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# CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

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## WHO SHALL RULE THE WAVES?

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A contest of a very remarkable kind is now going on, one which is pregnant with important results in respect to commerce, to naval architecture, to geographical discovery, to colonisation, to the spread of intelligence, to the

improvement of industrial art, and to the balance of political power among nations. The nature of this contest cannot be better made intelligible than by giving the words of a challenge recently put forth: 'The American Navigation Company challenge the ship-builders of Great Britain to a ship-race, with cargo on board, from a port in England to a port in China and back. One ship to be entered by each party, and to be named within a week of the start. The ships to be modelled, commanded, and officered entirely by citizens of the United States and Great Britain respectively; to be entitled to rank "A 1" either at the American offices or at Lloyd's. The stakes to be L.10,000, and satisfactorily secured by both parties; to be paid without regard to accidents, or to any exceptions; the whole amount forfeited by either party not appearing. Judges to be mutually chosen. Reasonable time to be given after notice of acceptance, to build the ships, if required, and also for discharging and loading cargo in China. The challenged party may name the size of the ships—not under 800 nor over 1200 American register tons; the weight and measurement which may be carried each way; and the allowance for short weight or oversize.'

There is a boldness, a straightforwardness, an honesty in this challenge, which cannot be mistaken. It is difficult to be interpreted in any other sense than that the challengers *mean* what they say. Brother Jonathan has fairly thrown down the gauntlet to the Britishers, and it behoves the latter to take it up in a becoming spirit. Our ship-builders, especially on the Dee, the Clyde, the Wear, the Mersey, and the Thames, ought to feel that much is now expected from them; for if once the Yankees obtain a reputation—a European reputation it will then be—for outstripping British ships on the broad seas, our ship-owners will assuredly feel the effects in a commercial sense.

This question of the speed of ships is a very curious one. Empirical rules, rather than scientific principles, have hitherto determined the forms which shall be given to ships. Smith adopts a certain form because Brown's ship sailed well, whereas Jones's differently shaped vessel was a bad sailer; although Smith, Brown, and Jones collectively may be little able to shew *why* one of the vessels should sail better than the other.

If opportunity should occur to the reader to visit a large ship-building establishment, such as those on any one of the five rivers named above, he will see something like the following routine of operation going on:—

There is, first, the 'ship's draughtsman,' whose duties are somewhat analogous to those of the architect of a house, or the engineer of a railway, or the scientific cutter at a fashionable tailor's: he has to shape the materials out of which the structure is to be built up, or at least he has to shew others how it is to be done. When the ship-builder has received an order, we will say, to construct a ship, and has ascertained for what route, and for what purpose, and of what size it is to be, he and his ship's draughtsman 'lay their heads together' to devise such an arrangement of timbers as will meet the requirements of the case. Here it is that a *science* of ship-building would be valuable; the practical rules followed are deductions not so much from general principles as from accumulated facts which are waiting to be systematised; and until this process has been carried further, ship-building will be an *art*, but not a *science*. Well, then; the draughtsman, gathering up all the crumbs of knowledge obtainable from various quarters, puts his wisdom upon paper in the form of drawings and diagrams, to represent not only the dimensions of the vessel, but the sizes and shapes of the principal timbers which are to form it, on the scale, perhaps, of a quarter of an inch to a foot. Then this very responsible personage goes to his 'mould-loft,' on the wide-spreading floor of which he chalks such a labyrinth of lines as bewilder one even to look at. These lines represent the actual sizes and shapes of the different parts of the ship, with curvatures and taperings of singularly varied character. One floor of one room thus contains full-sized contours of all the timbers for the ship.

So far, then, the draughtsman. Next, under his supervision, thin planks of deal are cut to the contours of all these chalk-lines; and these thin pieces, called *moulds*, are intended to guide the sawyers in cutting the timbers for the ship. A large East Indiaman requires more than a hundred mould-pieces, chalked and marked in every direction.

Another skilful personage, called the 'converter,' then makes a tour of the timber-yard, and looks about for all the odd, crooked, crabbed trunks of oak and elm which he can find; well knowing that if the natural curvature of a tree accords somewhat with the required curvature of a ship's timber, the timber will be stronger than if cut from a straight trunk. He has the mould-pieces for a guide, and searches until he has ferreted out all the timbers wanted. Then he sets the sawyers to work, who, with the mould-pieces always at hand,

shape the large trunks to the required form. And here it may be noted as a remarkable fact, that although we live in such a steam-engine and machine-working age, very few engines or machines afford aid in sawing ships' timbers. The truth seems to be, that the curvatures are so numerous and varied, that machine-sawing would scarcely be applicable. Yet attempts are from time to time made to construct such machines. Mr Cochran has invented one; and it is said that at the Earl of Rosse's first soir e as president of the Royal Society, a model of this timber-cutting machine was exhibited; that Prince Albert cut a miniature timber with it; and that he thus began an apprenticeship to the national art of ship-building.

Leaving the supposed visitor to a ship-yard to trace the timbers through all their stages of progress, we will proceed with that which is more directly the object of the present paper—namely, the relation of *speed* to *build*. Some sixteen or eighteen years ago, the British Association rightly conceived that its Mechanical Section would be worthily occupied in an inquiry concerning the forms of ships, and the effect of form on the speed and steadiness. The inquiry was intrusted to Mr Scott Russell and Mr (afterwards Sir John) Robison; and admirably has it been carried out. Mr Scott Russell, especially, has sought to establish something like a *science* of form in ship-building—precisely the thing which would supply a proper basis for the artificers.

It is interesting to see how, year after year, this committee of two persons narrated the result of their unbought and unpaid labours to the Association. In 1838 and 1839, they shewed how a solid moving in the water produced a particular kind of wave; how, at a certain velocity, the solid might ride on the *top* of the wave, without sinking into the hollow; how, if the external form of a vessel bore a certain resemblance to a section of this wave, the ship would encounter less resistance in the water than any other form; and thus originated the *wave principle*—so much talked of in connection with ship-building. A ship built on that principle in that year (1839) was believed to be the fastest ship in Britain. In 1840, the committee stated that they had 'consulted the most eminent ship-builders as to the points upon which they most wanted information, and requested them to point out what were the forms of vessel which they would wish to have tried. More than 100 models of vessels of various sizes, from 30 inches to 25 feet in length, were constructed,' and an immense mass of experiments were made on them. In 1841, they described how they had experimented on vessels of every size, from models of 30 inches in length to vessels of 1300 tons. In the next following year, the committee presented a report of no fewer than 20,000 experiments on models and ships, some of which afforded remarkable confirmation of the efficiency of the wave principle in ship-building. Thus the committee went on, year after year, detailing to the Association the results of their experiments, and pointing out how the ship-builders were by degrees giving practical value to these results.

Now, a country in which a scientific society will spend a thousand pounds on such an inquiry, and in which scientific men will give up days and weeks of their time to it without fee or reward, *ought* not to be beaten on the broad seas by any competitor. It affords an instructive confirmation of the results arrived at by the committee, that when some of our swiftest yachts and clippers came to be carefully examined, it was found that the wave principle had been to a great extent adopted in their form, in cases even where the vessels were built before the labours of the committee had commenced. The *art* had in this case preceded the *science*. And let it not be considered that any absurdity is involved here: farmers manured their fields long before chemists were able to explain the real nature of manuring; and so in other arts, ingenious practical men often discover useful processes before the men of science can give the rationale of those processes.

It may be all very well to assert, that 'Britannia rules the waves,' and that 'Britons never will be slaves,' and so forth; only let us prove the assertions to be *true*, or not assert at all. We must appeal to the 'Shipping Intelligence' which comes to hand from every side, and determine, from actual facts, whether any one country really outsails another.

Among the facts which thus present themselves to notice, is one relating to *clippers*. Who first gave the name of clipper to a ship, or what the name means, we do not know; but a clipper is understood to be a vessel so shaped as to sail faster than other vessels of equal tonnage. It is said that these swift sailers originated in the wants of the salmon shippers, and others at our eastern ports. A bulky, slow-moving ship may suffice for the conveyance to London of the minerals and manufactures of Northumberland and Durham; but salmon and other perishable articles become seriously deteriorated by a long voyage; and hence it is profitable in such case to sacrifice bulk to speed.

Leith, Dundee, and especially Aberdeen, are distinguished for the speed of their vessels above those of the Tyne and the Wear; and the above facts probably explain the cause of the difference. The Aberdeen clipper is narrow, very keen and penetrating in front, gracefully tapering at the stern, and altogether calculated to 'go ahead' through the water in rapid style. As compared with one of the ordinary old-fashioned English coasting brigs of equal tonnage, an Aberdeen clipper will attain nearly double the speed. One of these fine vessels, the *Chrysolite*, in a recent voyage from China, traversed 320 nautical miles (nearly 370 English statute miles) in twenty-four hours: this was a great performance. But it must not be forgotten, that the United States claim to have attained a high ship-speed before England had thought much on the matter; the Baltimore clippers have long been known on the other side of the Atlantic as dashing, rapid, little vessels, mostly either single or double-masted.

It is to the opening of the China trade the present wonderful rivalry may in great part be attributed. So long as European vessels were cooped up stagnantly in Canton river, and allowed to trade only under circumstances of great restriction and annoyance, little was effected except by the tea-drinking denizens of Great Britain; but when, by the treaty of Nankin in 1842, Sir Henry Pottinger obtained the opening of the four ports of Amoy, Foo-tchow-foo, Ning-po, and Shang-hae, and stipulated that foreign vessels should be allowed to share with those of England the liberty of trading at those ports, there was a great impetus given to ship-builders and ship-owners: those who had goods to sell, thus found a new market for them; and those who could perform the voyage most quickly, would have a quicker return for their capital. This, following at an interval of seven or eight years the changes made in the India trade by the East India Company's charter of 1834, brought the Americans and the French and others into the Indian seas in great numbers. Then came the wonders of 1847, in the discovery of Californian gold; and those of 1851, in the similar discoveries in Australia.

Now, these four dates—1834, 1842, 1847, 1851—may be considered as four starting-points, each marked by a renewed conquest of man over the waves, and a strengthened but not hostile rivalry on the seas between nation and nation. So many inducements are now afforded to merchants to transact their dealings rapidly, that the ship-builders are beset on all sides with demands for more speed—more speed; and it is significant to observe that, in almost every recent newspaper account of a ship-launch, we are told how many knots an hour she is expected to attain when fitted. Every ship seems to beat every other ship, in the glowing language employed; but after making a little allowance for local vanity, there is a substratum of correctness which shews strongly how we are advancing in rate of speed.

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It will really now become useful to collect and preserve records of speed at sea, in connection with particular ships of particular build, as a guide to future construction. Mr Henry Wise published a volume about 1840, containing an analysis of one hundred voyages, made by ships belonging to the East India Company, extracted from the ships' logs preserved by the Company. It appears that an average gave 112 days as the duration of a voyage from London to Bombay. Now, within the last few months we have seen that the *Chrysolite*, a small clipper, built at Aberdeen for a Liverpool firm, has made the run from England to China in 104 days; and the *Stornoway*, built at the same place for a London firm, has accomplished the distance in 103 days. Let the reader open his map, and compare the relative distances of Bombay and China from England, and he will then see what a wonderful increase of speed is implied in the above numbers. Three American clippers were sighted during the out and home voyages of the two vessels, and, if newspaper reports tell truly, were distanced by them.

We must not expect that the vast and unprecedented emigration to California and Australia now going on, will be designedly and materially connected with high speed, because most of the emigrants go in roomy ships, at fares as low as are attainable; but goods-traffic, and the higher class of passenger-traffic, are every month coming more and more within the domain of high speed. Let us take two instances which 1852 has afforded, one furnished by England, and one by America—one connected with the Australian trade, and one with the Chinese. The Aberdeen clipper-built barque, *Phœnician*, arrived at Plymouth on February 3, having left Sydney on November 12, and performed the voyage in 83 days! Her previous voyages had varied from 88 to 103 days. The other instance is that of the American clipper, *Witch of the Wave*, a fine vessel of 1400 tons burden, which left Canton on 5th January, and arrived in the Downs on 4th April, a period of 90 days. Her greatest speed is said to have been 338 nautical miles—equivalent to about 389 English miles—in 24 hours.

