, that among the many curious secrets the Christians possess, they have one which enables them to teach bears to read.'

'You don't say so?' exclaimed the sultan. 'How do they contrive it?'

'Ah,' replied the Jew with an internal shudder, 'that is more than I can tell your sublime highness. I don't suppose that half-a-dozen of your subjects, except themselves, are aware of the fact; and few even among the Christians know the secret. I only obtained the little knowledge I have by accidental circumstances, which put me upon the inquiry; and I was a long while before I could feel perfectly certain that they actually did the thing. *How* they did it, and *why*, I have never been able to learn. It is one of their greatest secrets, one of their deepest, and therefore, I suspect, one of their most pernicious mysteries. I do not suppose that any man among them would confess it to save his life—not even the old patriarch, if he were put to the rack.'

'It is very strange,' said the sultan, after a pause.

'It is wonderful,' said the physician with much emphasis.

'What is the harm of it?' exclaimed the sultan abruptly after a pause. 'Why should not bears read as well as men, if they are capable of learning?'

'Most true and most wisely said,' replied the Jew. 'If they were taught to read good books, it would probably mend their manners. But if that were all, why should there be so much mystery about it? why should these people do it so secretly, and deny it so stoutly?' and again he shook his head, and shuddered. But being fully persuaded that he had gained his point, he thought it safest to change the subject; and accordingly he did so as soon as he had emphatically and earnestly entreated the sultan not to say a word of the secret he had been led to impart, or, at all events, not to let it be known that *he* had given any information on the subject.

When the doctor was gone, the sultan fell into a reverie on the advantages and disadvantages of his bear learning to read. When he went to bed, the same train of thought kept him awake; and after a sleepless night, he sent early in the morning for the patriarch. The venerable Mar Yusef lost no time in obeying the summons. Taking his patriarchal staff in his hand, and followed by his two deacons with their heads bare, and their hands crossed on their bosoms, he silently bent his way towards the palace, pondering in his mind on all the various things he could think of as possible causes for his being wanted by the sultan. The sultan dismissed all his attendants; and as soon as he and

the patriarch were alone, he beckoned him to approach, and when the aged ecclesiastic had come quite close, and again bowed, not only out of respect, but instinctively, as one does who expects a whisper, the sultan said in a low, earnest tone: 'You know my bear?'

'I do, please your sublime highness,' replied Mar Yusef; 'and a very fine bear he is.'

'I know that,' answered the sultan; 'but the matter is this,' and he lowered his voice, and increased the earnestness of his tone: 'You must teach him to read.'

'To read!' exclaimed the patriarch, thunderstruck. 'To read! the thing is impossible.'

'Of course, I knew you would say that,' said the sultan; 'you must do it, however, or it will be the worse for you and for all your people.'

'Most willingly would I do that, or anything lawful, to shew my respect for your sublime highness,' said the astonished patriarch; 'but, as I have already had the honour to observe, the thing is impossible.'

'Don't tell me,' said the sultan. 'I know more about the matter than you imagine. There is no use in trying to conceal it. I know upon undoubted authority, that you have taught bears, and many of them, I daresay, of less capacity than mine. I shall send him to you this evening, and if you do not bring him back in six weeks able to read, it will be as I have already told you—at your peril, and to the ruin of all that belong to you. So, now, do not waste time, for I am quite in earnest about it; but go and make preparations to receive him, for he has been used to courteous treatment.'

This speech was accompanied by a wave of the hand, which precluded all reply, and the troubled patriarch silently and slowly withdrew.

'My children,' said the patriarch on his way home, addressing the two young men who were supporting him, 'the sultan has resolved to destroy us, and all the Christians in his dominions. He is seeking occasion against us. He does not make open war upon us; but he secretly commands us to do what is impossible, in order that he may have a pretext for our destruction. He requires that in six weeks we should teach his bear to read!'

'The old brute!' exclaimed the deacon Timothy.

'My father,' said the other deacon, Titus, 'suffer me to speak.'

'Speak, my son,' replied the aged man, in a voice scarcely articulate, while he gently withdrew his hand, and laid it on the deacon's head; 'what wouldst thou say?'

'Under favour, most dear and reverend father,' replied Titus, 'I would say that, whatever the sultan's design may be, you should not be discouraged; and that if you will only do one thing, which I earnestly entreat you to do, I will cheerfully undertake all the rest, and I doubt not that we may get clear through this difficulty.'

'What would you have me do, my son?' said the patriarch.

'Just this,' replied the deacon, 'if I may be permitted to advise: go back to the sultan as quickly as possible, and say that, on consideration, you are sorry that you hesitated—that you will be happy to receive his bear—that you will do your best, and hope to give him satisfaction in the matter.'

'What! my son,' said the patriarch, 'would you have me go to the sultan, and undertake to teach his bear *to read*? You do not know how difficult it is even to teach young children.' But the deacon pleaded so earnestly, that his superior at length consented; and returning to the palace, the patriarch signified to the sultan, that he had thought better of the subject, and was willing to do anything in his power to give his sublime highness satisfaction.

'No doubt you can, if you will,' said the sultan hastily, but not in ill-humour; 'and I expect you to do it—you might as well have agreed to it at once.'

When the patriarch was at home, seated in his armchair, with his deacons standing on each side, and a little recovered from the fatigue of the walk, he turned to Titus, and said: 'Well, my son, and what am I to do now?'

'Nothing, my father,' replied the deacon cheerfully. 'You have done all I asked you to do, and what remains I will readily undertake.'

So he made his bow, and set off to make his arrangements. He chose a little square room up one pair of stairs in the north turret, and parted off about a third of it with strong horizontal bars, six inches apart. The two lowest bars were movable, and the spaces between them left open, to admit air and light, as well as to allow the inmate to go in and be brought out at the pleasure of his keepers; but all above them were boarded over, except that one which was of such a height as would be about even with the bear's head when he should stand on his hind legs. This space was left open along the whole length of the den, so that, in any part of it, he could very conveniently put forth his nose far enough to look about him.

'And now,' said Titus to his comrade Timothy, when he had completed these preparations, 'I must go to seek for a book and a desk; and if they bring the bear before I come back, will you be so good as to see him put in, and also to mind that the other end of the chain, which I have padlocked to the staple in the wall, is fastened to his collar, and is long enough to allow of his lying down comfortably in the straw, and taking a little turn backwards and forwards, if he likes? and don't let them give him anything to eat, and take care not to be out of the way—that is a good fellow.'

'You may depend upon me,' said Timothy; and Titus went off to the church, to see about a lectionary, for the bear to study, though, to say the truth, not entirely, or even principally, with that intention; for he did not mean that his pupil should commence that day, or the next; and he was in no doubt which to choose among many old lectionaries that had been laid aside. There was an immense one, with great brass knobs and corners, out of which he had himself learned to chant long before he could lift it, and indeed, now that he was come to man's estate, it was as much as he could carry. This book he meant to use; but for the present he contented himself with observing from the window the bear coming to school in procession; and when he was satisfied that his pupil was in safe custody, he descended from the church-tower, and went to see after him. When he came to the door of the apartment, he waited a moment to listen to what seemed an interchange of anything but civilities between Timothy and his charge. Titus called out his colleague; and, without going in himself, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

'Won't you go in and look at him?' said Timothy, as they went down the staircase together.

'Time enough,' said Titus; 'he will be better by himself just at present. Had you much trouble in getting him in? How did he behave?'

'Rather restive,' replied Timothy; 'but we managed it among us. Should not he have something to eat?'

'No,' said Titus; 'he has got plenty of water; he will do very well. But now come and help me down with the old lectionary from the upper vestry, for I don't think I can get it down that staircase myself.' Between them the lectionary was safely brought down, and deposited, not in the apartment, which we may now call the school-room, but in the chamber of Titus, on a massy oak desk or lectern, which turned upon its pedestal, and which they brought out from the patriarch's library for the purpose.

It was well that the school-room was rather remote, and had thick walls; for, missing his supper, the bear naturally became not only hungry, but savage, growled in the most ferocious manner, and rampaged about his cage like a fury. But he got nothing by it; and when he had drunk up the water, and exhausted his powers of growling and raging, he went to sleep. In the morning, Titus brought him merely some fresh water and a cake of barley-bread; but in the afternoon, thinking it was now time for his pupil—who was tolerably tame after his unwonted exercise and fasting—to begin his studies, he brought with him the great book he had prepared for his use, and placed it open on the desk, which now stood before the horizontal opening between the bars already described. All the morning had been employed in preparing the desk and the book; and the former was now so contrived that, by means of a screw, the latter could be raised or lowered at pleasure. The book was no sooner placed before the opening, at the distance of a few inches, than the bear, which was on the look-out to see what was going forward, began to snuff and poke, and shewed a most eager desire to reach it. In fact, all along the lines of large letters, which were widely divided by the musical staves, the tutor, well knowing the taste of his pupil, had stuck little figs, dates, raisins, almonds, morsels of cake, comfits, and dried fruits; in short, all such little sweet things as bears so particularly delight in. The book was placed at such a height and distance, that the pupil could only reach the top line; and the eager manner in which he cleared it, gave promise that he would prove an apt scholar in that branch of learning. One page only was thus prepared for him;

for at that period of his education it would have been impossible, without harsher measures than his tutor wished to adopt, to prevent him from cross-readings, which would greatly have blemished his scholarship. Some minor offences, such, for instance, as inordinate efforts to begin upon a second line before he had regularly perused the first, were punished by switching him on the nose, turning the double desk round—in which case it presented him with a mirror, that frightened him dreadfully—or even, in case of perverseness, leaving him to himself, without giving him the substantial honey-cake, which always rewarded a well-said lesson. In a short time the parties began to understand one another, and as Titus had prudently taken care to be known to his pupil only as a benefactor, he soon gained his confidence. The bear who, like all his race, had an ardent love for such dainties, found that he was welcome to eat all he could get, if he did but do it in a decent methodical manner. He soon learned, therefore, to take each line as it came; and, indeed, after a short time, his instructor not only ventured to cover the lines of the two open pages at the same time, but by enlarging the opening in front of his cell, he put it in his pupil's power to go on from one line to another without the book being raised; and after the tutor had for a week or two turned the leaf when necessary, the pupil began to shew that, if it was not done for him, he could do it for himself.

As the time drew on, the patriarch was most anxious to know, but did not venture to ask, how matters were going on. At length he summoned courage, and put the question, somewhat indirectly, to Titus; and although he received no particulars, yet he could not help feeling comforted by the cheerful manner in which his affectionate deacon assured him that everything was going on rightly, and that he need have no fear for the result.

In the meantime, the sultan, though less anxious, was intensely curious to see what would come of the matter, and frequently entered into conversation on the subject with his physician, who was, on somewhat different grounds, still more curious than himself. His sublime highness, however, who could not expect from a Jew much information respecting the secrets and mysteries of the Christians, rather confined the discourse between them to the physiological part of the subject, expressing his wonder—first, that bears should be able to learn to read; and, secondly, that such a capacity was not more frequently cultivated, asking him, withal, whether he had ever himself heard a bear read? The doctor, in parliamentary fashion, blinked the question; observing that as it was done by secret practices, and no doubt for wicked purposes, it was best to say as little as possible about it. His sublime highness was not altogether satisfied, but comforted himself with thinking that time would soon throw light on the matter.

