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Title: Peter Parley's Own Story

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Release date: March 18, 2014 [EBook #45165]

Language: English

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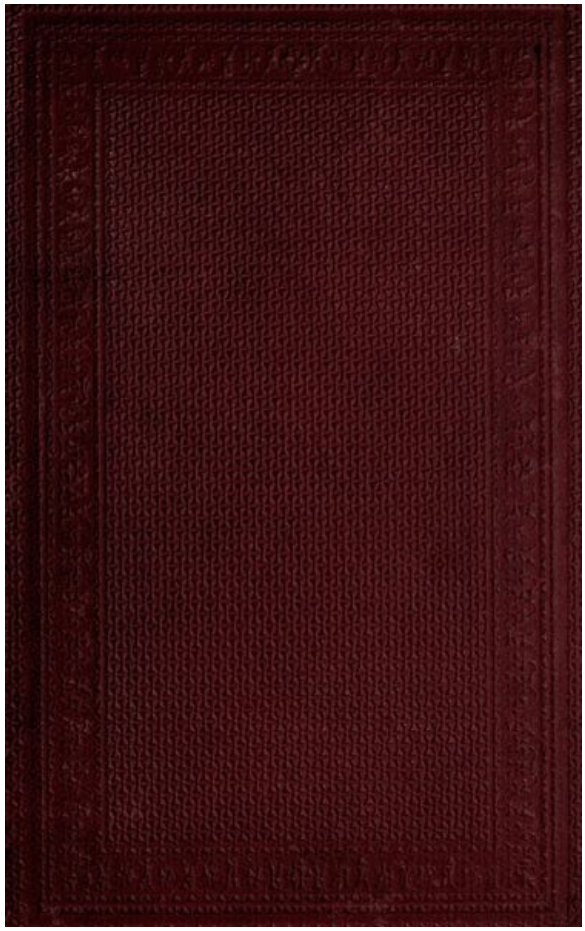

AUNT DELIGHT'S SCHOOL.

PETER PARLEY'S

OWN STORY.

FROM THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF THE LATE SAMUEL G. GOODRICH, ("*PETER PARLEY.*")

With Illustrations.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY SHELDON & COMPANY,
335 BROADWAY, COR. WORTH ST,
1864.

ELECTROTYPED BY SMITH & MCDOUGAL, 82 & 84 BERKMAN ST.
PRINTED BY C. S. WESTCOTT & CO., 79 JOHN ST.

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PETER PARLEY'S OWN STORY.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—THE OLD HOUSE—RIDGEFIELD—THE MEETING-HOUSE—PARSON MEAD—KEELER'S TAVERN —THE CANNON-BALL—LIEUTENANT SMITH.

In the western part of the State of Connecticut is a small town named Ridgefield. This title is descriptive, and indicates the general form and position of the place. It is, in fact, a collection of hills, rolled into one general and commanding elevation. On the west is a ridge of mountains, forming the boundary between the States of Connecticut and New York; to the south the land spreads out in wooded undulations to Long Island Sound; east and north, a succession of hills, some rising up against the sky and others fading away in the distance, bound the horizon. In this town, in an antiquated and rather dilapidated house of shingles and clapboards, I was born on the 19th of August, 1793.

My father, Samuel Goodrich, was minister of the Congregational Church of that place, and there was no other religious society and no other clergyman in the town. He was the son of Elizur Goodrich, a distinguished minister of the same persuasion at Durham, Connecticut. Two of his brothers were men of eminence—the late Chauncey Goodrich of Hartford, and Elizur Goodrich of [10] New Haven. My mother was a daughter of John Ely, a physician of Saybrook, whose name figures, not unworthily, in the annals of the revolutionary war.