Thus it is, we find, that in one voyage we beat the Americans—in another, they outstrip us; and there seems at present no reason why either country should fail in making still further advances. The Liverpool and New York packet-trade affords another example of the same principle which we have been considering; gradually these truly noble vessels are acquiring an increased rate of speed. Not only does the general desire for high speed impel their owners to this, but there is a more direct incentive in the increased rivalry of steam-vessels. The American 'liners,' as the sailing-packets on this route are usually called, have had in past years an average of about 36 days outward passage, and 24 days homeward; but they are now shooting ahead unmistakably. The *Racer*, built at New York in 1851, and placed upon the Liverpool station, is a magnificent clipper of 1700 tons register; it made its first voyage from New York to Liverpool in 14 days—a quickness not only exceeding that of its predecessors, but leaving nearly all of them many days in arrear. Even this, however, was shortly afterwards excelled; for another new clipper, the *Washington*, accomplished the distance in a little over 13½ days.

The pleasure-vessels which are so numerous in the south of England, belonging to the several yacht-clubs, are sharing in the modern speed-producing improvements observable in other vessels. Every one has heard of the yacht *America*, which arrived at Cowes from the United States in July 1851, and of the challenge which her owners threw out against English yacht-owners. Every one knows that the *America* beat the yachts which were fitted against her. This victory has led to an immense activity on the part of yacht-builders in England; they are studying all the peculiarities in the build and the trim of the yachts belonging to the different ports and different countries; and we are justified by every analogy in expecting, that good results will spring out of wits thus sharpened.

Although we have not deemed it necessary in the present paper to touch on the national struggle between steam-ships, we must not forget that one of the most promising and valuable features in steam navigation arose as an appendage to sailing. The *auxiliary screw* will deserve the blessings of our colonists, for reasons which may be soon told. When it was yet uncertain what result would mark the contest *Screw v. Paddle*, it was suggested that the screw-propeller might probably be used as an auxiliary power, for occasional use during calms and contrary winds; the vessel to be a sailing-vessel under ordinary circumstances; but to have a marine engine and a screw for exigencies at times when the ship would be brought to a stand-still or even driven backwards. About seven years ago, an American packet-ship, the *Massachusetts*, a complete sailing-vessel in other respects, was provided with a screw and a steam-engine powerful enough to keep the ship moving when winds and tides were adverse; the screw was capable of being lifted out of the water when not in use. In her first voyage from Liverpool to America, this ship gained from five to thirteen days as compared with five other ships which sailed either on the same or the following day. This experiment was deemed so far successful, that the Admiralty ordered, in 1846, an auxiliary screw to be fitted to the *Amphion* frigate, then building at Woolwich. Another example was the *Sarah Sands*, an iron ship of 1300 tons; she had engines of 180 horse-power, much below that requisite for an ordinary steamer of the same size. She could carry three classes of passengers, coal for the whole voyage, and 900 tons of merchandise. She made four voyages in 1847, two out and two home; and in 1848 she made five: her average time was about nineteen days out, and seventeen days home, and she usually passed about six liners on the voyage.

The speed here mentioned is not quite equal to that of the truly remarkable clippers noticed above, but it far exceeded that of any liner at work in 1848. The example was followed in other vessels; and then men began to cherish the vision of a propeller screwing its way through the broad ocean to our distant colonies. From this humble beginning as an auxiliary, the screw has obtained a place of more and more dignity, until at length we see the mails for the Cape and for Australia intrusted confidently to its safe-keeping.

The icy regions of the north are braved by the auxiliary screw. The little *Isabel*, fitted out almost entirely at the expense of Lady Franklin to aid in the search for her gallant husband, is a brigantine of 180 tons, with an auxiliary screw to ship and unship. The *Intrepid* and the *Pioneer*, the two screw-steamers which form part of Sir Edward Belcher's arctic expedition—lately started from England—are to work with or without their auxiliary appendage as circumstances may determine.

The present article, however, will shew that sailing is not less alive and busy than steaming; and that the yachts and clippers of both nations are probably destined to a continuous series of improvements. When these improvements—

whether by aid of scientific societies and laborious experiments, or by the watchful eye and the shrewd intelligence of ship-builders, or by both combined—have advanced steadily to a point perhaps far beyond that which we have yet attained, then, if at all, may we trouble ourselves about the question—'Who shall rule the waves?'

## NUMBER NINETEEN IN OUR STREET.

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Number Nineteen in our street is a gloomy house, with a blistered door and a cavernous step; with a hungry area and a desolate frontage. The windows are like prison-slits, only a trifle darker, and a good deal dirtier; and the kitchen-offices might stand proxies for the Black Hole of Calcutta, barring the company and the warmth. For as to company, black beetles, mice, and red ants, are all that are ever seen of animated nature there, and the thermometer rarely stands above freezing-point. Number Nineteen is a lodging-house, kept by a poor old maid, whose only friend is her cat, and whose only heirs will be the parish. With the outward world, excepting such as slowly filter through the rusty opening of the blistered door, Miss Rebecca Spong has long ceased to have dealings. She hangs a certain piece of cardboard, with 'Lodgings to Let,' printed in school-girl print, unconscious of straight lines, across it; and this act of public notification, coupled with anxious peepings over the blinds of the parlour front, is all the intercourse which she and the world of men hold together. Every now and then, indeed, a mangy cab may be seen driving up to her worn-out step; and dingy individuals, of the kind who travel about with small square boxes, covered with marbled paper, and secured with knotted cords of different sizes, may be witnessed taking possession of Nineteen, in a melancholy and mysterious way. But even these visitations, unsatisfactory as most lodging-house keepers would consider them, are few and far between; for somehow the people who come and go never seem to have any friends or relations whereby Miss Spong may improve her 'connection.' You never see the postman stop at that desolate door; you never hear a visitor's knock on that rusty lion's head; no unnecessary traffic of social life ever takes place behind those dusty blinds; it might be the home of a select party of Trappists, or the favourite hiding-place of coiners, for all the sunshine of external humanity that is suffered to enter those interior recesses. If a murder had been committed in every room, from the attics to the cellar, a heavier spell of solitude and desolation could not rest on its floors.

One dreary afternoon in November, a cab stopped at Number Nineteen. It was a railway cab, less worn and ghastly than those vehicles in general, but not bringing much evidence of gaiety or wealth for all that. Its inmates were a widow and a boy of about fifteen; and all the possessions they had with them were contained in one trunk of very moderate dimensions, a cage with a canary bird twittering inside, some pots of flowers, and a little white rabbit, one of the comical 'lop-eared' kind. There was something very touching in these evidences of the fresh country life which they had left for the dull atmosphere and steaming fogs of the metropolis. They told a sad tale of old associations broken, and old loves forsworn; of days of comfort and prosperity exchanged for the dreariness of poverty; and freedom, love, and happiness, all snapped asunder for the leaden chain of suffering to be forged instead. One could not help thinking of all those two hapless people must have gone through before they could have summoned courage to leave their own dear village, where they had lived so many years in that local honourableness of the clergyman's family; throwing themselves out of the society which knew and loved them, that they might enter a harsh world, where they must make their own position, and earn their own living, unaided by sympathy, honour, or affection. They looked as if they themselves thought something of this too, when they took possession of the desolate second floor; and the widow sat down near her son, and taking his hand in hers, gave vent to a flood of tears, which ended by unmaning the boy as well. And then they shut up the window carefully, and nothing more was seen of them that night.

Mrs Lawson, the widow, was a mild, lady-like person, whose face bore the marks of recent affliction, and whose whole appearance and manners were those of a loving, gentle, unenergetic, and helpless woman, whom sorrow could well crush beyond all power of resistance. The boy was a tall, thin youth, with a hectic flush and a hollow cough, eyes bright and restless, and as manifestly nervous as his mother was the reverse in temperament—anxious and restless, and continually taxing his strength beyond its power, making himself seriously ill in his endeavours to save his beloved mother some small trouble. They seemed to be very tenderly attached one to the other, and to

supply to each all that was wanting in each: the mother's gentleness soothing down her boy's excitability, and the boy's nervousness rousing the mother to exertion. They were interesting people—so lonely, apparently so unfit to 'rough it' in the world; the mother so gentle in temper, and the son so frail in constitution—two people who ought to have been protected from all ill and all cares, yet who had such a bitter cup to empty, such a harsh fate to fulfil.

They were very poor. The mother used to go out with a small basket on her arm, which could hold but scanty supplies for two full-grown people. Yet this was the only store they had; for no baker, no butcher, no milkman, grocer, or poulterer, ever stopped at the area gate of Miss Rebecca Spong; no purveyor of higher grade than a cat's-meat-man was ever seen to hand provisions into the depths of Number Nineteen's darkness. The old maid herself was poor; and she, too, used to do her marketing on the basket principle; carrying home, generally at night, odd scraps from the open stalls in Tottenham Court-Road, which she had picked up as bargains; and dividing equally between herself and her fagged servant-of-all-work the wretched meal which would not have been too ample for one. She therefore could not help her lodgers, and they all scrambled on over the desolate places of poverty as they best might. In general, tea, sugar, bread, a little rice, a little coffee as a change, a scrap of butter which no cow that ever yielded milk would have acknowledged—these were the usual items of Mrs Lawson's marketing, on which she and her young son were to be nourished. And on such poor fare as this was that pale boy expected to become a hearty man? The mother could not, did not expect it. Else why were the tears in her eyes so often as she returned? and why did she hang over her son, and caress him fondly, as if in deprecation, when she brought him his wretched meal, seeming to lament, to blame herself, too, that she had not been able to provide him anything better? Poor things! poor things!

Mrs Lawson seemed at last to get some employment. She had been seeking for it long—to judge by her frequent absences from home, and the weary look of disappointment she wore when she returned. But at last the opening was found, and she set to work in earnest. She used to go out early in the morning, and not return until late in the evening, and then she looked pale and tired, as one whose energies had been overtaken all the day; but she had found no gold-mine. The scanty meals were even scantier than before, and her shabby mourning was getting shabbier and duller. She was evidently hard-worked for very little pay; and their condition was not improved, only sustained by her exertions. Things seemed to be very bad with them altogether, and with little hope of amendment; for poor Mrs Lawson had been 'brought up as a lady,' and so was doubly incapable—by education as well as by temperament—of gaining her own living. She was now employed as daily governess in the family of a city tradesman—people, who though they were kindly-natured enough, had as much as they could do in keeping their own fortunes afloat without giving any substantial aid to others, and who had therefore engaged her at the lowest possible salary, such as was barely sufficient to keep her and her son from absolute want.

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The boy had long been very busy. He used to sit by the window all the day, earnestly employed with paper and scissors; and I wondered what fascinating occupation he had found to chain him for so many hours by those chinks and draughts; for he was usually enveloped in shawls, and blankets were hung about his chair, and every tender precaution taken that he should not increase his sickness by exposure even to the ordinary changes in the temperature of a dwelling-room. But now, in spite of his terrible cough, in spite of his hurried breathing, he used to sit for hours on hours by the dusky window, cutting and cutting at that eternal paper, as if his very life depended on his task. But he used to gather up the cuttings carefully, and hide all out of sight before his mother came home—sometimes nearly caught before quite prepared, when he used to shew as much trepidation as if committing a crime.