At length the day arrived when the bear's proficiency was to be put to the test. The sultan was seated on a divan in his hall of audience; his ministers and officers of state stood on either side; and behind him knelt his Jewish physician, who assumed that position, because, although he would not have failed, even at the hazard of his life, to be present, yet he had no strict right to be there; and, moreover, he did not particularly wish to be seen in the business. All were in breathless expectation when the Christian procession entered. The patriarch walked first, with his crosier in his hand; next came Titus, the tutor, bowed down under the huge lectionary, which he bore upon his back, secured by leathern straps over his shoulders; then followed Timothy, leading by a chain the carefully-muzzled pupil. This precaution was quite necessary; for, having been kept fasting four-and-twenty hours, the animal was in no good-humour, and would not have been so quietly brought in, if it had not been closely following the favourite book. But, in fact, the only trouble which Timothy had, was to prevent his eager charge from leaping at the volume while it was yet on his tutor's back. The procession was closed by a porter, bearing the desk, who, under the direction of Titus, placed it before the sultan, at such a distance as would conveniently enable the reader to stand between it and his sublime highness, who might thus see the book over his favourite's shoulder. Titus himself, thus relieved of his burden by its transfer to the desk, went round into the reader's place, and opened the ample leaves of the lectionary; while, to the great amusement of the sultan, Timothy was exerting his energies to the utmost to keep back the eager pupil.

'He seems fond of his book, however,' said the sultan; 'that looks well.' And all the circle bowed assent.

At length, having arranged the volume to his satisfaction, Titus received his pupil from the hands of his colleague. The bear stood up manfully to his task; but it need scarcely be said, he was sadly disappointed when he found that, unlike itself, the beloved book contained no sweets; not a morsel, though the often-travelled, much-licked, and still-besmeared lines retained the well-

known scent and savour. He ran his nose over one line after another, all down the first page, then down the second, and then somewhat impatiently turned the leaf.

'Well,' cried the sultan, 'he certainly seems to take a great interest in it himself; and he may understand it perfectly, for aught I know; but I wish he would read aloud. I should like to hear him. Will you be so good as to tell him so?' he added, addressing the patriarch.

The venerable Mar Yusef was puzzled, and, as people often do when they are puzzled, he made a bow, but could think of nothing to say. Titus, however, promptly dropped on his knees between the bear and the sultan; and addressing the latter, he said: 'Your sublime highness will hear him presently; be pleased to give him a little time. Let him not be harshly judged, if he is a little timid and shy. This is his first attempt in public.'

As he said this, the deacon saw the twinkle of the Jew's eye over the sultan's shoulder. It was only for a moment, and nobody but Titus himself knew that he had seen it at all, so intently did he seem to be occupied in comforting and encouraging—perhaps we should say exciting, his pupil. The bear, however, being disappointed line after line, and page after page, and only stimulated and irritated by the scent and the slight taste which he could get by thrusting the tip of his tongue through his muzzle, began to growl most awfully, as he still went on mechanically, line after line, and turned the leaves with increased rapidity and vehemence. This continued for some time, until the pupil was evidently getting into a passion, and the tutor was growing rather nervous, when the sultan shewed a disposition to speak, which Titus most thankfully interpreted as an intimation that the experiment had been carried far enough. He instantly quieted his pupil, not so much by the order which he gave, as by shewing him a honey-cake, which nobody else saw, handed the chain to Timothy, and prepared to listen.

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'As I observed before,' said the sultan, 'he certainly does seem to take a vast interest in it himself; and I daresay he understands it: but as to his elocution, I must say that it seems to me somewhat inarticulate.' The patriarch was puzzled again, and again he bowed, lower than before. The Jew chuckled, and whispered something in the sultan's ear. But Titus was not disconcerted. Falling again on his knees, he exclaimed: 'Pardon me, your sublime highness, we consider him a remarkably good reader, an animal of excellent parts, and a pupil who does us great credit. It is true, as your sublime highness's discrimination has observed, that his enunciation, even to those who know the language, may have some appearance of indistinctness, because he is defective in the vowel-points; but we cannot help it, for all our books are unpointed. In this, which, indeed, we consider a matter of little importance, we do not pretend to compete with the Jews, who teach theirs from pointed books. If your sublime highness ever heard a bear read more articulately than this one, it must have been one of theirs; and if you would have your own perfected in that particular, you must put it into their hands.' The sultan stared at the deacon; and the Jew eyed him over the sultan's shoulder with fierce alarm. But the hands of Titus were folded on his breast, and his head was bowed down on his hands.

'Well,' said the sultan to the patriarch, after a pause, during which it was obvious that some things were passing through his mind, of which he said nothing, 'I thank you for the pains you have taken; and although I cannot say that I quite understand the matter now, yet if I had known six weeks ago as much as I do at present, I would not have troubled you. If you are ever in want of any help or protection, remember, as I shall, that you have obliged me.'

The patriarch bowed. The sultan rose and retired, resolved that his first business should be to come to a full explanation with his doctor; and accordingly, a summons for the Israelite was instantly issued. Very long it seemed to the sultan—although, in fact, it was only half an hour—before the vizier came to report, that the doctor was nowhere to be found.

'Well,' said the sultan, 'I do not much wonder at that. I always thought him a wise man, and he is certainly no fool to get out of the way now. But, at the same time, let strict search be made; and also bring me the chief rabbi.'

In the confusion occasioned by the breaking up of the company, the tutor and his pupil—the latter of whom had naturally dropped into the less ostentatious posture of a quadruped—were forgotten, or at least overlooked, by the crowd of courtiers, who rushed to congratulate Mar Yusef, or laid their heads together, to whisper their surprise or their suspicions. Titus, therefore, having briefly given directions to Timothy to take care that the book was removed, and to see the patriarch home, and make an excuse for his staying behind,

slipped with his amiable charge through a side-door into the garden, where he seated himself on a bench, while his companion stood opposite to him on his hind legs, looking wistfully, he almost thought reproachfully, in his face. In truth, Titus was conscious that he had tried the temper of his pupil, and was afraid to let him loose before company, or, indeed, to let him go into company at all, until he should have brought him into good-humour. He had provided himself with ample means of doing this; and having produced more than one honey-cake, and several other good things, and laid them on the bench beside him, he did not hesitate to unmuzzle his friend, and a merry meal they made together.

If the master was rendered happy by the issue of an experiment which had been matter of such great and long anxiety, the pupil was also raised to a state of the highest possible good-humour, by being at once relieved from restraint and hunger. He looked cheerily about him; seemed as if for the first time he recognised his old haunts; gamboled through the now deserted hall and passages; and, before he had been missed by anybody, found his way, by a short cut, to his own rug in the sultan's apartment.

For a moment, indeed, while occupied in anticipating the explanation which he had resolved to extort from his doctor, the sultan, like his courtiers, had forgotten his favourite; but now the meeting was most cordial on both sides. The sultan seemed determined to make up for his neglect; and the favourite to shew, that neither scholarship, nor the discipline requisite for obtaining it, had diminished his social affections or companionable qualities.

At length the rabbi arrived. He had, indeed, been a little longer than was necessary on the way, because he had found some means of persuading the messenger to let him call on two or three friends as he came along. He did not lose much time by this, however; his only object being to ask them, to what extent they could help him in case the loan should be very large. Satisfied on this point, and preoccupied by the thoughts which had suggested the inquiry, he stood before the sultan. Great, therefore, was his surprise, when his sublime highness, instead of saying a word about money-matters, briefly, but clearly, explained to him the nature of the business in which his service was required.

'Your sublime highness is pleased to jest with your servant,' said the rabbi, as soon as he could command breath enough to utter the words.

'Not at all,' replied the sultan; 'you will find me quite in earnest, I assure you. He reads, and, I am told, reads as well as can be expected *without* the points; now you must teach him to read *with* them.'

The rabbi was utterly confounded. He could only bow down his head, wondering what the sultan could mean, and what he would say next, and whether it would throw any light on what he had said already. So his sublime highness continued, with some asperity: 'Do not think to deceive me. I know all about the matter. You *can* do it, and you had better not hesitate; for I am in no humour to be trifled with. I gave the Christians six weeks, and I'll give you the same. Don't answer, but go, and he shall be sent to you.'

The unhappy rabbi returned home in a state of bewilderment. He sent for some of his friends to consult with, most of whom were as much surprised as he had been, when they learned the nature of the business which had produced the summons. Only one of them, who happened to be a friend of the missing doctor, seemed to know anything about the matter; and he could not throw much light upon it. He could only tell them, for their comfort, that it was a very serious affair, and they must mind what they were about.

It would be only tiresome, if it were possible, to particularise all the suggestions and discussions which ensued. They were still going on when the bear arrived, and was duly installed in an apartment which had been prepared for him, as well as it could be on such short notice; for all agreed, that he must be treated with great care and attention, not only in order to propitiate him, but because it might be dangerous to let him return in worse condition than he came. So neither trouble nor cost was spared to make him comfortable; and very comfortable he was: supplied with every luxury, crammed with dainties, and petted in every conceivable way. But whatever progress he might make in the study of mankind, and in other branches of useful knowledge, it was plain that he was making none in that particular branch of learning for which he had been sent to school. His instructors did not know how to deal with him. He was on easy terms with all about him, would play with anybody, and quarrelled with nobody; but learn he would not. When they held a book before him, he thrust his nose into the cream-bowl; when they spoke of Pathach and Segol, he shut one eye, and munched figs;

and when, 'as a bird each fond endearment tries,' they set up a stave which might have made the very learned the Masorites to dance for joy, in the hope that instinctively, or by mere love of imitation, he might be led to join in the chorus, he only threw himself on his back, and fairly roared them down.

Sensible of all this, and of its probable consequences, the instructors had not been idle in another direction. They had used their utmost endeavours to learn how the pupil had been dealt with by his former tutor. But all their inquiries were fruitless. Titus had kept his secret so effectually, that even Timothy knew little, if anything, more than other people; or, in other words, more than had been transacted before the sultan and his court. But in collecting all such information as could be gleaned, they were indefatigable, and were scrupulously careful to imitate everything which had been done, not knowing what hidden virtue there might be in things apparently trivial. They provided a great book and a desk; and did, and were prepared to do, all that, so far as they could learn, had been done before. And so matters went on, until the time came for them to produce their pupil.

The sultan was led, by various considerations, to think that it would be better to have the examination rather more private than the former one had been; and, accordingly, at the time appointed, the rabbi and his companions were brought into his private apartment. They had no hope that the book and desk—which, however, they had taken care to provide—would be wanted by their pupil; and indeed for some time past their thoughts had been turned from any attempts at instruction, and employed in framing an apology, in doing which they flattered themselves that they had succeeded tolerably well.

The pupil, who had grown corpulent under his late course of treatment, did not at first raise his lazy, half-shut eyes high enough from the ground to see the desk and open book, which were clever imitations, if not quite facsimiles of forms deeply impressed on his memory, and calculated to produce very stimulating recollections. As soon as they caught his eye, he seemed to be seized with sudden passion, dashed at the book, and overthrew the whole concern. Fiercely did he thrust his nose and paws between the leaves, and turn them, and tear them, and trample them. At length, exhausted by his exertions—to say nothing of his having previously had more exercise than usual—he waddled away to his well-known rug, absolutely declined all invitations either to work or play, and lay there watching the company through his half-shut eyes, in a state of stupid repose, which those who had just watched his effervescence did not care to interrupt.

'Well,' said the sultan to the rabbi and his friends, 'you are a strange set of people. When I put my bear into your hands, he read fluently, and *con amore*; and all you had to do, was to perfect his articulation. Instead of that, you bring him back fat, stupid, and savage, and so far from reading better, unable to read at all. It would serve you right, if I were to hang the whole set of you, and confiscate all your goods; but I am a merciful man, and will be content with banishment.'

So an order was immediately issued for banishing the Jews from the dominions of the sultan; and they all made off as fast as they could, not knowing that their own countryman had been at the bottom of all, or having any idea of the explanation which is here laid before the reader.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [1] This is in substance a tradition still current among those Eastern Christians who are 'dwellers in Mesopotamia.'

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## THE ZODIACAL LIGHT.

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THERE is a certain degree of satisfaction to the inquiring mind in knowing that, even in these days of aptness for discovering and explaining everything, there yet remains something to be found out; something to excite speculation and recompense research. Such a subject is the zodiacal light, which, for nearly two centuries past, has at different times occupied the attention of astronomers and other observers of celestial phenomena, though it is only of late years that the theories concerning it have acquired anything like a precise character. Many ingenious hypotheses have been thrown out, which may perhaps be accepted as steps towards a true explanation; and while waiting the result of further inquiry, we shall endeavour to make our readers acquainted with the interesting phenomenon.



The zodiacal light is a peculiar brightness, pyramidal or wedge-like in form, seen at certain periods of the year in the eastern or western sky, before sunrise and after sunset. Its direction is in the line of the zodiac, whence its name—not perpendicular to the horizon, but at a varying angle, being in the spring from 60 to 70 degrees. The base of the wedge, which has a breadth generally of from 10 to 12 degrees, is below, and the sides rise in a line, curving outwards, to the apex, but so vague and diffuse as to be frequently indefinable. In our latitudes, it is best seen at or just after the equinoxes; before sunrise in autumn, and after sunset in spring; and becomes invisible as twilight increases, or if the moon shines; the light even of Venus and Jupiter is sufficient to render its discovery difficult. It is brightest at the base, and grows fainter the further it stretches from the horizon, vanishing entirely at the point. Unpractised observers would be apt to overlook it altogether, and those accustomed to watch the heavens are at times obliged to fix one eye on a dark space of sky, while they search for the light with the other, and discover it only by the contrast. A stratum of black cloud resting on the horizon often affords a means of detection, as the light can then be seen shooting from it with comparative distinctness. The soft, clear atmosphere which usually precedes or follows rain, is very favourable to a view of the light.

The luminous wedge varies in length with the progress of the seasons: sometimes but little more than its point is visible; at others, it is seen extending over a space of 120 degrees. Astronomically speaking, the axis of the zodiacal light is said to lie in the plane of the solar equator, with an angle of more than 7 degrees to the ecliptic, which it consequently intersects, the points of intersection becoming its nodes, and these nodes are the parts through which the earth passes in March and September. The light travels forward along the zodiacal signs from Gemini to Cancer and Leo from August to November, keeping pace with the sun. It grows dim towards the end of November, and fades more and more until January; but while this decrease has been going on in the east, and in the morning, the light has presented itself with increasing brightness in the west, and in the evening, and pursues its course until the end of February at about the same rate of motion. In March, it is slow, and travels through not more than one sign, and fades in April, and is lost in May, to reappear again at the end of summer, and perform the same route.

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Lengthened twilight is not favourable to the appearance of the zodiacal light; it can, therefore, be observed successfully in the temperate latitudes only by patient and long-continued watching. But in tropical regions, the deep azure of the sky, and the brief twilight, give it a distinctness and luminosity never witnessed elsewhere. In Egypt, we are told it is clearly 'visible every night, except when the light of the moon is too great, from January to June;' and in India its appearance is described as that of 'a pyramid of faint aurora-borealis like light' usually preceding the dawn. Humboldt tells us, that he has seen it shine with greater brightness than the Milky Way, from different parts of the coast of South America, and from places on the Andes more than 13,000 feet above the sea-level.

'Those who have dwelt long,' he writes, 'in the zone of palms, must retain a pleasing remembrance of the mild radiance of this phenomenon, which, rising pyramidally, illumines a portion of the unvarying length of the tropical nights.' And once, during a voyage from Lima to Mexico, he saw it in greater magnificence than ever before. 'Long narrow clouds, scattered over the lovely azure of the sky, appeared low down in the horizon, as if in front of a golden curtain, while bright varied tints played from time to time on the higher clouds: it seemed a second sunset. Towards that side of the heavens, the light diffused appeared almost to equal that of the moon in her first quarter.'

The zodiacal light can hardly fail of having been observed by astronomers in the past ages of the world; but the earliest known mention of it occurs in the *Britannia Baconica*, published by Childrey in 1661. The writer says: 'There is another thing which I recommend to the observation of mathematical men—which is, that in February, and for a little before and a little after that month—as I have observed for several years together—about six in the evening, when the twilight hath almost deserted the horizon, you shall see a plainly discernible way of the twilight, striking up towards the Pleiads, and seeming almost to touch them. It is so observed any clear night, but it is best *illæ nocte*. There is no such way to be observed at any other time of the year. But what the cause of it in nature should be, I cannot yet imagine, but leave it to further inquiry.' The further inquiry followed soon afterwards, for Cassini, the eminent French astronomer, having carefully observed the phenomenon from 1683 to 1688, communicated the results to the Académie des Sciences. Some of his views and determinations were well founded; and from them we gather

that the zodiacal light was nearly or quite the same in his day as at present. Others also devoted considerable attention to it, and noticed the variations in brightness in different years, which subsequent observations have verified. Since then, it has been made more or less a subject of investigation by modern astronomers, and has been observed in many parts of the world; the first observations in the southern hemisphere being those made by Professor Smyth at the Cape of Good Hope, from 1843 to 1845. In that latitude, the zodiacal light is best seen in spring evenings, at an angle of 30 degrees, visible long after sunset; its opposite peak is discernible at daybreak, but has scarcely come into view before the rising sun overpowers it. In autumn, the reverse takes place; the best appearance is in the morning.

To understand what is meant by the 'opposite peak,' we are to regard the zodiacal light, of which we see only one end in our latitudes, as a body extending all round the sun in the same form, presenting at a distance the appearance of one of those flat elongated oval nebulae seen in the heavens. Its direction is at right angles to that of the sun's rotation, a straight line drawn from either pole of the great luminary divides it in the centre. From its outline resembling that of a lens in section, it is frequently described as a 'cosmical body of lenticular form.'

From this account of what the zodiacal light appears to be, we proceed to consider what it is. Some inquirers—arguing from the 'nebular theory,' which assumes the formation of the several planets, one after another, from nebulous matter—have supposed the zodiacal light to be a remnant of that matter yet unconcentrated. In this view, it may be a nebula, brightest in the centre, as is the case with most, and fainter towards the margin. According to Humboldt, 'we may with great probability attribute the zodiacal light to the existence of an extremely oblate ring of nebulous matter, revolving freely in space between the orbits of Venus and Mars.' On several occasions he witnessed its fluctuations, night after night, from the plains of South America, shewing itself at times greatly collapsed or condensed, with intermittences of vividness and faintness, in the course of a few minutes, as is observed of the aurora. The light of the stars, of even the fifth or sixth magnitudes, can be seen through it: the same has been remarked of comets; and it is known also that the tails of comets undergo frequent flashings or pulsations, so that the two phenomena may be analogous in character. It is necessary, however, to distinguish the fluctuations from such effects as may be produced by movements in the lower strata of the atmosphere.

Mairan, who wrote in 1731, was of opinion that the zodiacal light consisted of particles thrown off from the sun by its rapid rotation, or a species of atmosphere peculiar to the central orb. Others have supposed the luminosity to be composed of 'revolving planetary particles,' shining by a direct or reflected light. But, according to Professor Olmsted, of Yale College, Massachusetts, it is something which has a motion of its own around the sun, notwithstanding that the general steadiness of its movements had warranted the notion that it was in some way attached to the body of the sun itself. Olmsted's conclusions are drawn from a diligent observation of the light during a period of six years, and are on this account, as well as from his scientific reputation, entitled to respect. He states the light to be, in constitution, colour, and density, similar to that of the tail of a comet, the portion nearest the sun being brightest, and both admitting of stars being seen through them. We may, therefore, infer it to be a nebulous ring surrounding the sun, in the same way that the magnificent rings of Saturn surround that planet. Of such nebulae as this there are from 2000 to 3000 visible in the regions of space, compared with which the dimension of ours is insignificant: at the same distance, and sought for with the same instruments, it would be invisible.

In one point, Professor Olmsted's views are particularly interesting, as, out of one mysterious phenomenon, he endeavours to explain another, and inquires: 'Whether or not the zodiacal light is the origin of the meteoric showers of November and August, and especially those of November?' Many readers know that for some years past great numbers of falling-stars, or showers of meteors, have been observed periodically in November: the fall seen in the United States in 1834—when, as is estimated, more than 240,000 stars fell as thick as snow-flakes, in the space of nine hours—being the most remarkable hitherto known. The explanation is, that the zodiacal light is a nebulous body revolving round the sun, and arrives at its aphelion on the 13th November in that part of the earth's orbit which the earth then reaches, and, coming into contact with our atmosphere, portions of the nebulous matter are detached, and, taking fire as they pass through, appear to us as shooting-stars. This explanation of the phenomenon in question is one not hastily conceived; the reasoning on which it is founded is altogether satisfactory, as well with regard

to the movement of the nebulous matter, as to that of the earth.

Professor Olmsted, in a communication addressed to the 'American Association for the Advancement of Science,' sums up his views as follows:

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'1. The zodiacal light, as we have found, in our inquiry into its nature and constitution, is a *nebulous body*.

'2. It has a revolution round the sun.

'3. It reaches beyond and *lies over the earth's orbit* at the time of the November meteors, and makes but a small angle with the ecliptic.

'4. Like the nebulous body, its periodic time is commensurable with that of the earth, so as to perform a certain whole number of revolutions while the earth performs one, and thus to complete the cycle in one year, at the end of which the zodiacal light and the earth return to the same relative position in space. This necessarily follows from the fact, that at the same season of the year it occupies the same position one year with another, and the same now as when Cassini made his observations nearly 170 years ago.

'5. In the meteoric showers of November, *the meteors are actually seen to come from the extreme portions of the zodiacal light*, or rather a little beyond the visible portions.'

There is much that is suggestive in this summary, and, as we said at the commencement, the subject is one of a nature to stimulate inquiry and research, and to lead to further explanations of cosmical phenomena. M. Mathieson's observations, published in the *Comptes Rendus* of the Académie des Sciences for 1843, shew, that when tested with the thermo-multiplier, the zodiacal light was found to radiate heat as well as light—a fact which, if further verified, will support the evidence in favour of an independent luminous ring.

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## WHO WROTE SHAKSPEARE?

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THUS asks Mrs Kitty in *High Life Below Stairs*, to which his Grace my Lord Duke gravely replies: 'Ben Jonson.' 'O no,' quoth my Lady Bab: 'Shakspeare was written by one Mr Finis, for I saw his name at the end of the book!' and this passes off as an excellent joke, and never fails to elicit the applause of the audience; but still the question remains unanswered: Who wrote Shakspeare? a question, we humbly think, which might be made the theme for as much critical sagacity, pertinacity, and pugnacity, as the almost equally interesting question, who wrote Homer? In the former case, the question is certainly in one respect more simple, for the recognised plays and poems that go by Shakspeare's name are—at least by far the larger portion—unquestionably from one and the same pen; while Homer, poor, dear, awful, august, much-abused shade! has been torn by a pack of German wolves into fragments, which it puzzles the lore and research of Grote and Muir to patch together again. Even Mr Grote seems disposed to admit, that while the *Odyssey* may pass muster as one continuous poem, whatever was the name of the author, the greater *Iliad* must be broken up at least into an *Iliad* and an *Achilleid*, by different rhapsodists; and though Colonel Muir stands stoutly on the other side, the restoration of the unity of Homer may, even with us sober-minded thinkers, take ten times the years it took to capture Troy; while with the German Mystics and Mythists, the controversy may last till they have to open their bewildered and bewildering eyes upon the realities of another world.