This went on for some time, and at last he went out. It was fortunately a fine day—a clear, cold, January day; but he had no sooner breathed the brisk frosty air than a terrible fit of coughing seemed to threaten his frail existence. He did not turn back though; and I watched him slowly pass down the street, holding on by the rails, and every now and then stopping to take breath. I saw a policeman speak to him in a grave, compassionating way, as if—seeing that he was so young and feeble, and so much a stranger that he was asking his way to Oxford Street, while going in a totally contrary direction—he was advising him to go home, and to let some one else do his business—his father perhaps; but the boy only smiled, and shook his head in a hopeful way; and so he went from my sight, though not from my thoughts.

This continued daily, sometimes Herbert bringing home a small quantity of

money, sometimes only disappointment; and these were terrible trials! At last, the mother was made acquainted with her son's new mode of life, by the treasured 5s. which the poor boy thrust into her hand one evening, with a strange shy pride that brought all the blood into his face, while he kissed her with impetuosity to smother her reproaches. She asked him how he had got so much money—so much! and then he told her how, self-taught, he had learned to cut out figures—dogs and landscapes—in coloured paper, which he had taken to the bazaars and stationers' shops, and there disposed of—for a mere trifle truly. 'For this kind of thing is not fashionable, mother, though I think the Queen likes them,' he said; 'and of course, if not fashionable, I could not get very much for them.' So he contented himself, and consoled her, for the small payment of sixpence or a shilling, which perhaps was all he could earn by three or four days' work.

The mother gently blamed him for his imprudence in exposing himself as he had done to the wet and cold—and, alas! these had told sadly on his weakened frame; but Herbert was so happy to-night, that she could not damp his pleasure, even for maternal love; so she reserved the lecture which *must* be given until to-morrow. And then his out-door expeditions were peremptorily forbidden; and Miss Spong was called up to strengthen the prohibition—which she did effectually by offering, in her little, quick, nervous way, to take Herbert's cuttings to the shops herself, and thus to spare him the necessity of doing so. Poor Mrs Lawson went up to the little woman, and kissed her cheek like a sister, as she spoke; while Miss Spong, so utterly unused as she had been for years to the smallest demonstration of affection, looked at first bewildered and aghast, and finally sank down on the chair in a childish fit of crying. I cannot say how much the sight of that poor little old maid's tears affected me! They seemed to speak of such long years of heart-loneliness—such loving impulses strangled by the chill hand of solitude—such weary familiarity with that deadness of life wherein no sympathy is bestowed, no love awakened—that I felt as one witnessing a dead man recalled to life, after all that made life pleasant had fled. What a sorrowful house that Number Nineteen was! From the desolate servant-of-all-work at her first place from the Foundling, to the half-starved German in the attics, every inmate of the house seemed to have nothing but the bitter bread of affliction to eat—nothing but the salt waters of despair to drink.

And now began another epoch in the Lawson history, which shed a sad but most beautiful light over the fading day of that young life.

A girl of about fourteen—she might have been a year or so younger—was once sent from one of the stationer's shops to conclude some bargain with the sick paper-cutter. I saw her slender figure bound up the desolate steps with the light tread of youth, as if she had been a divine being entering the home of human sorrow. She was one of those saintly children who are sometimes seen blooming like white roses, unstained by time or by contact. Her hair hung down her neck in long, loose curls, among which the sunlight seemed to have fairly lost itself, they were so golden bright; her eyes were large, and of that deep, dark gray which is so much more beautiful, because so much more intellectual, than any other colour eyes can take; her lips were fresh and youthful; and her figure had all that girlish grace of fourteen which combines the unconscious innocence of the child with the exquisite modesty of the maiden. She soon became the daily visitor of the Lawsons—pupil to Herbert.

The paper-cutting was not wholly laid aside though; in the early morning, and in the evening, and often late into the night, the thin, wan fingers were busy about their task; but the middle of the day was snatched like an hour of sleep in the midst of pain—garnered up like a fountain of sweet waters in the wilderness; for then it was that little Jessie came for her Latin lesson, which she used to learn so well, and take such pleasure in, and be doubly diligent about, because poor Herbert Lawson was ill, and vexation would do him harm. Does it seem strange that a stationer's daughter should be so lovely, and should learn Latin? And there those two children used to sit for three dear hours of the day; she, leaning over her book, her sweet young face bent on her task with a look of earnest intellectuality in it, that made her like some sainted maid of olden time; and he watching her every movement, and listening to every syllable, with a rapt interest such as only very early youth can feel. How happy he used to look! How his face would lighten up, as if an angel's wing had swept over it, when the two gentle taps at the door heralded young Jessie! How his boyish reverence, mixed with boyish care, gave his wasted features an expression almost unearthly, as he hung over her so protectingly, so tenderly, so adoringly! It was so different from a man's love! There was something so exquisitely pure and spiritual in it—something so reverential and so chivalrous—it would have been almost a sin to have had that love grow out into a man's strong passion! The flowers she brought him—



and seldom did a day pass without a fresh supply of violets, and, when the weather was warmer, of primroses and cowslips, from her gentle hand—all these were cherished more than gold would have been cherished; the books she lent him were never from his side; if she touched one of the paltry ornaments on the chimney-piece, that ornament was transferred to his own private table; and the chair she used was always kept apart, and sacred to her return.

It was very beautiful to watch all these manifestations: for I did watch them, first from my own window, then in the house, in the midst of the lonely family, comforting when I could not aid, and sharing in the griefs I could not lessen. Under the new influence, the boy gained such loveliness and spiritualism, that his face had an angelic character, which, though it made young Jessie feel a strange kind of loving awe for the sick boy, betokened to me, and to his mother, that his end was not far off.

He was now too weak to sit up, excepting for a small part of the day; and I feared that he would soon become too weak to teach, even in his gentle way, and with such a gentle pupil. But the Latin exercises still held their place; the books lying on the sofa instead of on the table, and Jessie sitting by him on a stool, where he could overlook her as she read: this was all the change; unless, indeed, that Jessie read aloud more than formerly, and not always out of a Latin book. Sometimes it was poetry, and sometimes it was the Bible that she read to him; and then he used to stop her, and pour forth such eloquent, such rapturous remarks on what he heard, that Jessie used to sit and watch him like a young angel holding converse with a spirit. She was beginning to love him very deeply in her innocent, girlish, unconscious way; and I used to see her bounding step grow sad and heavy as, day by day, her brother-like tutor seemed to be sinking from earth so fast.

Thus passed the winter, poor Mrs Lawson toiling painfully at her task, and Herbert falling into death in his; but with such happiness in his heart as made his sufferings divine delights, and his weakness, the holy strength of heaven.

He could do but little at his paper-cutting now, but still he persevered; and his toil was well repaid, too, when he gave his mother the scanty payment which he received at the end of the week, and felt that he had done his best—that he had helped her forward—that he was no longer an idler supported by her sorrow—but that he had braced the burden of labour on to his own shoulders also, weak as they were, and had taken his place, though dying, among the manful workers of the world. Jessie brought a small weekly contribution also, neatly sealed up in fair white paper; and of these crumpled scraps Herbert used to cut angels and cherubs' heads, which he would sit and look at for hours together; and then he would pray as if in a trance—so earnest and heartfelt was it—while tears of love, not grief, would stream down his face, as his lips moved in blessings on that young maiden child.

It came at last. He had fought against it long and bravely; but death is a hard adversary, and cannot be withstood, even by the strongest. It came, stealing over him like an evening cloud over a star—leaving him still beautiful, while blotting out his light—softening and purifying, while slowly obliterating his place. Day by day, his weakness increased; day by day, his pale hands grew paler, and his hollow cheek more wan. But the love in his boy's heart hung about his sick-bed as flowers that have an eternal fragrance from their birth.

Jessie was ever a daily visitor, though no longer now a scholar; and her presence had all the effect of religion on the boy—he was so calm, and still, and holy, while she was there. When she was gone, he was sometimes restless, though never peevish; but he would get nervous, and unable to fix his mind on anything, his sick head turning incessantly to the window, as if vainly watching for a shadowy hope, and his thin fingers plucking ceaselessly at his bed-clothes, in restless, weary, unsoothed sorrow. While she sat by him, her voice sounding like low music in his ears, and her hands wandering about him in a thousand offices of gentle comforting, he was like a child sinking softly to sleep—a soul striving upward to its home, beckoned on by the hands of the holier sister before it.

And thus he died—in the bright spring-time of the year, in the bright spring-time of his life. Love had been the cradle-song of his infancy, love was the requiem of his youth. His was no romantic fable, no heroic epic; adventures, passions, fame, made up none of its incidents; it was simply the history of a boy's manful struggling against fate—of the quiet heroism of endurance, compensated by inward satisfaction, if not by actual happiness.

True, his career was in the low-lying paths of humanity; but it was none the less beautiful and pure, for it is not deeds, it is their spirit, which makes men

noble, or leaves them stained. Had Herbert Lawson been a warrior, statesman, hero, philosopher, he would have shewn no other nature than that which gladdened the heart of his widowed mother, and proved a life's instruction to Jessie Hamilton, in his small deeds of love and untaught words of faith in the solitude of that lodging-house. Brave, pure, noble then, his sphere only would have been enlarged, and with his sphere the weight and power of his character; but the spirit would have been the same, and in the dying child it was as beautiful as it would have been in the renowned philosopher.

We have given this simple story—simple in all its bearings—as an instance of how much real heroism is daily enacted, how much true morality daily cherished, under the most unfavourable conditions. A widow and her young son cast on the world without sufficient means of living—a brave boy battling against poverty and sickness combined, and doing his small endeavour with manful constancy—a dying youth, whose whole soul is penetrated with love, as with a divine song: all these are elements of true human interest, and these are circumstances to be found in every street of a crowded city. And to such as these is the divine mission of brotherly charity required; for though poverty may not be relieved by reason of our inability, suffering may always be lightened by our sympathy. It takes but a word of love, a glance of pity, a gentle kiss of affection—it takes but an hour of our day, a prayer at night, and we may walk through the sick world and the sorrowful as angels dropping balm and comfort on the wounded. The cup of such human love as this poured freely out will prove in truth 'twice blessed,' returning back to our own hearts the peace we have shed on others. Alas! alas! how thick the harvest and how few the reapers!

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## VISIT TO A SPOT CONNECTED WITH THE BIOGRAPHY OF BURNS.

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Having occasion to spend a few days of the beautiful July of the present year in the lower part of Nithsdale, I felt tempted to bestow a forenoon upon an effort to discover and examine a particular spot in the district connected with the history of the poet Burns, but respecting which a doubt has till lately existed. The subject was the more excitingly placed before me, by my seeing every morning, from my bedroom windows, the smiling farmstead of Ellisland, which the poet built, and where he spent more than four years of his life. Daily beholding his simple home, and the fields he had tilled, I felt a revived interest in his sad history and everything associated with it.

All the readers of Burns are of course acquainted with his extravagant Bacchanalian lyric, beginning—

O Willie brewed a peck o' maut,  
And Rab and Allan cam to prie;  
Three blither hearts that lee-lang night  
Ye wadna find in Christendie.

[pg 119]

It was well known that the affair described was a real one—that the Willie who gave the entertainment was Mr William Nicol, a master in the High School of Edinburgh—Rab, the poet himself—and Allan, a certain Mr Masterton, likewise of the Edinburgh High School: three merry-hearted men, of remarkable talents and many other good properties, but who, unfortunately, were all of them too liable to the seductions of the 'barley-bree.' That such was the scene, and such the actors, we had learned from Burns himself, who thus annotated the song in a musical collection: 'This air is Masterton's; the song mine. The occasion of it was this: Mr William Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan—who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton—and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting, that Mr Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business.' That is to say, Burns undertook to compose a song descriptive of the merry encounter, while Mr Masterton, who was an amateur musician, should compose an appropriate air. So far there seems to be little obscurity about the matter. The locality pointed out is the well-known spa village of Moffat, situated among the hills of Annandale, about twenty miles from Ellisland. Nicol had had a lodging there, in which to enjoy his few weeks of autumn vacation; Burns and Masterton—the one from Ellisland, the other from Dalswinton—had journeyed thither in company; and there, probably in some small cottage room, had the strength of the peck o' maut been tried. Most likely, as Moffat is so far on the way from Dalswinton to Edinburgh, Mr

Masterton would part with his two friends next day, and proceed on his way to the city, while Burns returned to his farm, lone-meditating on the song in which he was to make the frolic immortal.

With so explicit a statement from the poet, we never should have had occasion to feel any doubt about the circumstances referred to in 'Willie brewed a peck o' maut,' had not Dr Currie, the editor of the posthumous collection of Burns's works, inserted therein a note, stating that the merry-meeting 'took place at Laggan, a farm purchased by Mr Nicol in Nithsdale, on the recommendation of Burns.' Currie, proceeding upon the undoubted fact of Nicol having purchased such a farm, seems to have imagined that the meeting was what is called in Scotland a *house-heating*, or entertainment given to celebrate the entering upon a new domestic establishment, Laggan itself being of course the scene. To add to the perplexity thus created, Dr Currie's assumptions were taken up by a subsequent editor, who ought to have known better—the late Allan Cunningham. He gives the whole affair with daring circumstantiality. The song, he says, 'was composed to commemorate the *house-heating*—as entering upon possession of a new house is called in Scotland. William Nicol made the brewst strong and nappy; and Allan Masterton, then on a visit at Dalswinton, crossed the Nith, and, with the poet and his celebrated punch-bowl, reached Laggan "a wee before the sun gaed down." The sun, however, rose on their carousal, if the tradition of the land may be trusted.' Thus, as Laggan is on the right bank of the Nith, while Dalswinton is on the left, we have Masterton crossing the river to join Burns at Ellisland, which is the converse of the procedure necessary on the supposition of Moffat being the locality. A place called Laggan, about two miles from Ellisland, being further assumed as the seat of Nicol, we have the poet marching along to it bearing his punch-bowl as an essential of the frolic!—a particular which this biographer would have probably suppressed, if he had known that the real Laggan of William Nicol is eight or nine miles from Ellisland, in a part of the country naturally so difficult of access, that a visitor might be glad to get there himself without any such nice burden as a punch-bowl to carry.

In a more recent edition of the poet's life and writings—where at length an effort is made to illustrate both, by documentary and other exact evidence<sup>[1]</sup>—the affair is set in such a light as to throw a ludicrous commentary on such testimony as the 'tradition of the land.' It appears, from a letter of Burns in which two verses of the song are transcribed, that it was written before 16th October 1789; while it equally appears that Mr Nicol did not purchase Laggan till March 1790: *ergo*, the maut was not brewed at Laggan; Masterton did not cross the Nith; and the punch-bowl is a myth, which most likely originated in editorial fancy.

Laggan is, nevertheless, a remarkable place, for Burns and Nicol must have been there together in some fashion, if not a Bacchanalian one, since it was upon the recommendation of the former that the latter became its proprietor. There are, however, two Laggans—one in Dunscore parish, about two miles from Ellisland; the other in Glencairn parish, a comparatively remote situation; and the latter was the Laggan of Nicol. Mr M—, of A—, who now lives near Ellisland, remembers, while living in his father's house, Laggan of Dunscore—the place erroneously assumed by Cunningham—that Burns and Nicol came there rather late one evening, and induced his father to accompany them to the town of Minniehive, whence he did not return home till next day at three o'clock. Laggan of Glencairn being on the way to Minniehive, and near it, and there being no other imaginable reason for Nicol going to such an out-of-the-way place, it seems a very reasonable supposition, that the pair of friends were on their way to see the property which Nicol thought of purchasing; and that Burns, knowing Mr M— to be well skilled in land, had thought of asking his advice on its value. The junior Mr M— adds a reminiscence, too characteristic, we fear, to be much doubted, that Burns and Nicol on that occasion were for a whole week engaged in merry-making.

We had, therefore, a half-melancholy interest in seeing Laggan—a name, we felt, associated with reckless gaieties, but then they were the gaieties of genius, and well had they been moralised in the punishments which they drew down—for, as Currie remarks in 1799, these 'three merry boys' were already all of them under the turf. Our kind host, the successor of Masterton's, took us in his carriage across the Nith, through a scene of natural luxuriance and beauty not to be surpassed, and under a sun of as intense brilliancy as ever shone in these climes. Passing into a high side-valley, we soon left the glowing plains of Nithsdale behind. We passed under the farmstead of Laggan of Dunscore, and thought of Burns and Nicol coming there to seduce the worthy farmer away to partake of their festivities at Minniehive. By and by we came to Dunscore kirk, which Burns used to attend with his family while resident at

Ellisland—a gloomy-looking man, the people thought him, all the time that he, with his generous, benevolent nature, was in reality groaning over the stern Calvinistic theology of the preacher. It is a tract of country which has but recently been reclaimed from a marshy and moorish state, and which still shews only partial traces of decoration and high culture. In a gloomy recess among the hills, we caught a glimpse of the situation of the old castle of Lagg, a fortalice surrounded by bogs, the ancient residence of the persecutor Grierson of Lagg, and fit scene to be connected with the history of a man who could coolly stand to see innocent women drowned at a stake in the sea for conscience' sake. The name of the place is pure Norwegian, expressing simply *water*; such being, no doubt, the predominating feature of the scenery in its original state—while Laggan merely gives the article *en* (the) in addition. Soon after passing Dunscore, we entered the valley of the Cairn, which, with its chalet-like farmhouses far up the slopes on both sides, reminded us much of Switzerland. Here, a few miles onward, we saw Maxwellton House, surrounded by those slopes so warmly spoken of in Scottish song—

Maxwellton braes are bonnie,  
Where early fa's the dew;  
Where I and Annie Laurie,  
Made up the promise true, &c.

Of this estate, the Laggan of William Nicol was originally a part, being sold in 1790 by Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwellton, a gentleman whom Burns has celebrated in his famous poem of 'The Whistle.' Even in this splendid summer-day, the whole vale has a rude and triste appearance, somewhat at issue with the declaration of the old song just quoted, and not likely, one would have thought, to attract the regard of such men as William Nicol and Robert Burns.

We had inquired, as we came along, as to the place of which we were in quest; and finding nobody with a very clear or ready conception of it or its whereabouts, began to feel as if it were of a half-fabulous character. At length, however, at a place called Crossford, we were told we should have to leave our carriage and the road, and ascend the side of the valley to the northward, where, about a mile and a half onward, we should find a small farm called Laggan Park. This we hoped to find to be the true place. To walk a mile and a half up hill on a roasting July day was not a task to be encountered on light grounds; however, we had resolved to make out our point if possible. Behold a couple of wayfarers, then, pursuing their way along the skirts of turnip-fields, through slight coppices, and along various clayey braes, with this unseen place of Laggan Park still keeping wonderfully ahead, long after it ought to have been reached. We wondered how the Ayrshire bard would have looked carrying a punch-bowl along our present path, after a journey of eight miles similarly loaded; and whether he would have thought any amount of the 'barley bree' during 'the lee-lang night' a fair recompense for his toils. At length, we arrived at the spot, but in a state of deliquescence and exhaustion not to be described. It is a small farm-establishment, nestling in a bosom of the hills, with some shelter and good exposure, making up for elevation of position, so that its few fields of growing grain, of potatoes, and meadow grass, have a tolerably good appearance. Some patches of ancient coppice at the base of the barish hills behind, give it even a smiling aspect. The farmer, seeing us approach, left his people in the field, and came to greet us. We entered a neat clean room, and met a kind reception from 'the Mistress,' who was as trigly dressed as if she had been expecting company. It soon became clear, from our conversation with the good couple, that our toils were crowned with success. This really had been Nicol's property; it still belonged to a member of his family. That line of gray heights seen from the door was what Burns alluded to when he facetiously dubbed his friend 'Illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills.' This cottage had been the retreat of the High School master in his hours of rustic vacation. There was a difficulty, which we discussed over a glass of most welcome spirits and water furnished by the farmer: Did this neat room form a part of the dwelling of Nicol? It appeared not. It was a modern addition. The original house, to which it adjoined upon a different level of flooring, was the merest hut, of one room, with a line of box-beds dividing the sitting-place from a small space, which, being rudely causewayed like a cow-house, had probably been employed in keeping animals of some kind. Such was the humble *tuguriolum* of Willie Nicol of the 'peck o' maut'—an interesting memorial of the simplicity of country life in Scotland at the close of the eighteenth century. We did not venture to indulge in any dreamings as to festive meetings between Burns and Nicol in this humble shed; for we felt that here there was no certain ground to go upon. Enough that we could be assured of Burns and Nicol having been together here; two most singular examples of the peasant class of their country, and one of them an unapproached master of his country's lyre, whose strains have floated to the ends of the earth, and promise to last through many ages.

The elements of the place, and the ideas connected with it were, after all, too simple to detain us long. We only waited to snatch a slight pencil sketch of the house and its adjuncts; and then, having taken leave of the farmer and his wife, we retraced our steps to the road. Somewhat unexpectedly, and not at all in keeping with the idea of either Maxwellton braes or Laggan's many hills, we discovered in our walk that the rough terrace-like ground over which we had passed before coming in sight of Nicol's estate, was a *moraine*, or mass of *débris*, produced and left there by a glacier. Its surface, thickly covered with loose blocks of rock different from that of the district, first fixed our attention; then looking into some openings which had been made in the earth for building materials, we readily observed that the internal constitution of the mass was precisely like that of the moraines of the existing glaciers of the Alps, and of the similar masses of drift scattered over Sweden—a confused mixture of angular, slightly-worn blocks of all sizes, bedded in clayey gravel of a brown colour. Such objects are rare in Scotland; but here is undoubtedly one, though we cannot pretend to tell from what quarter it has come. The thing most nearly resembling it in general appearance, which we have ever seen, is an undoubted ancient moraine at a place called Mosshuus, in the Valley of the Laug, in Norway.

One reflection arises at the conclusion of this trivial investigation, and it is this—If so much doubt and obscurity have already settled on circumstances which took place scarcely beyond the recollection of living people, can we wonder at that which invests the events of a more remote epoch? If editors in our enlightened time have contrived so soon to give the history of Burns a mythical character, what safety have we in trusting to such ancient narrations as those of Plutarch or Thucydides? On the other hand, where even such a biography as that of Burns is placed by sound and carefully-examined evidence upon an irrefragable basis, a service is rendered to the public beyond the merits of any immediate question that may be under discussion, in the encouragement which it gives to historical inquirers of all grades, to rest satisfied with nothing on vague assertion, but to sift everything to the bottom.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Life and Works of Robert Burns, edited by Robert Chambers. 4 vols. Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers.

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## ONE-SIDEDNESS.

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*Plantagenet.* The truth appears *so* naked on my  
side,  
That any purblind eye may find it out.

*Somerset.* And on my side it is so well  
apparelled,  
So clear, so shining, and so evident,  
That it will glimmer through a blind  
man's eye.

*First Part of Henry  
VI.*

Having made up our mind upon a question, probably by a delightfully curt process, how pleasant and natural it is to laugh sublimely at all dissentients! Poor creatures, those nonconformists are almost to be pardoned, so much does their impenetrable dulness amuse us! How they *can* have scrambled to a conclusion opposite to ours, is a problem so absurd that it tickles us amazingly.