So far, therefore, the question is limited, for we are entitled to assume, what no one at this time of day dreams of disputing, that *Hamlet* and his fellows are not only the productions of one mind, but are beyond comparison the greatest productions which man's intellect, not divinely inspired, has yet achieved. The question therefore is—who wrote them? With the exception of Homer, who lived before the time of written history, and Junius, who purposely and successfully shrouded himself in obscurity, there has, perhaps, been no great writer who has not in his life, his letters, or his sayings, more or less identified himself with the productions of his pen. Take Walter Scott, for instance; or Byron, or Addison, or Dryden; or, to go still earlier, take Ben Jonson, or Kit Marlowe, or Geoffrey Chaucer, and each and all of them have external marks by which we could assign the authorship, even if the production had been published anonymously. Try Shakspeare's plays by the same test, and suppose *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, &c., had been successively published after the fashion of Junius, and what critic of any age would ever have ascribed them to William

This may appear uncandid and unfair. It may be said, that Shakspeare lived in a time when letter-writing and letter-preserving were comparatively infrequent, and that we have no right to deprive him of his authorship, any more than we should have had to deprive Dr Johnson of *Rasselas*, if he had not had the good-fortune of a Boswell to record his sayings. So we humbly think it would, had Shakspeare, like Homer, been wholly unknown, and every record of him lost; we should then, as in the case of Homer, have judged exclusively from the internal evidence of the works themselves, and formed a brilliant ideal picture of what the astonishing author must have been in his daily walk, correspondence, and conversation. But, unfortunately, enthusiasm worked up to its pitch, sweeping the clouds for a bird's-eye view of the high pinnacle of human greatness commensurate with the 'local habitation and the name' of such a genius, is at once 'cabined, cribbed, confined,' by the authentic recorded whatabouts, whenabouts, and whereabouts of William Shakspeare, actor, owner, purchaser, and chattels and message devisor whilom of the Globe Theatre, Surrey-side; item of the Blackfriars, Fleet Street; and ultimately of Stratford-on-Avon, '*gent*,' husband of Anne Hathaway, to whom he devises his second-best bed. On the one hand, research has traced his life from the cradle to the grave, and by means of tradition, legal documents, records, and inscriptions, formed a very accurate skeleton biography; while, on the other hand, with the single exception of Ben Jonson, to be noticed hereafter, records and even tradition are silent upon his walk and conversation; and though his signature has been several times disinterred, his whole correspondence, if he ever wrote a letter, has sunk like lead beneath the dark waters of oblivion; indeed, even the single signature as yet discovered unconnected with business documents—namely, the 'Willm<sup>e</sup> Shakspeare' on the volume of Montaigne—is not preceded by any remark whatever, by any sentence that might give a faint echo of *Hamlet*. Now this, to say the least, is singular to the very last degree. The unsurpassed brilliancy of the writer throws not one single spark to make noticeable the quiet uniform mediocrity of the man. Is it more difficult to suppose that Shakspeare was not the author of the poetry ascribed to him, than to account for the fact, that there is nothing in the recorded or traditionary life of Shakspeare which in any way connects the poet with the man? It will not do to use the common hackneyed expression, that Shakspeare had a 'genius so essentially dramatic, that all other writers the world has seen have never approached him in his power of going out of himself.' Even the inspired writers of Scripture have their style and their expressions modified, and adapted to the peculiar idiosyncrasy and accidental position of the respective men; and taking human nature as we find it, we think it much easier to suppose that Shakspeare never once appears personally in his dramas, because his interest in them was not personal, but pecuniary. William Shakspeare, the man, was comparatively well known. He was born in Stratford-on-Avon, of respectable parentage; he married Anne Hathaway; had children; apparently became unsettled; went to London to push his fortune; made a deal of money by theatrical speculations, and by the profits of certain plays, of which he was reputed to be the author; then retired quietly to the country, and was heard of no more, excepting that a few years afterwards old Aubrey states that 'Shakspeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry-meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakspeare died of a fever there contracted.' Brandish not thy dagger, Melpomene, at this profanation! The scandal is not ours, but Aubrey's, Shakspeare's earliest biographer, but who did not write till forty-six years after his death. His name and signature are connected with the buying and selling of land and theatrical shares, and such-like commonplace transactions; and his last will and testament, with which everybody is familiar, is as plain and prosaic as if it had been the production of a pig-headed prerogative lawyer. Now, in all this we see a sensible, sagacious, cautious, persevering man, who certainly was free from the rashness and (excepting the closing scene, if old Aubrey is to be believed) rakish extravagance too often characteristic of genius at any time, and perhaps particularly so of Shakspeare's time. It is apparent that Shakspeare, at least from the time the plays commenced, never had to shift for his living: he had always money to lend and money to spend; and we know also, that many of his contemporaries, men with genius akin to that which produced these plays, were in continued and utter extremity, willing to barter exertion, name, and fame, for the daily dole that gets the daily dinner.

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May not William Shakspeare—the cautious, calculating man, careless of fame, and intent only on money-making—have found, in some furthest garret overlooking the 'silent highway' of the Thames, some pale, wasted student, with a brow as ample and lofty as his own, who had written the *Wars of the Roses*, and who, with eyes of genius gleaming through despair, was about, like Chatterton, to spend his last copper coin upon some cheap and speedy means of death? What was to hinder William Shakspeare from reading,

appreciating, and purchasing these dramas, and thereafter keeping his poet, as Mrs Packwood did? The mere circumstance of his assuming them as his own, may have seemed to be justified by his position as manager, and his regard to the interests of the theatre; as a play by a well-known and respected favourite would be more likely to escape hissing than one by an unknown adventurer; and the practice once commenced must go on; for we cannot suppose that Shakspeare could afford to deny the authorship of *Macbeth*, if he had previously consented to father *Henry VI.*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. This assumption, we are sorry to say, smooths away many of the difficulties that have hitherto baffled the critics. How could Shakspeare, say they, have been able to write at all, while obviously and laboriously employed in the active business of his profession? Where did he acquire that all-comprehensive knowledge of nature, men, and books? How could he paint with such exact fidelity the peculiar scenery pertaining exclusively to the subject in question, when he can be proved never to have left London? What time had he to tread the 'blasted heath,' or describe the aspect of Glamis Castle? How could he accomplish all this? Why, simply, and naturally, and easily—by affording his poet all the requisite leisure, and defraying the expenses of all the requisite tours. And with this view, though it cannot be proved, and is very unlikely, that Shakspeare ever was in Scotland, yet it is most likely that the author of *Macbeth* was; and thus the intelligence, but not the genius, of these wonderful works ceases to be supernatural. Again, not one single manuscript of Shakspeare's plays or poems has ever been discovered; and certainly the search has been as rigorous and continuous as that for the Philosopher's Stone; while even Scott, when owing to the Novels, found it necessary to say that almost all the manuscripts were holograph; nor, if we do not very much mistake, is there among all the records and traditions which have been handed to us, any statement of Shakspeare having been seen writing, or having delivered his manuscript.

Of course, the obvious answer to all this is, that such a transaction, carried on through so many years, and having reference to works which even in that age excited considerable admiration and attention, could not be concealed. We may reply to this, that Shakspeare, who apparently was liked by every one, did not conceal it from his friends, and that they supported him in this pardonable assumption—the members of the theatre for their own sakes, and his other friends for his.

Take, besides, the custom of the age, the helter-skelter way in which dramas were got up, sometimes by half-a-dozen authors at once, of whom one occasionally monopolised the fame; and the unscrupulous manner in which booksellers appropriated any popular name of the day, and affixed it to their publications; and who so popular with all playgoers of the period as the gentle, well-living Shakspeare? And his name would better suit his friends and the then public, than any mere recluse, unknown poet, until his name, like other myths, acquired sanctity by age. Indeed, we fear it is not necessary to go back to Shakspeare's time to find the practice of assumed authorship of purchased plays, without either the reasons or the excuses which apply to Shakspeare. Unfortunately, however, for those who claim Shakspeare for Shakspeare, the secret was not wholly kept. Robert Greene, a well-known contemporary, a writer of reputation, but one who led the skeldering life peculiar to most of his class, addressed, on his death-bed, in 1592, a warning to his co-mates not to trust to the puppets 'that speak from our mouths.' He then goes on in these remarkable words, which we believe every critic thinks were intended for Shakspeare: 'Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his own conceit the only *Shake-scene* in a country.' Again: with this view, the disputed passages—those in which critics have agreed that the genius is found wanting—the meretricious ornaments sometimes crowded in—the occasional bad taste displayed—in short, all the imperfections discernible and disputable in these mighty dramas, are reconcilable with their being the interpolations of Shakspeare himself on his poet's works.

The dedication of the *Venus* and the *Lucrece* to Lord Southampton is, we confess, somewhat against us, for we cannot but think these poems came from the pen that wrote *Romeo*; but, after all, Southampton was so generous a patron, that Shakspeare might be excused in assuming the authorship, in order to make the books (as his poems) a better return for the thousand pounds bestowed. But if Southampton really knew him to be the author of the dramas, how comes it that Raleigh, Spenser, and even Bacon—all with genius so thoroughly kindred to the author of *Hamlet*—have all ignored his acquaintance? Raleigh and Bacon seem not to have known of his existence;

while Spenser, if he alludes to the works, takes care to avoid the name. In short, Heywood, Suckling, Hales, and all the others who are recorded to have spoken of Shakspeare 'with great admiration,' confine themselves to the works, and seem personally to avoid the man—always excepting '*Rare Ben Jonson*;' and we confess, if Ben is to be entirely believed, Shakspeare wrote Shakspeare. But Ben, if unsupported, is somewhat disqualified from being what the Scotch would call a 'famous witness'—he was under the deepest pecuniary obligations to Shakspeare, and was through life, despite the nonsensical tradition of their quarrel, his hearty friend and boon-companion, with 'blind affection,' as he phrases it, as seen above, literally 'unto death,' and therefore bound by the strongest ties to keep his secret, if secret there were. Besides, Ben can be convicted of at least one unqualified fib on the subject. Hear how he describes Droeshout's print of Shakspeare, prefixed to the first folio edition of 1623:

This figure that thou here see'st put,  
It was for gentle Shakspeare cut,  
Wherein the graver had a strife  
With nature to outdo the life.  
Oh! could he have but drawn his wit  
As well in brass, as he hath hit  
His face, &c.

Hear now Nathan Drake: 'The wretched engraving thus undeservedly eulogised;' and Mr Steevens calls it 'Shakspeare's countenance deformed by Droeshout'—like the sign of Sir Roger turned into the Saracen's Head.

We might, did space allow, also allude to the celebrated 'wit-combats at the Mermaid,' where Shakspeare's wit, when recorded, becomes truly un-Shakspearian. Let one example suffice, stated by Capell. 'Ben' and 'Bill' propose a joint epitaph. Ben begins:

'Here lies Ben Jonson,  
Who was once one—'

Shakspeare concludes:

'That, while he lived, was a *slow* thing;  
And now, being dead, is a *no*-thing.'

We doubt if Benedict would have gained Beatrice had he wooed her in this style, and yet its tiny sparkle seems a beam of light contrasted with the dull darkness of the rest. In fine, we maintain we have no more direct evidence to shew that Shakspeare wrote Hamlet's soliloquy, than we have that he wrote the epitaph on John a Coombe, the ballad on Sir Thomas Lucy, or the epitaph to spare his 'bones' on his own tombstone—all of which the commentators are now determined to repudiate.