Yet the formation of opinions is vastly dependent upon circumstances. Whang-shing is born in the Celestial Empire; and the chances are that the fellow will go the length of pinning his faith to Confucius. Yonder squalid urchin, turning out of Saffron Hill or some other sweet-scented purlieu, has been cradled on the ragged lap of professional mendicancy; and there is a strong probability that he will come to a misunderstanding with the police one of these fine days. The mild-eyed priest who just passed you, was born and educated within the states of the church; and somehow or other he firmly believes in the Romanism you so hotly repudiate. The sallow-faced gentleman crossing the road, and exhibiting so wobegone an aspect, has always had a bad liver; and you will never persuade him to look on the bright side of life. While this bustling, vivacious personage, who approaches us with such a springy step,

and rapid merry glance, has never known a day's illness—is indebted to hearsay for his belief in nerves—and is ready to challenge Europe to beat him at a hearty guffaw—*he* is perplexed by the shadow of a long face, marvels with all his might at a heavy eye, and cannot unriddle the philosophy of a bent brow. When shall we learn that the result of looking depends on the state of the eye—that the vision is modified by the position of the seer—that he who stands on one side, sees one side only? Says Wordsworth—

We safely may affirm that human life  
Is either fair or tempting, a soft scene,  
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,  
Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view,  
*Even as the same is looked at, or approached.*

And the pastor of the *Excursion*, who is the spokesman, illustrates his doctrine by shewing that the church-yard among the mountains, in which he and his companions are standing, if approached from the sullen north, when 'in changeful April, fields are white with new-fallen snow,' and ere the sun has gained his noontide height, will appear an 'unillumined, blank, and dreary plain, with more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom saddening the heart;' whereas, if it be regarded from the quarter whence the lord of light dispenses his beams, '*then* will a vernal prospect greet your eye'—

All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,  
Hopeful and cheerful—vanished is the pall  
That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,  
Vanished or hidden; and the whole domain,  
To some, too lightly minded, might appear  
A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.

The same principle of mental optics is of universal application. We cannot ignore it without fatal results when studying history, science, art, human nature, or any conceivable object of inquiry. Thus, in forming our opinion of the actions of others, there is no more mischievous absurdity, it has been remarked, than to judge them from the outside as they look to us, instead of from the inside as they look to the actors; nothing more irrational than to criticise deeds as though the doers of them had the same hopes, fears, desires, and restraints with ourselves. 'We cannot understand another's character except by abandoning our own identity, and realising to ourselves his frame of mind, his want of knowledge, his hardships, temptations, and discouragements.' If we turn to history, we are reminded of Thomas Moore's lines—

By Tory Hume's seductive page beguiled,  
We fancy Charles was just, and Stratford mild;  
And Fox himself, with party pencil draws  
Monmouth a hero 'for the good old cause!'  
Then, rights are wrongs, and victories are defeats,  
As French or English pride the tale repeats.

Thus, too, Macaulay remarks, that for many years every Whig historian was anxious to prove that the old English government was all but republican—every Tory, to prove it all but despotic. 'With such feelings, both parties looked into the chronology of the middle ages. Both readily found what they sought, and obstinately refused to see anything but what they sought.' Accordingly, to see only one-half of the evidence, you would conclude that the Plantagenets were as absolute as the sultans of Turkey; to see only the other half, you would conclude that they had as little real power as the Doges of Venice: and both conclusions would be equally remote from the truth.

Carlyle justly affirms, that if that man is a benefactor to the world who causes two ears of corn to grow where only one grew before, much more is he a benefactor who causes two truths to grow up together in harmony and mutual confirmation, where before only one stood solitary, and, on that side at least, intolerant and hostile. Every genius rides a winged horse; but all are apt to ride too fast. Plotinus, says Emerson, 'believes only in philosophers; Fénelon, in saints; Pindar and Byron, in poets. Read the haughty language in which Plato and the Platonists speak of all men who are not devoted to their own shining abstractions.' If genius is liable to such one-sidedness, the greater the need of educational correctives to common-place minds. Hence the overpursuit of any one subject may be hurtful, unless duly balanced by countervailing forces. As the author of *Friends in Council* says, a human being, like a tree, if it is to attain to perfect symmetry, must have light and air given to it from all quarters. This may be done without making men superficial—without sanctioning the dissipation of mere desultory reading. One or two great branches of science may be systematically prosecuted, and

others used in a more supplementary and illustrative form. 'A number of one-sided men,' observes the same writer, 'may make a great nation, though I much incline to doubt that; but such a nation will not contain a number of great men.' With the advance of intelligence, advances a catholicism of literature, of taste, of humanity at large. Uncultured intellect, 'cabined, cribbed, confined,' is ill at ease among the riches of variety in literary lore; it is satisfied with the little, because, as Menzel says, it knows not the great; it is content with one-sidedness, because it sees not the other sides. If critical *esprit de corps* has its advantages, it has its penalties also; potent within its self-imposed bounds, it is impotent outside of them. Longfellow reminds his brethren of the lyre, that whatever is best in the great poets of all countries, is not what is national in them, but what is universal: their roots are in their native soil, but their branches wave in the unpatriotic air, that speaks the same language to all men, and their leaves shine with the illimitable light that pervades all lands. 'Let us throw all the windows open; let us admit the light and air on all sides; that we may look towards the four corners of the heavens, and not always in the same direction.'

Monomania is sometimes simply the exaggerated regard to one side of many-sided truth. It is not absolute, but only relative delusion. It is in its degree true; but by affecting to be the whole truth, it becomes untrue. Philosophic reflection shews, that if a man fasten his attention on a single aspect of truth, and apply himself to that alone for a long time, 'the truth becomes distorted, and not itself, but falsehood;' and may be compared to the air, which is our natural element, and the breath of our nostrils; 'but if a stream of the same be directed on the body for a time, it causes cold, fever, and even death.' 'How wearisome,' exclaims Emerson, 'the grammarian, the phrenologist, the political or religious fanatic, or, indeed, any possessed mortal, whose balance is lost by the exaggeration of a single topic! It is *incipient insanity*.' The bore of society is constituted by his one-sidedness. His ear is deficient in the sense of harmony, and he deafens and disgusts you by harping on one string. The retired nabob holds you by the button, to hear his wearisome diatribes on Indian economics; the half-pay officer is too fluent on his worn-out recollections of the Peninsular War, and becomes savage if you broach a new theme, or move to adjourn the debate; the university pedant distracts you with his theories on philology and scansion—with his amended translation of a hexameter in Persius, and his new reading of a line in Theocritus; the bagman is all for 'the shop;' the policeman is redolent of the 'lock-up house' and 'your wertchup;' the tailor is profoundly knowing on the 'sweating system; 'the son of Crispin vows and protests there's 'nothing like leather.' All these *minus* signs have a tendency to cancel each other: and thus the equation of life is worked out. Society has been said to have at all times the same want—namely, of one sane man, with adequate powers of expression to hold up each object of monomania in its right relations. 'The ambitious and mercenary bring their last new Mumbo-Jumbo—whether tariff, railway, mesmerism, or California—and by detaching the object from its relations, easily succeed in making it seen in a glare, and a multitude go mad about it; and they are not to be reproved or cured by the opposite multitude, who are kept from this particular insanity by an equal frenzy on another crotchet. But let one man have the comprehensive eye that can replace this isolated prodigy in its right neighbourhood and bearings, and the illusion vanishes—the returning reason of the community thanks the reason of the monitor.' There is perhaps nothing which more urgently calls for such a controlling and overseeing mind, to curb eccentric excesses, and to restore equilibrium of action, than philanthropy itself. In the enthusiasm of its impulses, it thinks it can afford to sneer at political economy, and that it is right to wander at its own sweet will, benevolently defying the remonstrances of all who have a method to propound, a science to explain, a system to uphold. Though the heart be large, yet the mind—as Nathaniel Hawthorne somewhere observes—is often of such moderate dimensions, as to be exclusively filled up with one idea; and thus, when a good man has long devoted himself to a particular kind of beneficence, to one species of reform, he is apt to become narrowed into the limits of the path wherein he treads, and to fancy that there is no other good to be done on earth but that selfsame good to which he has put his hand, and in the very mode that best suits his own conceptions. 'All else is worthless; his scheme must be wrought out by the united strength of the whole world's stock of love, or the world is no longer worthy of a position in the universe. Moreover, powerful truth, being the rich grape-juice expressed from the vineyard of the ages, has an intoxicating quality when imbibed by any but a powerful intellect, and often, as it were, impels the quaffer to quarrel in his cups.' Even a saint with one idea may be a plague to his neighbourhood; and, by being canonised, may retard, not further, the progress of his church.

Let us own, however, that one-idea'd people are often amusing as well as mischievous—or rather, when not mischievous. The rapt devotion they pay to

their *idola specūs* oscillates between the sublime and the ridiculous. We have all seen such people, and alternately admired and laughed at them. We have all witnessed or read pleasant illustrations of their doings. With one such illustration we conclude this discursive fragment. It is related by the witty author of *A Defence of Ignorance*, who introduces it in the course of an imaginary dialogue on one-sided university training, in which one of the speakers (at dessert) says to his companion: 'If you reach after that pear, without considering what stands against your elbows, you may empty a decanter over me. He who desires thoroughly to know one subject, should be possessed of so much intellectual geography as will enable him to see its true position in the universe of thought.' The allusion to upsetting a decanter reminds the other interlocutor of a story, which he proceeds to tell. A gentleman who carved a goose was inexpert; and thinking only of the stubborn joints that would not be unhinged, he totally forgot the gravy. Presently, the goose slipped off the dish, and escaped into his neighbour's lap. Now, to have thrown a hot goose on a lady's lap would disconcert most people, but the gentleman in question was *not* disconcerted. Turning round, with a bland smile, he said: 'I'll trouble you for that goose.' Here we have a sublime example of a man with one idea. This gentleman's idea was the goose; and in the absorbing interest attached to his undertaking, that he was to carve the goose, not altogether knowing how, he had shut out extraneous objects. Suddenly the goose was gone, but his eye followed it, his mind was wrapt up in his struggle with it; what did he know of that lady? 'I'll trouble you for that goose,' expressed the perfect abstraction of a mind bent on developing its one idea.

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## MR KIRBY THE NATURALIST.

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The popular fame of Mr Kirby rests upon the *Introduction to Entomology*, a work (partly written by him) full of interesting facts respecting the economy of the insect world. Amongst the scientific, his reputation depends on a variety of elaborate papers which he wrote for learned societies on subjects connected with natural history. For sixty years previous to the conclusion of his long life in 1850, he had devoted the leisure of a parsonage to that delightful study, and being a diligent and accurate observer, and an elegant and entertaining writer, he had attained the highest rank amongst the British naturalists of his day. It appears, from a memoir just published,<sup>[2]</sup> that Mr Kirby was born in 1759, and settled in 1782 in the cure of Barham, near Ipswich, where he was ultimately rector, and which he only left for his last long-home sixty-eight years thereafter. In an age of sluggish theology, he was an earnest minister and zealous controversialist, all the time that he was cultivating a taste for natural objects. This is equally unexpected and creditable. And yet it does not appear that his personal conduct was characterised by anything like rigour, for, as an example, we find, from the journal of an entomological excursion in 1797, that it was commenced on a Sunday afternoon, and involved one other Sunday of constant travelling. A reference of the dates to an almanac enables us to establish this fact, so unlike the spirit of a zealous man in our times.

Of the sister sciences of nature, botany first attracted Mr Kirby's regards. 'This he pursued in no hasty or superficial manner, but with the greatest perseverance and research. It was not enough for him to know a plant by sight, and to ascertain its proper name, but he compared the minutest parts of inflorescence and fructification; he sought for the most trifling differences in those nearly allied, and studied with a keen but generous criticism the various theories of writers on the science, from the earliest age to the time of the immortal Linnè. Of every plant he met with, even to the daisy and primrose, the whole physiological structure was thoroughly investigated; he discovered, or rather observed, what it was which enabled some plants to endure great changes of temperature, while others perished—the formation which enabled some to live in water, while others flourished in the most dry and arid sands; he carefully marked the causes which combined to clothe even rocks with verdure, in consequence of the wonderful structure of the plants inhabiting them, enabling them to live as it were by the suction of their numerous mouths, rather than by nourishment transmitted by a root in contact with that which would refuse to yield the ordinary food of plants. And as he thus marked all these peculiar adaptations of plants to their respective situations, his mind was by a constant train of thought directed from the beauty and wondrous mechanism of the creature, to contemplate the supreme and ineffable glory of the Creator.'