Assuming, then, that we have proved, to our own extreme dissatisfaction, the probability that Shakspeare kept a poet, we are bound to say that the intercourse between them must have been one of almost unexampled cordiality and kindness; for seldom can we discover anything like hostility in the poet to his employer; but there must have been two little miffs—one of which occurred during the writing of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the other before the publication of the *Twelfth Night*. Shakspeare, it is well known, in very early youth, married a girl a good deal older than himself, and there is at least no evidence to shew that, as usual, he did not repent his choice. Now, we will admit that it was unhandsome in the poet at the beginning of the *Dream* to make Hermia and Lysander discourse upon this delicate subject—

*Hermia*. O cross! too high to be enthralled to low!

*Lysander*. Or else misgraffèd in respect of years.

*Her. (the lady)*. O spite! too old to be engaged to young!

But matters were still worse, when the Duke, in the *Twelfth Night*, exclaims:

'Too old, by Heaven! Let still the woman take  
An elder than herself.'

And again:

'Then let thy love be younger than thyself,  
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;  
For women are as roses, whose fair flower

Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.'

It is, we confess, very difficult to suppose that Shakspeare, with his unquestionable good feeling, could have written this unhandsome insult to his own wife, though it is very easy to imagine his passing it over in a hurried perusal previous to its presentation in the green-room.

One thing at least appears certain, and not disputed—the plays apparently rise, if we may use the expression, as the series goes on; all at once, Shakspeare, with a fortune, leaves London, and the supply ceases. Is this compatible with such a genius thus culminating, on any other supposition than the death of the poet and the survival of the employer?

Well, reader, how like you our hypothesis? We confess we do not like it ourselves; but we humbly think it is at least as plausible as most of what is contained in the many bulky volumes written to connect the man, William Shakspeare, with the poet of *Hamlet*. We repeat, there is nothing recorded in his everyday life that connects the two, except the simple fact of his selling the poems and realising the proceeds, and their being afterwards published with his name attached; and the statements of Ben Jonson, which, however, are quite compatible with his being in the secret. In fact, the only other hypothesis which we think will serve at all, is to suppose that Shakspeare, like Mohammed, instead of going to a garret, went to a cave, and received his *Koran* from Gabriel; but then the mischief is, that Shakspeare is the most readable of authors, and the *Koran*, perhaps the most unreadable trash ever inflicted on a student—at least its translation is; and besides, no angel of them all could ever have shewn such an acquaintance with our (to a celestial) unkindred humanity as these poems display. Perhaps the best and crowning hypothesis is that of Byron about Junius:

That what we Shakspeare call,  
Was really, truly, nobody at all.

Thus, whether Shakspeare were written by nobody or not, it seems pretty well proved that *nobody gave* the plays to Shakspeare; so that, whether by inheritance, *purchase*, or divine afflatus, the man who wrote Shakspeare was —William Shakspeare.

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## A NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAINS OF JAMAICA.

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FOR persons who have never visited the tropics to form an idea of the exceeding beauty of night in these regions, is utterly impossible. The azure depth of the sky, illuminated by numberless stars of wondrous brilliancy, seems, as it were, reflected in the giant foliage of the trees, and on the dewy herbage of the mountainsides, gemmed with the scintillations of innumerable fire-flies; while the gentle night-wind, rustling through the lofty plantain and feathery cocoa-nut, bears upon its breath a world of rich and balmy odours. Perhaps the scene is still more lovely when the pale moon flings down her rays on the chalice of the *Datura arborea*, brimming with nectareous dew—her own most favoured flower, delicate of scent and chaste in beauty. Yet the night of the tropics has many drawbacks: noxious, unsightly creatures then forsake their lair, lithe snakes uncoil their glossy rings, bats flutter in the moonbeams, and croaking frogs disturb the silence of the hour.

In a valley of the St Andrew Mountains, in the island of Jamaica, where we resided for a short time, we beheld in perfection this lovely night, and experienced in an equally great degree its inconveniences. It was indeed a favoured spot, for which nature had done her utmost. Sublime and beautiful were there so exquisitely blended, that to determine the leading characteristic of the scenery was impossible. Mountains, clad to the loftiest summit in perpetual verdure; gigantic trees, rich in blushing fruits; pensile plants, aglow with the choicest flowers; proud-rifted rocks, pale and ghastly, as if cleft by an earthquake; foaming cascades springing madly down the cliffs, leaping through chasms spanned with aquatic creepers, and then dwindling into ever-gurgling streams, that glided through ravines curtained with verdant drapery—such were some of the details of the picture; but how vain the endeavour to describe this redundant beauty! A friend, who enjoyed it with a zest as keen as our own, once remarked: 'It is like nothing in this world but one of Salvator Rosa's pictures framed in a garland of flowers!'

This gorgeous scenery screened from our dwelling the unsightly squalor of a negro village, which lay at a distance of a mile and a half on the other side of an abrupt hill to our rear. It consisted merely of some score of huts, of

miserable aspect, formed of matting, stretched on stakes stuck in the ground; and in other cases, of interwoven bamboos, dabbed with mud, and roofed over with gigantic palm-leaves. Each had its garden in front, of yams, cocos, and sweet potatoes. The negroes of the village were our nearest neighbours, and we visited them occasionally, in the hope of ameliorating their condition by communicating to them such instruction as they were capable of receiving; but their grotesque ideas of liberty, overweening egotism, and marvellous superstition, together with the shortness of our stay in their vicinity, combined to frustrate our object.

The place we occupied had been once a missionary station, and consisted merely of a couple of chambers, a sitting-room, and a veranda that ran round the house, which was built of an inferior species of mahogany, and ceiled and floored with the same. The colour of the wood, together with the fact, that all the former occupants had fallen victims to the climate, gave the house an air of extraordinary gloom; still, this was in some measure dissipated by the multitude of flowers in the garden, of the kinds familiar to us in England, and which, from the equable temperature of the mountain climate, flourished in the open air.

Before the windows flashed a bright parterre, begirt with a thick hedge of salvias, above which the exquisite humming-bird for ever hovered. The hedge was intermingled with the tea-rose, white jasmine, fuchsia, pink cactus, and bignonia; all of which, from the hardihood of their growth, appeared indigenous. Balsams sprung like weeds, and every conceivable variety of convolvulus flaunted in gay bands from the shafts of ever-blossoming limes. Along the veranda, extending from column to column, ran a drapery of nurandias, lobeas, and plumbago; while at the end of the parterre, in close proximity, stretched the grave-yard of the station, studded thick with white stones, recording the names of many a once weary missionary and Christianised negro.

About a month after our arrival at Rosevale—for so was the place called—my husband was compelled by professional duty to be absent for a couple of days. It was the first time I had ever been left alone, having been only recently married, and separated from my family in England. An utter stranger in the island, my nerves were somewhat subdued at the prospect before me; and although determined to endure the loneliness very bravely, still it was not felt the less acutely. There were no Europeans nearer than a distance of five miles; and owing to the peculiar nature of the scenery, its extraordinary stillness, and the unusual aspect of its gigantic vegetation, it was, despite its beauty, invested to a remarkable degree with an air of desolateness and solitude. At five in the morning, my husband set out upon his journey, and at eight a negro came to inquire whether massa was at home. This was an unusual circumstance; but upon hearing that massa left home that morning, he departed, and I thought no more of him. The weary day dragged heavily to a close, and at eight in the evening the same negro returned, and repeated his inquiry by the light of a lamp held by a young lad of his own race in our service. I saw the man's face, and suffering, perhaps, from nervous irritability, fancied I had never seen a countenance more sinister. My pulse throbbed quickly, as the reply was given, that 'Massa wouldn't return till the night of the ensuing day.' Here was an admission! I alone in this wild, outlandish place, attended only by my maid, a semi-German, semi-Irish girl, exceedingly timid, and a couple of negro servants, if possible more cowardly: I felt my heart sink, as after uttering some half-intelligible words, the sable visitor departed. While drinking tea in solitude, musing on the old familiar faces of my former home, never was the croaking of the frog so loud, the curlo's note so shrill, the evening air so gentle. I heard the negro servants without expressing their astonishment that, now as massa was gone, missus wouldn't call in Miss Jane (the maid), and make her 'peak' to her; adding—'Rosevale not good house to lib by himself in—plenty "padres" die dere, plenty doppies (ghosts) come up dere from de grave-yard!' Now my dread was not of the 'doppies,' but I did fear the return of the recent ill-favoured visitor.

Our books had not yet been forwarded from Kingston, so I had not the solace of a favourite author; but on a shelf in the sitting-room lay an odd volume of Missionary Reports, and the third or fourth of Mandeville's English History, which had belonged to the former occupant of the place. These I took from their resting-place, and essayed to read, when, in an instant, a bat dropped from the rafters, and fluttering round and round the lamp, cut short my studies. Formerly, church-service was wont to be celebrated in this same room; and for the purpose of kindling, by means of music, any latent sparks of devotion in the minds of his sable flock, the deceased clergyman, who had resided before us at Rosevale, had imported a seraphine, which he played with skill, and which had never been opened since his death. It stood as he



had last touched it, at one end of the sitting-room; and hoping to overcome my nervousness, I strove against the feelings which had hitherto withheld me from approaching the instrument. I seated myself before it, and began a sacred melody, when, by the imperfect light, it seemed as if the keys were in motion. This I at first attributed to the manner in which the light was thrown, owing to the wheeling flight of some four or five bats that had joined the earliest intruder in his frolics. This idea, however, was speedily dissipated by a great cockroach crawling upon my fingers, and I started up with a shudder, for the instrument was literally covered with these unsightly creatures. I then paced up and down the veranda, flooded with moonlight, till a short time past ten o'clock, when the moon set, and I retired for the night to my chamber, where my uneasiness was speedily overcome by sleep.

At midnight, or probably earlier, I awoke with a start: unusual sounds were on the air; and the sinister visage of the past evening's visitor presented itself to my disturbed imagination. I stilled my heart, and listened. The sounds seemed to come from the negro village. I sprang from my bed, and, approaching the window, unclosed the jalousie, and saw a number of negroes pouring down the mountain-side—some bearing large torches, and all yelling fearfully. On streamed the living mass; closer and closer they approached, till their faces were distinctly visible. They carried with them a hideous burden—a swathed and ghastly corpse, the rigid features of which looked ghastlier still in the lurid glare of the torch-light! This they flung, with frantic gestures, from one to another, receiving it in their arms with a yell and a scream, gibbering in fiendish glee, and dancing and whirling about. Sickening at the horrid sight, I turned away, and closed the jalousie; when, as the procession surrounded the house, my maid rushed into the room, exclaiming: 'O ma'am, what will become of us? they are trying to force the doors—they are coming in!'

For some time they continued seeking an entrance; but the thought of admitting them never once crossed my imagination. At last, one among the number suggested the inutility of any further attempt; and, abandoning their original design, they all marched off to the grave-yard, where they remained till dawn as it seemed in some grand carousal. They then, as I was afterwards told, returned to the dwelling of the deceased, laid him in his coffin, and at six in the morning bore him to his last resting-place. This ceremonial was called 'The Feast of the Dead,' and was celebrated in order to insure a favourable reception for their departed brother from the mouldering occupants of the grave-yard, and to prevent the appearance of his doppie.

The deceased, it seems, had been a carpenter, and in that capacity had worked occasionally at Rosevale, which, a few days previously to our arrival, had been the scene of his last labours. It was thought necessary, therefore, for the repose of his soul, that, prior to interment, his body should be brought into the house to pay a farewell visit.

A fellow-passenger in our voyage to Kingston related to us a similar occurrence. He had been but a short time resident at Montego Bay, and was, with his wife, active in disseminating Christian knowledge among the negroes of the district. One family, more intelligent than the rest, particularly attracted this good lady, who was much interested in their behalf, in return for which, they attached themselves to her most zealously. Their eldest child, a young girl of fourteen years old, was attacked by a malady, which suddenly terminated in death; and Mrs R—— was ignorant of the fact, till one evening, as she was entertaining company, the corpse of the poor girl, dressed in the latest gifts she had bestowed, was borne into the midst of the party, to take leave of the kind benefactress, so beloved by her in life.

The dread in which the appearance of disembodied spirits is held by the negroes is excessive, and the expedients to which they resort to defend themselves from their intrusion are truly absurd. One of these is to drive ten nails into the door in a pentagonal form—a very effectual barrier; for the doppie, on beholding it, can neither advance nor recede, but remains there literally spell-bound till the witching-time of night is past, vainly endeavouring to reckon the number of nails, but unable to get beyond the fifth. Another very excellent preventive, in negro estimation, is old leather—that which has been worn in boots or shoes is considered best. This should be burned with horse-litter, and afterwards rubbed upon the door-posts. 'This,' to quote one of the dusky fraternity, 'make such a bad mell, that it catch him nose; and de berry Jurabie himself would run away from it!' I know not the extent of Satanic endurance, but for a mere mortal to bear with it is impossible, as I once found by experience, when it compelled me to take refuge in the bush.

# PANIC.

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THE *London Gazette*, of the 3d July 1852, announced, in its weekly report of the Bank of England, that the gold coin and bullion in the issue department had reached the sum of L.21,742,110. It had never reached such a sum before. But this is not all. While this vast amount of gold already lies in the vaults of the Bank, nearly every ship from Australia, and steamer from America, brings more of the precious metal.

There are not wanting persons to whom this accession of treasure to the country is a subject of panic. The annuitant dreads a depreciation of the value of gold, equivalent, of course, to a general rise in the price of those commodities which conduce to his comfort; or, in other words, to a diminution of his income. The millionaire sees rivals springing up on all sides from the mountain of gold. Many in every class, who are at ease in their circumstances, and would fain have things remain as they are, look with dislike on a state of things so new, and wish that the 'diggings' in California, and the gold region of Australia, had never been disturbed by spade or pickaxe.

If gold were not our standard of value, no such panic could exist in any mind; but, on the contrary, the abundance of a metal so pre-eminent in beauty and utility must be universally hailed as a boon. Silver is now the legal tender in most countries of Europe, and used to be so in England, till it became too abundant; but where transactions are large, silver is too cumbrous: a man can carry L.500 in gold in his pocket, but L.500 in silver would require a horse.

The reason why these two metals form the money of the most civilised nations, need not be gone into here at any length. 'Their qualities of utility, beauty, and *scarcity*,' says Adam Smith, 'are the original foundation of the high price of those metals, or of the great quantity of other goods for which they can everywhere be exchanged. This value was antecedent to, and independent of, their being employed as coin, and was the quality which fitted them for that employment.'

We have printed the word *scarcity* in italics, because that is the point of alarm. 'If,' say the alarmists, 'gold, which has been in all the world's annals scarce, is to become plentiful, one of the conditions of its fitness for coin is annihilated.' To this we reply: Scarcity is a relative term. Actual scarcity of a commodity may exist, to all practical purposes, in the midst of an abundance of that commodity; because scarcity is occasioned by two very different causes—namely, limited supply and excessive demand.

An amount of gold coin which would be very large for a small community, might be very insignificant for the use of a great and populous nation. In August 1789, the bullion in the Bank of England amounted only to L.8,645,860; but we think that was a larger sum for the Bank to possess, in relation to the population and trade of England at that period, than L.22,000,000 now.

In 1801, the population of Great Britain numbered about from ten to eleven millions; in 1851, nearly twenty millions. Whatever quantity of money, therefore, was necessary for the former period, a very much larger, perhaps a double quantity—supposing an equal degree of prosperity to exist—would be requisite in the latter.

This necessity for a larger amount of coin is obvious when regarded only in relation to the increase of population. If population continues at its present rate of increase, a much larger amount of coin than we possess now, even with our L.22,000,000 of bullion in the Bank, will be required to keep pace with its wants. But this is not the only view of the question. The population of 1851, it must be granted, required a larger amount of coin than that of 1801, or of any former period in our history, supposing each period to possess an equal amount of prosperity. But how stand the facts on this question of prosperity? If it should appear that, while more gold is discovered, more iron, more tin, more copper, more of every other mineral is also found; that more wool and cotton are produced, more corn is grown, more ships built, more houses built, more towns raised, more countries inhabited, and last, not least, that railways begin to intersect every country, old and new, and in combination with steam-ships on the ocean, to facilitate the communication among them all—then it would appear that they required a larger amount in proportion to the population; and that if prosperity continues on the increase, so constantly progressive will be the necessity for more coin, that scarcity will be a term applicable to gold, in all probability, for a long period of time.

The fact is, that the increase of commodities has been, in many instances, far greater than the increase of population. In 1740, the total quantity of iron made in Great Britain was 17,350 tons; in the following hundred years, this quantity increased considerably more than a hundredfold, being estimated at the later period at above 2,000,000 tons. In 1801, the Cornish tin-mines produced 2328 tons of metal; it took only thirty years to double their annual amount. The same is more than true of the copper-mines of Cornwall, which produced in 1801, 5267 tons; and after thirty years, 11,224 tons. In 1828, the quantity of sheep's wool imported from Australia was 1,574,186 lbs.; in 1850, it was 39,018,228 lbs. In 1801, the coals shipped from Newcastle were 1,331,870 tons; in fifty years more than double—namely, 2,977,385 tons. These are only a few examples gleaned from many of a similar description, and to them we will only add the fact, of a kind totally new in the world's annals, that a sum approaching to a moiety of the national debt is now invested in railways in England alone—namely, upwards of L.350,000,000.

By a late police report, it appears that 60,000 houses have been added to the metropolis of England in the last ten years. These would alone form a large city, requiring much gold and silver for money and luxury; and in this question of gold, the requisitions of luxury must not be forgotten; they form an important item, and are commensurate with the necessity for coin.

'When,' said Adam Smith, 'the wealth of any country increases, when the annual produce of its labour becomes gradually greater and greater, a quantity of coin becomes necessary, in order to circulate a greater quantity of commodities; and the people as they can afford it, as they have more commodities to give for it, will naturally purchase a greater and greater quantity of plate. The quantity of their coin will increase from necessity, the quantity of their plate from vanity and ostentation, or from the same reason that the quantity of fine statues, pictures, and of every other luxury and curiosity, is likely to increase among them. But as statuaries and painters are not likely to be worse rewarded in times of wealth and prosperity than in times of poverty and depression, so gold and silver are not likely to be worse paid for.'

It may, indeed, be predicted with tolerable certainty, that the qualities of 'beauty and utility' possessed by gold will be for a long time guarantees for its 'scarcity' whatever be its abundance. Its fine colour and brilliancy are not its only beauties. No metal is so ductile, so malleable, so indestructible by fire or chemical tests. It does not rust, it scarcely tarnishes, and it admits of the most exquisite workmanship. India alone would absorb the results of many years' digging; and when direct steam communication commences between it and Australia, gold will begin to flow into that great country, with its hundred million of people, in one continued stream, to supply their insatiable desire for it. They habitually invest their savings in gold ornaments, which they wear on their persons; and at this day, it is not uncommon to see the wife of a native under-secretary, whose salary and property altogether do not amount to much more than L.300 a year, wearing gold in this manner to the value of L.500. The treasure of this kind possessed by the rich natives is probably extraordinary; and so great is their desire to accumulate it, that it is impossible to keep up a gold-currency in the country: the coin is immediately melted down, and made into ornaments.

But whatever amount of gold is absolutely required at present as a circulating medium, and whatever amount is likely to be absorbed by the requirements of luxury, an amount far greater is likely to be needed to keep pace with the increasing prospects of prosperity in this country. Now that the restrictions on trade are nearly all removed, Britain may become the centre of the world's commerce: situated as she is in a temperate climate, between the Old and the New World, her harbours never closed by ice, there is nothing to limit the extent of her markets, nothing to check the development of her resources, nor the division of her labour. The extraordinary impetus given to emigration by the discovery of the gold-fields, has already begun to create new and great countries; and every emigrant that leaves our shores becomes a source of wealth and strength to the mother-country, which has cast off the fetters that so long restrained its enterprise, and is open to trade with all the world; while the discovery of rich coal-mines in most parts of the globe, favours the communication by steam-power between both hemispheres, and almost from pole to pole; and while we hear of new discoveries that may make the air a motive power instead of steam, and thus render railway transit possible in arid deserts; and while the electric telegraph not only connects us with the continent of Europe, but is about to cross the Atlantic. With all these powers at command, men will not long be confined to the narrow boundaries in which they are at present congregated; and in comparison with future improvements in every branch of industry, the present time may come to be regarded as one

when they were bunglers in industrial art, and mere scratchers of the soil instead of cultivators.

And not the least important among the elements of national prosperity, will be found an abundance of the circulating medium. "'Tis certain,' says Hume, 'that since the discovery of the mines in America, industry has increased in all the nations of Europe, except in the possessors of those mines; and this may justly be ascribed, amongst other reasons, to the increase of gold and silver. Accordingly, we find that in every kingdom into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, everything takes a new face—labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising; the manufacturer more diligent and skilful; and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention.'

The exception of Spain alone is a curious example and warning to nations, as shewing how the best gifts may be abused and converted into a curse instead of a blessing; for, believing the possession of gold and silver to be the only true wealth, they attempted to accumulate these metals by preventing the exportation of them by absurd restrictions; and this policy, added to her bigotry and persecution, has left Spain to this day an example of the results of restriction, powerless and poor, a haunt of the robber and the smuggler.

An abundance of the circulating medium will always be found to be an important element in national prosperity; and so great has been the conviction of this fact, that a whole school of political economists have advocated a paper-currency, in order to escape from the danger of restriction. 'Give us,' say they, 'paper-money, the basis of which shall be, not this scarce, restrictive gold, but the real wealth of the country in commodities of every kind.' It was Sir Robert Peel who explained the danger of these views, by shewing that paper-notes issued against commodities would tend to increase the fluctuations of the prices of those commodities. By the act of 1819, therefore, he established that a pound sterling, or the standard, by reference to which the value of every other commodity is ascertained, and every contract fulfilled, should be itself fixed to be a piece of gold of a certain weight and fineness, and that whatever paper-notes were issued, the holder should be entitled to demand standard coined gold in exchange for them at the Bank, at the rate of L.3, 17s. 10-1/2d. of notes per ounce. Undertaking always to pay in coin when demanded, the Bank was allowed to use its own discretion in the amount of notes it might issue. Such discretion, however, was found to work badly, for the trading community in particular; and therefore, by the act of 1844, the issue of bank-notes was limited to the certain amount of L.14,000,000 against securities; and it was enacted that any further issue must vary with and be equal to the amount of bullion deposited in the coffers of the Bank. The reason why L.14,000,000 in notes against securities was the sum fixed on, was partly that this was the smallest sum that had been known to be in the hands of the public for a very long period; and it is probable that numbers of these notes will never appear again, so many being perpetually lost by fires, shipwrecks, or carelessness. However, it is said, that only the other day a bank-note was presented for payment, bearing the date of 1750.