With a mind so predisposed and so fitted for the study of entomology, a casual



occurrence of a trivial nature was sufficient to awaken and give it direction. 'Observing accidentally, one morning, a very beautiful golden bug creeping on the sill of my window, I took it up to examine it, and finding that its wings were of a more yellow hue than was common to my observation of these insects before, I was anxious carefully to examine any other of its peculiarities; and finding that it had twenty-two beautiful clear black spots upon its back, my captured animal was imprisoned in a bottle of gin, for the purpose, as I supposed, of killing him. On the following morning, anxious to pursue my observation, I took it again from the gin, and laid it on the window-sill to dry, thinking it dead; but the warmth of the sun very soon revived it: and hence commenced my further pursuit of this branch of natural history.'

A Dr Gwyn of Ipswich was his preceptor in this study. 'Though now in his seventy-fifth year, so much was the good old doctor interested in the pursuit of his friend, that he would frequently walk over to Barham, a distance of five miles, to see what had been the success of recent perambulations. The parsonage-house was then approached by a narrow wicket, with posts higher than the gate, and often, while working in his garden, or sitting in his parlour, Mr Kirby would look up and see, to his great delight, the shovel hat of his facetious friend adorning one post, and the cumbrous wig and appertaining pig-tail ornamenting the other. And soon the kind old man would walk in with his bald head, as he used to say, cool and ready for the investigation. These visits were always hailed with pleasure, the delights of which were still fresh in the memory of Mr Kirby, and would call forth expressions of affectionate gratitude, even when nearly half a century had elapsed, after his friend and Mæcenas, as he loved to call him, had gone to his rest.'

There seems no room to doubt, that his studies tended not merely to the happiness of Mr Kirby's life, but to its duration. It is at the same time abundantly evident, that much hard work was undergone. He carried on a most laborious correspondence with other naturalists, often extending a letter to the dimensions of a pamphlet: this altogether over and above his practical researches and his published writings. He took good-humoured views of most things, and was not easily put out of temper. A slight dash of absence of mind increased that quaintness of character so often found in zealous students. On an entomological excursion with two friends, Mr Marsham and Mr Macleay, it happened on their arriving at an old-fashioned wayside inn, that 'there was only one large room for them, with three beds in it. The arrangement having been made for the night, according to the custom of the time, three nightcaps were laid upon the dressing-table. Mr Kirby retired before his companions, and was soon sound asleep. Perceiving no caps ready for them, his friends inquired for what they considered the due appurtenances of the pillow: they were assured by the hostess that three nightcaps were laid upon the table, but they stoutly averred they had not seen them; the landlady no less stoutly maintaining her side of the question. What actually passed in her own mind did not transpire, but she appealed to the first gentleman as being the only one who could throw light upon the subject; when, lo and behold! as soon as his head appeared, in answer to the hasty summons, the three nightcaps appeared at the same time upon it, one being dragged over the other, much to the amusement not only of those present, but also of those who long after heard the tale.'

Another example of the pleasantries that sometimes enliven the path of the naturalist. It is related by Mr Spence, and refers to the time when that gentleman was engaged with Mr Kirby in preparing the work which has for ever combined their names. 'Mr (now Sir William J.) Hooker was at that time staying at Barham, and being desirous to have pointed out to him, and to gather with his own hands, a rare species of *Marchantia?* from its habitat, first discovered by Mr Kirby, near Nayland, some miles distant, it was agreed we three should walk thither, entomologising by the way, and after dinner proceed to the hedge-bank where it grew. Entering the head inn-yard on foot, with dusty shoes, and without other baggage than our insect-nets in our hands, we met with but a cool reception, which, however, visibly warmed as soon as we had desired to be shewn into the best dining-room, and had ordered a good dinner and wine. We intended to walk back in the evening, but as the bank where the *Marchantia?* grew was a mile or two out of the direct road, and it came on rain, we ordered out a postchaise, merely saying we wanted to drive a short way on a road which Mr Kirby indicated to the postilion.

'When we arrived at the gate of the field where the bank was, the rain had become very heavy; so, calling to the postilion to stop and open the door, we scampered out of the chaise, all laughing, and hastily telling him to wait there, without other explanation we climbed over the gate, and not to be long in the rain, set off running as fast as we could along the field-side of the

hedge, to the bank we were looking for. We saw amazement in the face of our postilion at what possible motive could have made three guests of his master clamber pell-mell over a gate into a field that led nowhere, in the midst of a heavy shower of rain, and then run away as if pursued; and it was the expression in his countenance which caused our mirth, which was increased to peals of merriment when we saw that, instead of waiting for us at the gate, as we had directed, he mounted his horses with all speed, and pushed on in a gallop along the road on the other side of the hedge, evidently to circumvent our nefarious plan (as he conceived) of bilking his master both of our dinners and the chaise-hire. When the cessation of our uncontrollable mirth had allowed us to gather specimens of our plant, perceiving through the hedge whereabouts we stopped, he also halted to watch our motions, and when he saw us run back, he obeyed our orders to return to the gate—where we got into the chaise, still in a roar of laughter at the whole affair, and at his awkward attempt to explain away his not having waited for us there, as we had directed, and evident high satisfaction at bringing back in triumph to our inn the three cheats whose intended plans he had so cleverly frustrated, as he no doubt told his master; to whom, being too much amused with the adventure, we did not make any explanation, but left it to form one of the traditions of the inn.'

When a man excels in anything, it must always be of some consequence to know what were his habits, and what external means he employed, in connection with his particular gift. Mr Spence says: 'There were two circumstances in Mr Kirby's study of insects, by which I was always forcibly struck on my visits to him at Barham. The first was the little parade of apparatus with which his extensive and valuable acquisitions were made. If going to any distance, he would put into his pocket a forceps-net and small water-net, with which to catch bees, flies, and aquatic insects; but, in general, I do not remember to have seen him use a net of any other description. His numerous captures of rare and new Coleoptera were mostly made by carefully searching for them in their haunts, from which—if trees, shrubs, or long grass, &c.—he would beat them with his walking-stick into a newspaper; and, collected in this way, he would bring home in a few small phials in his waistcoat pockets, and in a moderate-sized collecting-box, after an afternoon's excursion, a booty often much richer than his companions had secured with their more elaborate apparatus. The second circumstance in Mr Kirby's study of insects, to which I allude, was the deliberate and careful way in which he investigated the nomenclature of his species. Every author likely to have described them was consulted, their descriptions duly estimated; and it was only after thus coming to the decision that the insect before him had not been previously described, that he placed it in his cabinet under a new name. It was owing to this cautious mode of proceeding—which young entomologists would do well to follow—that he fell into so few errors, and rendered such solid service to the science; and a not less careful consideration was always exercised by him in the forming of new genera, and in his published descriptions of new species, as his admirable papers in the *Linnæan Transactions* amply testify.'

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Considering how well Mr Kirby performed his professional duties, how much he did to advance his favourite science, and how greatly he contributed to the happiness of society within the sphere of his personal influence, his may truly be said to have been a *well-spent life*. On this account, Mr Freeman's memoir may be recommended to the notice of many who are not as yet conscious of the charms of entomology.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [2] *Life of the Rev. William Kirby, M.A.* By John Freeman. 8vo, pp. 506. London: Longman & Co. 1852.

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## THE MODERN TARTAR.

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The phrase, 'Catching a Tartar,' points to a peculiarity in Tartar life, which, however correct historically, is not in keeping with the actual current state of the Mongol character. It implies something impetuous, stern, unyielding, relentless, and cruel; whereas the modern life of the children of the desert exhibits much that is simple, confiding, generous, and even chivalric. It is nothing to our discredit that we should have been so long in discovering these features in the great nomadic class of the day, because European barbarians are absolutely prohibited from visiting the desert places which are the scenes of their wanderings; and but for the enterprise of two Roman Catholic

missionaries from France, we should probably have remained in ignorance for a much longer period. These gentlemen, however, have thrown a light on this subject, which is too remarkable to be passed over without notice. Messrs Gabet and Huc composed their work in 1846, but it has only recently been published in this country,<sup>[3]</sup> and its perusal cannot fail to modify many of our preconceived notions regarding Tartar life.

It will, for example, be admitted that, according to the hitherto popular acceptance of the character, Tartars were not exactly the sort of persons on whom practical jokes might be perpetrated with impunity. Read, however, the following anecdote:—While our two travellers were one day in their tents, two Tartar horsemen dashed up to the entrance, and threw themselves on the ground. 'Men of prayer,' said they with voices full of emotion, 'we come to ask you to draw our horoscope. We have this day had two horses stolen from us. We cannot find the robbers, and we come to you men of learning, to tell us where we shall find our property.'

'Brothers,' answered the missionaries, 'we are not lamas of Buddha, and do not believe in horoscopes. For a man to say that he can discover stolen goods by such means, is falsehood and deception.'

The horsemen entreated, but the priests were inflexible, and the disappointed Tartars mounted their steeds, and galloped off. It so happened that Samdadchiemba, the guide of the missionaries—a Christianised Oriental, but withal a very merry fellow—was present during this interview, but he sat drinking his tea without uttering a word. All on a sudden he knitted his brows, rose, and came to the door. The horsemen were at some distance; but the *dchiahour*, by an exertion of his strong lungs, induced them to turn round in their saddles. He motioned to them, and they, thinking that the horoscope was to be given, galloped once more to the tent. 'My Mongol brothers,' said Samdadchiemba, 'in future be more careful: watch your herds well, and you won't be robbed. Retain these words of mine in your memory: they are worth all the horoscopes in the world.'

Samdad—the reader will perhaps thank us for the abbreviation—gravely returned to the tent; and the Tartars did not dismount and whip him, as two horsemen of any other nation under the sun would have done, but quietly resumed their journey. It appeared that Samdad had once acted as diviner on a similar occasion. The missing valuable was a bull, and the sage having called for eleven stones, counted, arranged and rearranged them with great gravity, and then appeared to meditate. 'If you would find your bull, go seek him in the north,' said the magician; and without querulously inquiring, like Shakspeare's Richard, what Taurus did in that region, the Mongols pursued a northern course, and by mere chance actually discovered the animal. Samdad was entertained for a week, and took his departure laden with butter and tea. He hinted his regret that 'his attachment to Mother Church' prevented him from playing the soothsayer to the two horsemen.

A peculiarity in Tartar manners, regarding stolen horses when abstracted near caravans, is likely to prove of more service than casting horoscopes. Some time after the occurrence mentioned, the missionaries lost a horse and mule. 'We each mounted a camel, and made a circuit in search of the animals. Our search being futile, we resolved to proceed to the Mongol encampment, and inform them that our loss had taken place near their habitation. *By a law among the Tartars*, when animals are lost from a caravan, the persons occupying the nearest encampment are bound either to find them or replace them.... This it is which has contributed to render the Mongols so skilful in tracking. A mere glance at the slight traces left by an animal on the grass, suffices to inform the Mongol pursuer how long it is since it passed, and whether or not it bore a rider; and the track once found, they follow it throughout all its meanderings, however complicated.

'We had no sooner explained our loss to the Mongol chief, than he said to us cheerfully: "Sirs Lamas, do not permit sorrow to invade your hearts. Your animals cannot be lost; in these plains there are neither robbers nor associates of robbers. I will send in quest of your horses. If we do not find them, you may select what others you please in their place from our herd. We would have you leave this place as happy as you came to it.'" Eight horses darted off in pursuit; the missionaries were invited to take tea in the interim, and in two hours the strayed cattle were recovered. We should like to know in what other country travellers would be so treated?

Regal personages in these regions observe the characteristic simple manners of the country. Our pilgrims were pursuing their solitary way, when the tramping of many horses and the sound of many voices disturbed the silence of the desert. A large caravan belonging to the queen of Mourguevan overtook

them, and a mandarin addressed them.