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'To what end,' it is sometimes argued—'since even the advocates of gold-currency resort to paper-money as more convenient for practical purposes—is the accumulation of treasure in the vaults of the Bank of England? Why, after all the labour of digging it out of the earth in the antipodes, is it buried again here? Why not coin it, and lend it out at interest?' The remark is, of course, not unnatural, but has a ready reply. The gold in the vaults of the Bank of England belongs, not to the Bank, but to the holders of the bank-notes. They prefer notes to gold to carry in their pockets, but these rags of notes have no value in themselves; their sole value is as representatives of a certain portion of gold. People cannot have notes and the gold represented by the notes at the same time: they may have either that they like. If they prefer to have gold spoons, or gold candlesticks, or gold watches, or gold anything else; or if, as traders, they require to make purchases in any parts of the world where their notes would not pass current, or where those from whom they buy do not require any commodity manufactured in this country, then they can have their gold at the Bank any day by presenting their notes. As, moreover, the holder of every bank-note has an equal claim, *pro tanto*, on the bullion in the Bank coffers, the more gold there is in them, the more will his note represent. In short, the act of 1844, above alluded to, established the security of the Bank-of-England-note in a way that seems perfect.

On the whole, therefore, it appears that a condition requisite to national prosperity is in prospect for our country. Individual exceptions there may be in the persons of annuitants, but even here counteracting circumstances are

continually at work. By improvements in machinery, and facility of communication, the cost of production is so much reduced as, in a greater or lesser degree, to balance the rise of price consequent on an abundance of gold, should any such condition of things actually occur; and an abundance of gold would undoubtedly, as we have shewn, be favourable to all these improvements. Already, the cost of production, or small amount of labour with which commodities can be produced, compared with former periods, is an important fact in all questions of income. The quantity of cotton wool, for example, taken for consumption in the United Kingdom in 1814, was 53,777,802 lbs., and in 1849 was 775,469,008 lbs.; but its value, which in 1814 was L.20,033,132, had only increased in 1849 to L.26,771,432: so that fifteen times the quantity at the latter period cost only about a third more money than the much smaller quantity in the former. The price of cotton-yarn was 8s. 9d. per lb. in 1801, and only 2s. 11d. in 1832, owing to improved machinery. Such examples might be multiplied, and would increase in accelerated ratio in times of increased prosperity. Other compensations would not be wanting. If the actual income of an annuitant should be lowered, his taxes would be lightened, his poor-rates perhaps abolished, his sons and daughters able to find openings in every direction. He would not be called on for charity; he might become enterprising and successful like his neighbours. It is scarcely possible that individual adversity should long co-exist with national prosperity.

A period may indeed arrive, discoveries may be in store, which may render a change in the standard of value an absolute necessity. Such a period, however, must be remote, and must be met by wise legislation as it gradually approaches. Meanwhile, we see nothing to stop the development of our resources, nor the increase of our wealth, so long as we use our good gifts and do not abuse them.

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## FRENCH COTTAGE COOKERY.

### CONCLUDING ARTICLE.[2]

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It may be gathered from the two former papers, that I am not in affluent circumstances; the intimation, therefore, that four distant relations, occupying a sufficiently high position in society, intended to dine with me, was received with a feeling the reverse of pleasurable, both by myself and my single servant. The dining-room and its table were so very small, that I never gave even family dinners. Rose had no idea of waiting; and, moreover, to cook and wait at one and the same time, is by no means an easy task for any one. I could not bear the idea of hired waiters and cooks, and the attendant noise, fuss, and expense. What was to be done? I thought over my dinner, but there was no room to place it on my small table, and the apartment would not hold a larger one conveniently. Rose could cook two dishes very well for my solitary self, but how were her unpractised powers equal to sending up a dinner for five persons, two of them men! It never struck me that Madame Miau could help me in this particular dilemma; nevertheless, as I wished to consult her about a sauce, I unconsciously unfolded my cause of annoyance.

'I see no difficulty at all,' said the worthy widow; 'and if you will only let me manage for you, I will answer for its all succeeding *à merveille*; but it must be *à la Française*.'

'But the fish?'

'Oh, your fish shall come first; *soyez tranquille*.'

'Anything you please, then,' answered I, gaining comfort from her easy, confident manner. I resolved to follow her instructions faithfully; for I was persuaded somehow that, whether she managed well or ill, her plan would probably be better than mine, and the result shewed I was right.

In the middle of the table, fresh flowers in a valuable china bowl did duty as an epergne; port and sherry—the only wines I would, or, indeed, could present—stood at each corner; and round the bowl the little dessert, tastefully decorated with leaves, looked well, although consisting only of common dried fruits, preserved ginger, oranges, and cakes. But the plate was bright, the crystal clear, the table-cloth and napkins of the finest damask, and there was abundance of room for sauces, glasses, plates, and all the little things we might happen to require. As the company consisted of my private friends, not inhabitants of our town, Madame Miau herself—attired in a Bolognese cap,

long gold earrings, cross, fluted lace tucker up to her collar bones, and black silk gown—condescended to wait upon and carve for us. She had each dish and its proper accompaniments brought by Rose to the side-table, where all was neatly divided into portions, and handed round, one dish at a time, hot from the fire. We had, first, ox-tail soup; second, fried soles; third, oyster *patés*; fourth, Maintenon cutlets and cauliflower; fifth, roast lamb and potato-ribbons; sixth, pheasant, with both bread-sauce and toast. Tartlets and creams followed, and a cream-cheese finished the repast; then we were left to our dessert and conversation, the latter of which we soon resolved to terminate with our coffee in the drawing-room, where a purer atmosphere awaited us. All went off quietly and comfortably; no noise, no bustle, no asking will you have this or that; everything was brought round without questioning, and conversation was never for an instant interrupted. My fastidious cousin, Jack Falconbridge; his foolish fine-lady sister; her common-place lord; and her 'talented and travelled friend,' Miss Scribbleton, expressed themselves equally pleased, although there was nothing *recherché*, nothing expensive, nothing extraordinary. At the rich Mr Goldscamp's, where they had dined the day before, things were, they all agreed, very far inferior. Five or six inexperienced young footmen jostled against each other, whilst rushing about with sauces and condiments; the table groaned under a gorgeous display of plate, and loads of unnecessary glass and china.

'I was,' said Miss Scribbleton, 'really quite afraid to move, lest I should overturn or break something, and felt like a bull in a china-shop.'

'The cookery,' continued the Honourable John, 'was atrocious; everything half cold, and we rose hungry, to partake of watery coffee and lukewarm tea.'

'Ah!' sighed his sister, 'I was bored to extinction by everything and every person.' And then followed compliments to me upon my little unpretending entertainment, which I felt were sincere, for everything was good of its kind, and I presented nothing that Rose could not cook perfectly under Madame Miau's directions, except the soup and *patés*, which the pastry-cook supplied—all was hot, and all was quiet.

I have forgotten in the above enumeration the crowning dish of all, the Braousa, which drew down applause from the company; the Mayonnaise, in short, which Madame Miau concocted with her own hands. Every one thinks they can make the Mayonnaise sauce, because they find the ingredients given in various treatises upon cookery; but there is a secret, gastronomic reader, a very simple one; and this small secret I shall now unfold, by which, if you try, you will see that oil, vinegar, and egg, end in a very different result than when the usual mode of mixing them is employed. But ere I enlighten you, let me suggest to the Mesdames Jones and Thompsons, who will persist in giving dinners with few servants and small means, that if they adopt the above plan, they will better content their company, to say nothing of saving their money, than by pursuing the accustomed mode of killing off their acquaintance—namely, a huge 'feed' dressed by a common cook, and served by hired waiters, who, scuffling amongst strange plates and glasses, invariably crack many and break some.

*A Mayonnaise.*—Beat the yolk of a large quite freshly-laid egg, adding a little salt, with a teaspoonful of lemon juice: use a flat dish and a silver fork, and beat them thoroughly well together. Then take nearly a pint of the finest Lucca oil, which has been kept well corked from the air, and drop *one* drop. Keep beating the egg all the time, and add another drop—drop by drop at a time: it will take half an hour to do, and must be so thick as to require to be lifted by a spoon. Prepare your cold meat, lobster, chicken without skin, veal, or rabbit. Cut all in neat pieces, and set them round the centre of your dish; then take the very inside hearts of two or three cabbage lettuces, which have been well crisped in cold water, and place them round the meat. Cut two hard-boiled eggs in quarters, and some beet-root in strips, and place them tastefully, contrasting the colours. Now, with a spoon cover all with the sauce, laid on thickly, and upon it an anchovy cut in strips. Finish off with a nasturtium at the top, and also a row all round the outward edge.

Several days having elapsed since I had seen the friend in need, who had proved to me a friend indeed so lately, I went to ascertain whether her unusual exertions of body and mind had not made her ill, but was happy to find her in perfect health, seated at dinner with a very fine gentleman, all curls, compliments, gilt chains, and earrings, whom she introduced as 'Mon neveu Antonio'—the son of her husband's sister, who had married an Italian, and who, like his father, was at once cook and courier. Their dinner consisted of the following *friture*, from M. Antonio's own private recipe-book: Have ready, half-cooked, *1st*, thin slices of calves' liver; *2d*, artichokes cut in half quarters or quarters, according to their size; *3d*, cauliflower—only the *flower*,

divided in small pieces; *4th*, calves' brains, previously soaked in salt, vinegar, and water, for twenty-four hours, cut in little bits: make a light batter, and fry each separately of a golden brown in the right order, having the dish in which they are to be served on a hot hearth. Cover the dish with the liver, then the artichoke, then the brains, and, lastly, the cauliflower, each distributed so as to decrease towards the top, which is covered with a larger sprig of cauliflower.

Madame Miau fried beautifully, and, under her nephew's directions, tried a pretty dish I had never before heard of—namely, the flower of the cucumber-plant, or vegetable mallow—which is usually, and, I believe, incorrectly, called marrow—nipped off with the little fruit attached to it. It was dipped in butter, fried lightly, and served quite hot.

Creams are very good, made according to the following simple, inexpensive recipe, which is just enough to fill twelve small cups or glasses. Take good milk sufficient to fill them, and boil it with two ounces of grated chocolate, and six of white sugar; then beat the yolks of six eggs, to which add slowly the chocolate-milk, turning steadily one way. When quite mixed, pass the whole through a search, fill your cups, and, if you have not a regular *bain-marie*, a flat sauce-pan will do, filled to a proper height, so as not to overtop the creams, and which must continue boiling a quarter of an hour. For a change, instead of the chocolate, boil the milk with a pod of *vanille* broken in pieces, or any other flavour you may fancy.

*Spinach Cream*.—Boil your spinach, and let it thoroughly drain in a cullender; then press it through a hair-sieve with a spoon, as for food. Take the pulp that has been pressed through the sieve, and mix it with cream, or very good milk, and two additional yolks of eggs. Pass the yolks of six eggs through a sieve, add six ounces of white sugar in powder, and two table-spoonfuls of trebly-distilled orange flower-water, and, as before mentioned, place the cups in a *bain-marie* for a quarter of an hour.

I requested the good-natured nephew to dress me a dish of macaroni, which he did as follows, one of his many modes of preparing it: He boiled it till just tender, and no more. The English cook it too much, he said. When drained, he grated a sufficient quantity of both Gruyère and Parmesan cheese, and alternately put upon the dish, first macaroni, and then cheese, finishing with the cheese. Over this he poured strong beef-gravy, in which some tomatoes had been dissolved, and put it a few minutes in the oven, and then a few more before the fire in a Dutch oven; but he preferred a hot hole, and to cover it with a *four de compagne*, or cover upon which you place hot embers. He also assured me the following sauce was better even than the beef-gravy:—

*Tomato Sauce*.—Warm your tomatoes until you can skin them; beat the pulp with finely-grated ham, onion, parsley, thyme, salt, and Lucca oil, all as small as possible; pass through a sieve, and pour over your macaroni. Serve hot.

Tomatoes are good skinned, the seeds taken out, and with a little butter and finely-chopped herbs, beaten into a paste with eggs, and fried in a light batter.