'Sirs, where is your country?'

'We come from the west.'

'Through what districts have your beneficial shadows passed?'

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'We have come from Tolon Noor.'

'Has peace accompanied your progress?'

'Hitherto we have journeyed in all tranquillity. And you—are you at peace, and what is your country?'

'We are Khalkhas of the kingdom of Mourguevan.'

After some other Oriental queries and answers, her majesty comes up. The cavalcade halted, and the camels formed into a semicircle, the centre being occupied by a close four-wheeled carriage. Two mandarins, 'decorated with the blue button,' opened the door, and handed out the queen, who was attired in a long silk robe.

'Sirs Lamas,' said she, raising her hands, 'is this place auspicious for an encampment?'

'Royal pilgrim of Mourguevan,' said we, 'you may light your fires here in all security. For ourselves, we must proceed on our way, for the sun was already high when we folded our tent.'

The Tartars are divided into two grand classes—lamas and laymen. The former act as priests, lawyers, physicians, painters, decorators, &c., and in fact monopolise every learned and liberal art and profession. Of course, they are held in high repute; and our travellers having, like Joseph Wolff, adopted sacerdotal costume, they were everywhere received with the honours and respect awarded to the indigenous clergy. It will duly appear, from subsequent illustrations, that mere ecclesiasticism did not secure the hospitality and kindness which they experienced at all hands; but even after making allowance for the national devotion to the cloth, the attentions shewed by the Mongols are often marked by a delicate sense of the hospitable. On one occasion, M. Huc and his companions encountered an unusual storm of rain and wind. After travelling several weary miles, Samdad contrived to erect the tent in a place that, for the locality, was tolerable, but no more. 'My spiritual fathers,' observed the guide, 'I told you we should not die to-day of thirst, but I am not at all sure that we don't run some risk of dying of hunger.' In point of fact, there seemed no possibility of making a fire. There was not a tree, not a shrub, not a root to be seen. As to argols, the rain had long since reduced that combustible of the desert to a liquid pulp. The pilgrims were about to partake of the primitive fare of meal steeped in cold water—a cheerless beverage to three men drenched to the skin—when at the critical juncture up came two Tartars.

'Sirs Lamas, this day the heavens have fallen. You doubtless have been unable to make a fire.'

'Alas! how should we make a fire? we have no argols.'

'Men are all brothers, and belong to each other; but laymen should honour and serve the holy ones: therefore it is that we have come to make a fire for you.'

The fire soon blazed and crackled, and a hot repast speedily rejoiced the jaded frames of the two priests and the imp Samdad.

The domiciliary hospitalities of the Tartars are frank and artless, forming a marked contrast to the formal reception of strangers among the Chinese. 'On entering, you give the word of peace, *amor* or *mendon*, to the company generally. You then seat yourself on the right of the head of the family, whom you find squatting on the floor opposite the entrance. Next, everybody takes from a purse, suspended at his girdle, a little snuff-bottle, and mutual pinches accompany such phrases as these: "Is the pasturage with you rich and abundant?" "Are your herds in fine condition?" "Did you travel in peace?" "Does tranquillity prevail?" The mistress then silently holds out her hand to the visitor. He as silently takes from his breast-pocket a small wooden bowl, the indispensable *vade mecum* of all Tartars, and presents it to the hostess, who fills it with tea and milk, and returns it.' In higher families, a table is spread with butter, oatmeal, millet, cheese, all in small boxes of polished

wood; and these luxuries are all mixed in the everlasting tea. Amongst the uppermost aristocratic classes, fermented milk is proffered; but Europeans would perhaps regard this liquor as more honoured by being set aside than indulged in.

We now proceed to exhibit some traits of Tartar character, as developed in their intercourse with their Asiatic brethren. As usual, a horseman overtakes or meets the travellers; and after the customary salutations, the missionaries inquired why he and his brethren did not cultivate corn, instead of allowing every field to run to grass.

'We Mongols,' replied this stranger, 'are formed for living in tents, and pasturing cattle. So long as we kept to that in the kingdom of Gechekten, we were rich and happy. Now, ever since the Mongols have set themselves to cultivating the land, and building houses, they have become poor. The *Kitats* (Chinese) have taken possession of the country: flocks, herds, lands, houses—all have passed into their hands. There remain to us only a few prairies, on which still live under their tents such of the Mongols as have not been forced by utter destitution to emigrate to other lands.'

'But if the Chinese are so baneful to you, why did you allow them to penetrate into your country?'

'We took pity on these wicked Kitats, who came to us weeping, to solicit our charity. We allowed them, through pure compassion, to cultivate a few patches of land. The Mongols insensibly followed their example, and abandoned the nomadic life. They drank the wine of the Kitats, and smoked their tobacco on credit; they bought their manufactures on credit, at double the real value. When the day of payment came, there was no money ready, and the Mongols had to yield to the violence of their creditors houses, lands, flocks, everything.'

'But could you not seek justice from the tribunals?'

'Justice from the tribunals! That is out of the question. The Kitats are skilful to talk and to lie. It is impossible for a Mongol to gain a suit against a Kitat. Sirs Lamas, the kingdom of Gechekten is undone!'

After-experience amply corroborated the truth of these statements. 'The commercial intercourse between the Tartars and the Chinese is revoltingly iniquitous on the part of the latter. So soon as the Mongols arrive in a trading town, they are snapped up by some Chinese, who carry them off, as it were, by main force to their houses, give them tea for themselves, and forage for their horses, and cajole them in every conceivable way. The Mongols take all they hear to be perfectly genuine, and congratulate themselves—conscious, as they are, of their inaptitude for business—upon their good-fortune in thus meeting with brothers *Ahaton*, as they say, in whom they can place full confidence, and who will undertake to manage their whole business for them. A good dinner, provided in the back-shop, completes the illusion—and when once the Chinese has established his hold, he employs all the resources of a skilful and utterly unprincipled knavery. He keeps his victim in his house, eating, drinking, and smoking one day after another, until his subordinates have sold all the poor man's cattle, or whatever else he has to sell, and bought for him in return the commodities he requires, at prices double and treble the market value. But so plausible is the Chinese, and so simple is the Tartar, that the latter invariably departs with the most entire confidence in the immense philanthropy of the former, and with a promise to return, when he has other goods to sell, to the establishment where he has been treated so fraternally.'

The missionaries were themselves mistaken for Tartars when they visited the 'Blue Town,' and every kind of imposition was attempted to be practised on them. The hotel scouts assailed them at their first entry, and almost compelled them, by physical force, to become their guests; shopkeepers cozened on all hands; and even bankers condescended to cheat. Messrs Gabet and Huc wished to exchange silver for Chinese coin current. The Tartars can weigh, but cannot calculate, and accordingly the bank-teller of Blue Town, after gravely consulting his *souan-pan* (exchange-table), announced the value to be about a thousand *sapeks* less than it should have been. The missionaries remonstrated, and a colleague was called in to check the sum, but he, with due gravity, declared that the first was right. A bystander interfered, and declared in favour of the strangers. 'Sirs Lamas,' said the banker, 'your mathematics are better than mine.' 'Oh, not at all,' replied we, with a profound bow; 'your souan-pan is excellent; but who ever heard of a calculator always exempt from error?' These phrases were, it seems, rigorously required under the circumstances by Chinese politeness. Whenever any person in China is compromised by any awkward incident, those present always

carefully refrain from any observation which may make him blush, or, as the Chinese call it, take away his face. A further proof of Chinese cupidity was afforded by the admission of a gentleman, whom we may take the liberty of denominating an Oriental bagman. This worthy arrived at an inn after our travellers had secured all the accommodation.

'Peace and happiness unto you, Sirs Lamas; do you need the whole of your room, or can you accommodate me?'

'Why not? We are all brothers, and should serve each other.'

'Words of excellence! You are Tartars, I am Chinese; yet comprehending the claims of hospitality, you act upon the truth that all men are brothers.'

'Whither are you bound? Are you going to buy up salt or catsup for some Chinese company?'

'No; I represent a great commercial house at Peking, and I am collecting some debts from the Tartars.... You, like myself, are Tartar-eaters—you eat them by prayers, I by commerce. And why not? The Mongols are poor simpletons, and we may as well get their money as anybody else.... Oh, we devour them; we pick them clean! Whatever they see, when they come into our towns, they want; and when we know who they are, and where we can find them, we let them have goods upon credit of course at a considerable advance upon the price, and upon interest at 30 and 40 per cent., which is quite right and necessary. In China, the emperor's laws do not allow this; it is only done with the Tartars. Well, they don't pay the money, and the interest goes on until there is a good sum owing, worth the coming for. When we come for it, we take all the cattle and sheep and horses we can get hold of for the interest, and leave the capital debt and future interest to be paid next time, and so it goes on from one generation to another. Oh, a Tartar debt is a gold-mine!'

The yearly settlement of accounts amongst the Chinese furnishes another curious chapter in their commercial life. Bills are made up to the last few days of the year, 'and every Chinese being at once debtor and creditor, every Chinese is hunting his debtors and hunted by his creditors. He who returns from his neighbour's house, which he has been throwing into utter confusion by his clamorous demands for what the neighbour owes him, finds his own house turned inside out by an uproarious creditor; and so the thing goes round. The whole town is a scene of vociferation, disputation, and fighting. On the last day of the year, disorder attains its height; people rush in all directions with anything they can scratch together to raise money upon at the broker's or pawnbroker's—the shops of which tradesmen are absolutely besieged throughout the day with profferers of clothes, bedding, furniture, cooking utensils, and movables of every description. Those who have already cleared their houses in this way, and yet have not satisfied the demands upon them, post off to their relations and friends, to borrow something or other, which they vow shall be returned immediately, but which immediately takes its way to the *tang-pon* or pawnbroker's. This species of anarchy continues till midnight, then calm resumes its sway. No one, after the twelfth hour has struck, can claim a debt, or even make the slightest allusion to it. You now only hear the words of peace and good-will; everybody fraternises with everybody. Those who were just before on the point of twisting their neighbour's neck, now twine their friendly arms about it.'

Tartar warriors and Tartar robbers are also peculiar of their kind. The warrior presents a curious combination of the national simplicity with the spirit of the ancient Gascon. Two of those military gentlemen gave a singular account of the war with the *Rebels of the South*, as the English are designated. They belonged to the Eight Banners, or army of reserve—and stated, that when at war the grand-master (the emperor of China) first sent the Kitats against the enemy; next the banners of the Solon country are set in motion; and if they fail, then 'we (the Tchakars) take the field, and the mere sound of our march suffices to reduce the rebels to subjection!' In the English war, the first two classes availed not, and then came the turn of the sacred order. 'The Kitats told us everywhere that we were marching upon certain and unavailing death. "What can you do against sea-monsters? They live in the water like fish: when you least expect them, they appear on the surface, and hurl the fire-bombs at you; while the instant your bow is bent to shoot them, down they dive like frogs.'" The third class was not to be intimidated; the lamas had opened the *Book of Celestial Secrets*, and predicted victory; and on they marched, till met with the intelligence that the rebels, hearing of the approach of this invincible legion, had sued for and obtained peace!

The robbers of this extraordinary territory are also entitled to claim credit for their share of eccentricity. 'They are extremely polite; they do not rudely clap

a pistol to your ear, and bawl at you: "Your money or your life!" No; they mildly advance with a courteous salutation: "Venerable elder brother, I am on foot; pray lend me your horse. I've got no money; be good enough to lend me your purse. It's quite cold to-day; oblige me with the loan of your coat." If the venerable elder brother charitably complies, the matter ends with: "Thanks, brother!" but otherwise, the request is forthwith emphasised with the arguments of a cudgel; and if these do not convince, recourse is had to the sabre.'

As a matter of course, Chinese thieves belong in contrast to the species of which the 'Artful Dodger' may be regarded as the type. The *modus operandi* of Eastern appropriators is this: 'Two of them, associated together for the purpose, hawk about various articles of merchandise—boots, skin-coats, bricks of tea, and what not. They offer these for sale to travellers. While one of them engages the attention of the destined victim by displaying his goods and bargaining, the other ferrets about, and pockets whatever he can lay his hands on. These rascals have inconceivable skill in counting your sapeks for you, in such a way as to finger fifty or one hundred of them without your having the slightest notion as to what is going on. One day, two of these little thieves came to offer for our purchase a pair of leathern boots. Excellent boots, said they—boots such as we would not find in any shop in the whole town; boots that would keep out the rain for days; and as to cheapness, perfectly unexampled. If we missed this opportunity, we should never have such another. Only just before they had been offered 1200 sapeks for them! As we did not want boots, we replied that we could not have them at any price. Thereupon the acting merchant assumed a lofty tone of generosity. We were foreigners, we should have them for 1000 sapeks, 900, 800, 700. "Well," said we, "we certainly don't want any boots just now; yet doubtless, as you say, these are very cheap, and it will be worth while to buy them as a reserve." The bargain was accordingly concluded; we took our purse and counted out 700 sapeks to the merchant, who counted them over himself, under our very eyes, pronounced the amount correct, and once more laid the coin before us. He then called out to his companion, who was poking about in the court-yard: "Here, I have sold these capital boots for 700 sapeks." "Nonsense," cried the other; "700 sapeks! I wont hear of such a thing!" "Very well," said we; "come, take your boots, and be off with you!" He was off, and so quickly, that we thought it expedient to count our sapeks once more: there were 150 of them gone; and that was not all. While one of these rascals had been pocketing our money under our very nose, the other had bagged two great iron pins that we had driven into the court-yard for the purpose of our camels. Therefore, we took a resolution, better late than never, to admit in future no merchant whatever into our room.'

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We cannot sufficiently regret, that two travellers who have furnished us with such interesting accounts of territories comparatively so little unexplored, should, after a brief sojourn, have been compelled to quit the scene of their labours. After eighteen months' travel, Messrs Huc and Gabet arrived at the Thibetian town of Lha-Ssa, where, under the protection of the local authorities, they remained unmolested for several weeks; but their presence excited the jealousy of Ki-Chan, the deputy of the emperor of China, and at his instigation the nomekhan of Lha-Ssa ordered them to quit. They ultimately settled at Macao in 1846, and there compiled the narrative from which we have been quoting.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [3] *Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China, during the years 1844-5-6.* By M. Huc. Translated by W. Hazlitt. London. (National Illustrated Library.)

## A DAINY DISH.

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Among the variety of curious insects which are common to tropical climates, the groogroo worms of the West Indies may be considered particularly interesting. From the peculiar manner in which they are produced, and from the circumstance of their constituting a choice article of food for man, they become entitled to some attention.

The groogroo worm—so called because it is found in a species of palm vulgarly called the groogroo—is the larva of a large-sized beetle, the *Prionus*, which is peculiar to the warm latitudes of America. With the exception of a slight similarity about the region of the head, the worm bears no resemblance to the parent beetle. When full-grown, it is about 3½ inches in length, having

the body large and turgid, and increasing in circumference from the head towards the opposite extremity. The head is of a corneous, opaque substance. It has neither eyes nor the rudiments of the antennæ which distinguish the beetle tribe. It is, however, provided with the mandibles and other oral apparatus of the mandibulate group of insects, and it is only in this feature that any connection with the beetle can be traced. The trunk is precisely that of a worm; it consists of many closely-knitted segments, which are possessed of an extraordinary contractile power. It bears no mark which would indicate a future metamorphosis into a beetle. There is no sign of a future division into thorax and abdomen. There are no rudiments of wings or feet, as the under surface of the body presents exactly the same appearances as the upper. At the posterior extremity of the worm, however, there is a small horny termination, something like the hinder part of a leech. The organs are exceedingly simple, the digestive being the most developed. Albumen is the substance which composes its body, and its blood is of a greenish tint. With a motion similar to that of the earthworm, it perforates with extraordinary rapidity into the substance of the tree in which it is found.

When the moon is at her full, the gatherer of worms enters a neighbouring wood, and selects a young *palmiste* tree. This is a tree of the palm order, exceedingly stately and graceful, growing sometimes to the extraordinary height of eighty feet. From the roots upwards, it has not a single branch or shrubby excrescence, but grows beautifully smooth and straight, tapering towards the top. At its top, an abundance of the richest and most beautiful leaves spread out in graceful symmetry, and bend down on all sides, forming a figure like an umbrella; while the young leaf, still firm and compact in its foliar envelope, is seen standing erect in the centre of this foliage, like a lightning-conductor.

When a promising *palmiste* is found, the gatherer makes an incision into it with a cutlass or a hatchet. This incision is generally in the figure of a half-moon, with the base of the semicircle downwards, and the wound increasing in depth in that direction, so as to expose effectually the flesh of the tree. When this is done, the gatherer marks the locality, and leaves the tree, which he does not revisit for a considerable time. When the moon is in her wane, he returns and examines his *palmiste*. If the young leaf, together with the others, begins to shew a yellow tinge at its extremity, and if, on application of his ear to the trunk, a hollow, rumbling noise is heard within, he concludes that the worms have attacked the vital parts, and the tree is immediately cut down; but if these symptoms are absent, the tree is left standing until they appear. The gatherer, however, must now visit the tree frequently, because the transition of the insects is so rapid, that almost immediately after the appearance of the yellow tinge the whole would disappear. When the tree is felled, a square portion of the bark is cut out longitudinally from the original incision upwards, and its fibrous texture laid open. Myriads of worms are then seen voraciously devouring their way through the substance. In capturing them some degree of dexterity is necessary, both to protect one's self from the mandibles of the insects, which inflict a painful bite, and also to save time, by preventing them from burrowing out of sight. When the worms are taken, they are placed into a close vessel, where they continue to retain their activity and vigour.

The number that can be procured from a single tree, depends altogether upon the season in which it is wounded. If the moon is at her full, they are generally numerous and good—many thousands being found in an ordinary young tree of 25 feet in height. If a few succeed in eluding the gatherer, they do so only to become a prey of as voracious animals, for the wild hogs, or *quencos*, of the forest relish much the soft substance of the *palmiste* when in a state of decomposition. It never happens, therefore, that much time passes before they discover any *palmiste*-tree that has been felled; and as soon as night sets in, they flock in numbers to the spot and devour the whole substance. A gathering of worms, therefore, brings a hunt of *quencos*; and the gatherer, when his first business is over, chooses a convenient tree, where he places himself in ambush. Seated on a cross branch, he awaits the coming of the animals.

It is difficult to form an idea of the peculiar excitement of this midnight sport in the thick woods of a tropical country. The usual stillness of the night, and the solitude of the wilderness—the croaking of the night-birds, the movement of every leaf, animated as it is by the myriads of nocturnal insects that fill the atmosphere—the brilliant and fleeting fire-flies traversing the gloom—the strange animals wandering in their nightly prowlings—the approach of the grunting hogs, and the incidents of the hunt: all these things, combined with the idea of isolation when a man finds himself alone in the wilds of a scarcely pervious forest, create an inexpressible feeling of mingled fear, pleasure, and



anxiety.

Before the worms are cooked, they are, each in its turn, carefully pricked with an orange-thorn, and thrown into a vessel containing a sauce of lime-juice and salt. This is for the purpose of cleansing them from the viscid fluids they may have imbibed from the palmiste. Notwithstanding this discipline, the worms retain their vitality till they are deprived of it by the culinary process. The simpler mode of dressing them is to spit a number together on a piece of stick or a long orange-thorn, and roast them before the fire in their own fat. The general mode, however, is by frying them with or without a sauce, and when dressed in this manner, they form a most savoury dish.

Groogroo worms are considered great delicacies in some parts of the West Indies, chiefly in those whose inhabitants are of French or Spanish origin. The good old planter at his table presents you with a dish of worms, with as much pride as an epicure in England introduces you to cod-sounds, eels, or high venison. Nor does it appear that there is any peculiarity in the taste of those who relish the insects; because it very frequently happens, that the stranger, who manifested on his arrival the greatest disgust at the idea of eating worms, becomes immediately converted into an extravagant lover of them.

It may appear strange, that in the tropics, especially, where nature provides so abundantly for the wants of man, such creatures should be resorted to as articles of consumption; but while we on this side of the Atlantic are shocked at the idea of eating worms, the West Indian consumer in his turn expresses surprise that human beings can use things which resemble snakes so much as eels, and pronounces it to be the height of uncleanness to eat frogs, as some of the continentals do. Indeed, the groogroo worm is by no means more repulsive in appearance than any of the other unprepossessing creatures which are so highly prized. It would be a difficult matter to decide on the merits of the many extraordinary things which the taste of man, in its morbid cravings, has discovered and converted into luxurious use; and the philosopher finds himself at last driven to take shelter from his own unanswerable inquiries behind the concluding power of that most true, but somewhat musty proverb: 'De gustibus non est disputandum.'

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## GRATITUDE OF THE COUNTRY FOR STEAM COMMUNICATION.

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Mr Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, who first experimented in the application of steam to navigation, never received any mark of gratitude from his country; his family, though long in comparatively reduced circumstances, remain to this day equally without requital on that account. Henry Bell, who, taking his ideas from Mr Miller's experimental boat, first set a steam-vessel afloat in this country, spent his latter years in poverty, from which he was rescued only a short time before his death by a small pension from the Clyde Trustees. Mr Thomas Gray, whose Observations on Railways, published about thirty years ago, may be said to have given origin and impulse to our present railway system, by which three hundred millions have been expended, died in poverty, to which he had been reduced by his exertions in the cause; his widow and children are at this day in that state, without any public acknowledgment of his services to the country; and his son has lately applied to nearly every railway company in the kingdom for a situation, but in vain. Beyond a pension of L.50 a year to the widow of Mr James Taylor, who prompted Mr Miller to try his experiments, we are not aware of a single penny having been expended by the country in requiting the services, or compensating the losses, of individuals in respect of steam communications of any kind.

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## A DREAM OF RESURRECTION.

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So heavenly beautiful it lay,  
It was less like a human corse  
Than that fair shape in which perforce  
A dead hope clothes itself alway.

The dream shewed very plain: the bed  
Where that known unknown face reposed—  
A woman's face with eyelids closed,

A something precious that was dead:

A something, lost on this side life,  
By which the mourner came and stood,  
And laid down, ne'er to be renewed,  
All glittering robes of earthly strife;—

Shred off, like votive locks of hair,  
Youth's ornaments of joy and strength,  
And cast them in their golden length  
The silence of that bier to share.

No tears fell—but a gaze, fixed, long,  
That memory might print the face  
On the heart's ever-vacant space  
With a sun-finger, sharp and strong.

Then kisses, dropping without sound;  
And solemn arms wound round the dead;  
And lifting from the natural bed  
Into the coffin's strange *new* bound;

Yet still no parting—no belief  
In death; no more than we believe  
In some dread falsehood that would weave  
The world in one black shroud of grief.

And still, unanswered kisses; still,  
Warm clings to the image cold,  
With an impossible faith's close fold,  
Creative, through its fierce '*I will*.'

Hush, hush! the marble eyelids move;  
The kissed lips quiver into breath;  
Avaunt, thou ghastly-seeming Death!  
Avaunt! We are conquerors—I and Love!

Corse of dead hope, awake, arise!  
A living hope, that only slept  
Until the tears thus overwept  
Had washed the blindness from our eyes.

Come back into the upper day!  
Dash off those cerements! Patient shroud,  
We'll wrap thee as a garment proud  
Round the bright shape we thought was clay.

Clasp, arms! Cling, soul! Eyes, drink anew,  
Like pilgrims at a living spring!  
Faith, that out-loved this perishing,  
May see this resurrection too.

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