*Fried Asparagus*.—Do not boil it too much, but enough to cut in pieces and pass through a sieve; mix this with grated ham and Parmesan cheese, and with butter make it into a paste of good consistency, which fry in a light batter. Celery is also very nice treated in the same way. As I like butter, as the French do, without any salt at all, I found much difficulty in keeping quite sweet what a farmer obligingly so prepared for me. Without water, it got bad. Made into pats, and kept in water, it lost flavour; but Madame Miau soon put me upon a plan by which it remained for ten days as if new churned. As soon as I received my quantum, I had it well washed in spring-water, for sometimes the milk had not been taken clean out of it; and then it was put down with a spoon in a salad bowl, to which it adhered. Every morning, fresh water, in which was dissolved a little salt, was poured upon it, and the top *curled* off for use with a tea-spoon or a small shell. To the very last, it was sweet and tasteless; and I consider this a very valuable hint, in hot weather especially.

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## FOOTNOTES:

[2] Nos. 388 and 416.

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## AMUSEMENTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

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WE have become so accustomed to the idea of a soul-and-body-ruining intemperance amongst the lower portion of the working-classes, that only some startling details connected with it make any great impression upon us. Yet it is verily a most awful thing to exist in the midst of enlightened, advancing England. There are 1300 beer-shops in the borough of Manchester, besides 200 dram-shops. Thirty-nine per cent. of the beer-shops are annually reported by the police as disorderly. One dram-shop receives 10,000 visits weekly. In those of Deansgate, which are 28 in number, 550 persons, including 235 women and 36 children, were found at one time on a Saturday night. Many of the beer-shops are a haunt of the young of both sexes among the factory people, 'the majority with faces unwashed and hair uncombed, dancing in their wooden clogs to the music of an organ, violin, or seraphine.'

A considerable number of the public-houses of Manchester have music continually going on as an attraction. Twenty-four such houses are open on Sunday evenings. Two of them received 5500 visitors per week last winter. The most innocent of the favourite haunts of the people are casinos, or music-saloons, where multitudes assemble to witness scenic representations, feats of jugglery, tumbling, &c. Twopence is paid for admission, and for this the value is given in refreshments, most frequently consisting of ginger-beer. These places are comparatively innocent, but still are far from being what is required in that respect.<sup>[3]</sup>

It is a tremendous problem—how are we to give *innocent* amusement to the people? Perhaps there is none of our day more momentous. We try the lecture, and win an audience of units out of the thousands whom we seek to benefit. The reading-room, with penny cups of coffee, holds out its modest charms, and does much good, but still leaves the masses as it finds them. Something else is wanted, but it is difficult to say what it should be. Perhaps some clever person will hit upon it by intuition, or some ordinary one by accident, and so solve the problem. Perhaps it will be left to the philosopher to consider the human nature of the case, and divine what should be done. We can imagine him saying something like this: 'Man is a creature that requires novelty, variety, and excitement. He cannot be kept at duty continually; he must have pleasure too. He cannot be always at work on the real; he demands the ideal also. Even in the course of exertions which he relishes as conducing to his material interests, he every now and then requires a change of scene and of occupation. Something to divert the mind from its ordinary series of ideas—something to enable us to lose ourselves in a temporary illusion, were it only a jocular supposition of our being something a good deal worse than we are—something, above all, to stir the hearty laugh, which proves its being good for us by the very help it gives to digestion—is required at frequent intervals—all free from what tends to debase and corrupt. Such is the theory of Amusement; and nothing which does not fulfil that theory will be effective for its ends. Here is a perquisition somewhat more startling than that of Xerxes, putting a prize upon a new pleasure. Happy will be the man who can devise truly available means of supplying this grand want in our Work-World! It is plainly for want of some such device that the public-house thrives, and that human nature is seen in such unlovely forms amongst the lower circles of society.'

It occurs to us, that there can be no social want which society itself is not competent to satisfy. In the variety of the human faculties, there are some which immediately tend to give pleasure and amusement, and certain men possess these in a greater degree than others. The *troubadour*, the *jongleur*, and the *joculator*, are natural productions of all time, in a certain proportion to the bulk of their kind. Accordingly, all through the various grades of society, we find clever people, exhibiting a gift for music, for mirth-making, for narration, and for dramatic effect. In the upper circles, these voluntary and unprofessional powers form the main dependence for the amusement of the evening. In the inferior walks of life, they are comparatively lost for want of a fair field to work in: they only find a vulgar and unworthy outlet in the coarse scenes of the tavern. Suppose we address ourselves to making arrangements by which humble society could be enabled to take advantage of the powers of amusement which lie within itself?

We can pretend to nothing like a scheme, and perhaps so much the better. We can imagine, however, that in certain circumstances, the desideratum could be tolerably well supplied without much outlay or formality. We have coffee and reading rooms already. Say that to such an institution, we add a music and conversation room; this, as a beginning. There, when the newspaper or book had ceased to charm, let a group assemble, and, according as there might be power present, enjoy itself with a tune, a song, a chorus, a recital, an elocutionary reading, a debate on some question, or a scene from a play. Presuming that the house is under the care of an honest, well-meaning



person, there could be little fear of impropriety of any kind as resulting from such amusements. The amateur spirit guarantees plenty of such volunteer effort. Let it simply be understood, as in ordinary society, that each should do his best to promote the hilarity of the evening. If a single room succeeded, let two be tried—one for conversation alone, or for such games as cards and draughts (under strict regulation, to prevent any beyond nominal stakes); while the other served for music, and other entertainments not inferring silence. In the long-run, there might be further additions, allowing rooms for mutual instruction in various arts and accomplishments, sheds and courts for out-of-doors amusements, and so on.

If such establishments were ever to reach a public character, under what regulation should they be placed? We have no suggestion to make; but we embrace and maintain the principle, that the more they were understood to be under the protection of the public opinion of the class for whose benefit they are designed, the better. The patronising puritanism of another class would ruin everything. Let the other classes, if called on to assist, agree to view all that went on with a certain liberality of judgment, remembering that, although there may be some little possibilities of abuse, the whole project is, after all, an alternative from something infinitely worse; and in a fair course, improvement is to be expected. It is one unfortunate necessity of the case, that a very small abuse in a system under a responsible administration, makes a great scandal against the administration itself; the public not reflecting, that that administration may be all the time tending to the repression, not the promotion of such abuses: hence the difficulty of getting responsible administrations in such cases at all. These, however, are difficulties to be struggled with, not given way to.

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### FOOTNOTES:

- [3] The facts here adduced are from a recent contribution of Dr J. W. Hudson to the *Manchester Examiner*.

## CORINNA AT THE CAPITOL.

BY MARIE J. EWEN.

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THERE were footsteps on the Corso in the morning  
twilight gray,  
And gatherings in the Forum ere the rosy blush of day;  
Loud voices round the Capitol, and on the marble  
stair,  
A breathless crowd assembled, as for a triumph there.

The chimes of San Giovanni, how merrily they ring!  
As if to all the city a soul of joy to bring:  
There's noise of many chariots, and sounds of  
trampling feet,  
Of horses with their trappings gay, and minstrels in  
the street.

And the balconies, what mean they with their tapestry  
so fine?  
And why are garlands wreathed around the arch of  
Constantine?  
What mean those banners streaming bright o'er tower  
and glittering dome,  
Ye ladies fair and gentlemen, that throng the streets of  
Rome?

It is a day of triumph, and the brightest of its kind;  
The victory of genius and the mastership of mind;  
Corinna, the pride of Italy, descends the flower-  
wreathed way,  
For at the proud old Capitol she will be crowned to-  
day.

Right nobly prance her snow-white steeds; behold the  
chariot come!  
Room, room for her, the star of all! ye citizens of  
Rome.  
Off with your hats, brave gentlemen! for genius is

divine,  
And never hath she made her home in such a lovely  
shrine.

She comes! the fair Corinna comes! 'mid thunders of  
acclaim,  
That rush unto the lips of all at the murmur of her  
name.  
Scatter sweet roses all around; fling perfumes to the  
air;  
And strew her path with all that breathes of beautiful  
and fair.

Her car hath gained the Capitol—her foot is on the  
stair;  
She stands a form of matchless grace, the queen of  
thousands there.  
Bring forth the wreath that threw afresh a lustre  
round his name,  
Whose genius burned, a vestal fire, with never-dying  
flame.

Whose vision pierced the mantling mists that circle  
round the tomb,  
Where bitter groans resound for aye amid the starless  
gloom;  
Who saw the cities of the blest, and with as fearless  
tread  
Paced through the ebon halls of hell, the mansions of  
the dead.

The crown that might have cast a ray to light lone  
Tasso's gloom,  
But only drooped, a funeral wreath, to wither on his  
tomb;  
Ay, reach it down, that laurel crown, it never hath  
been given  
To one more rich in beauty's grace, and all the gifts of  
Heaven.

Oh, it is grand, a nation's love! a people's benison,  
The homage of ten thousand hearts flung at the feet of  
one;  
The rapturous glow that fires the soul, and thrills  
through every frame,  
At the mention of the worshipped one, the echo of her  
name.

Corinna at the Capitol! Oh, what a spell comes o'er  
me,  
As I view the gorgeous pageantry that passeth now  
before me;  
But I would I knew the meaning of the tears which like  
a stream  
In pearly drops are shining through the rapture of her  
dream.

Though laurel wreaths surround her brow, and glory  
lights her name,  
There is a chamber in her heart can ne'er be filled by  
fame;  
Lonely, amid adoring crowds, she deems, as well she  
may,  
The faithful love of *one* true heart were better worth  
than they.

And when the crowd is parted, and the festival is o'er,  
The many voices silent, and the music heard no more;  
She will think upon the triumph, the splendour that is  
gone,  
As the shadow of a dream, or the echo of a tone!

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## GOING AHEAD.

THE reading of your paper on 'Railway Communication,' has given me great pleasure: your remarks about American railways are very well in the main, but the speed of travel is misstated, as it ranges from forty to fifty miles an hour; unless it be an omnibus railway, like the Haarlem, where they stop for passengers every few hundred yards. The Hudson River Railway, which passes by our mill at Yonkers, almost frightens my brother out of his wits by its speed, and he takes the steam-boat now to avoid it. The trains go very fast, but it is a superb road, and very safe, as the servants of the company, with their flags and lanterns, line the road the whole distance. They have twenty trains a day. The Erie Railway is also finished from New York to Lake Erie; the traffic on this line is immense, freight often lying two weeks before it can be put through. Its income is over three and a half million dollars. We have only one class of passengers, except emigrant trains: the fare generally ranges from a cent and a quarter to two cents a mile—on some of the shorter roads, as high as three or four cents. All the carriages are lined with mahogany and silk plush. The locomotives on our long roads weigh from twenty to forty tons. The fact is, that anything said about our physical development on data collected at any one period, is quite likely to be false or absurd within a twelvemonth. Though in the midst of it, and not one of the excitable kind, I am often astonished at it myself. I have several times mentioned that you would hardly know New York, or find any of your old landmarks; and yet New York would be comparatively a mean city, if you took away what had been built within a year. Steam-ships shew another phase of it: three years ago, we hardly had the shadow of one; now—and I have looked into the matter very carefully—I would not, as a commercial speculation merely, exchange forty of the best of our steam-ships for any other forty in the world: of course I don't refer to war-steamers. Some of the California steam-ships are perfect pictures in model, and put the Collins' Line into the shade. By the way, did you ever notice their passenger-list?—from 300 to 600 at a trip; and one vessel last year took 1125 passengers, paying very nearly half her cost in a single trip. In the summer, they slept about the decks like ants in a hill. A good education, including a college one to those who have the proper capacity, is open to every poor child in this city, free of cost. The immense sums necessary to pay for all this, are voted by the people themselves out of their own pocket.—*Private Letter from New York.*

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