I was the sixth child of a family of ten children, two of whom died in infancy, and eight of whom lived to be married and settled in life. My father's annual salary for the first twenty-five years, and during his ministry at Ridgefield, averaged four hundred dollars a-year: the last twenty-five years, during which he was settled at Berlin, near Hartford, his stipend was about five hundred dollars a-year. He was wholly without patrimony, and owing to peculiar circumstances, which will be hereafter explained, my mother had not even the ordinary outfit when they began their married life. Yet they so brought up their family of eight children, that they all attained respectable positions in life, and at my father's death he left an estate of four thousand dollars. These facts throw light upon the simple annals of a country clergyman in Connecticut, half-a-century ago; they also bear testimony to the thrifty energy and wise frugality of my parents, and especially of my mother, who was the guardian deity of the household.

Ridgefield belongs to the county of Fairfield, and is now a handsome town, as well on account of its artificial as its natural advantages; with some two thousand inhabitants. It is fourteen miles from Long Island Sound, of which its many swelling hills afford charming views. The main street is a mile in length, and is now embellished with several handsome houses. About the middle of it there is, or was, some forty years ago, a white, wooden Meeting-house, which belonged to my [11] father's congregation. It stood in a small grassy square, the favorite pasture of numerous flocks of geese, and the frequent playground of school-boys, especially on Sunday afternoons. Close by the front door ran the public road, and the pulpit, facing it, looked out upon it on fair summer Sundays, as I well remember by a somewhat amusing incident.

In the contiguous town of Lower Salem dwelt an aged minister, by the name of Mead. He was all his life marked with eccentricity, and about those days of which I speak, his mind was rendered yet more erratic by a touch of paralysis. He was, however, still able to preach, and on a certain Sunday, having exchanged with my father, he was in the pulpit and engaged in making his opening prayer. He had already begun his invocation, when David P——, who was the Jehu of that generation, dashed by the front door upon a horse, a clever animal, of which he was but too proud—in a full, round trot. The echo of the clattering hoofs filled the church, which, being of wood, was sonorous as a drum, and arrested the attention, as well of the minister as the congregation, even before the rider had reached it. The minister was fond of horses, almost to frailty; and, from the first, his practised ear perceived that the sounds came from a beast of bottom. When the animal shot by the door, he could not restrain his admiration; which was accordingly thrust into the very marrow of his prayer "We pray Thee, O Lord, in a particular and peculiar manner—*that's a real smart critter*—to forgive us our manifold trespasses, in a particular and peculiar manner," &c.

I have somewhere heard of a traveller on horseback, who, just at eventide, being uncertain of his road, inquired of a person he chanced to meet, the way to Barkhamstead. [12]

"You are in Barkhamstead now," was the reply.

"Yes, but where is the centre of the place?"

"It hasn't got any centre."

"Well, but direct me to the tavern."

"There ain't any tavern."

"Yes, but the meeting-house?"

"Why didn't you ask that afore? There it is, over the hill!"

So, in those days, in Connecticut, as doubtless in other parts of New England, the meeting-house was the great geographical monument, the acknowledged meridian of every town and village. Even a place without a centre, or a tavern, had its house of worship; and this was its point of reckoning. It was, indeed, something more. It was the town-hall, where all public meetings were held for civil purposes; it was the temple of religion, the pillar of society, religious, social, and moral, to the people around. It will not be considered strange, then, if I look back to the meeting-house of Ridgefield, as not only a most revered edifice, but as in some sense the starting-point of my existence. Here, at least, linger many of my most cherished remembrances.

A few rods to the south of this there was, and still is, a tavern, kept in my day by Squire Keeler. This institution ranked second only to the meeting-house; for the tavern of those days was generally the centre of news, and the gathering-place for balls, musical entertainments, public shows, &c.; and this particular tavern had special claims to notice. It was, in the first place, on

the great thoroughfare of the day, between Boston and New York; and had become a general and favorite stopping-place for travellers. It was, moreover, kept by a hearty old gentleman, who [13] united in his single person the varied functions of publican, postmaster, representative, justice of the peace, and I know not what else. He, besides, had a thrifty wife, whose praise was in all the land. She loved her customers, especially members of Congress, governors, and others in authority who wore powder and white top-boots, and who migrated to and fro in the lofty leisure of their own coaches. She was, indeed, a woman of mark; and her life has its moral. She scoured and scrubbed, and kept things going, until she was seventy years old; at which time, during an epidemic, she was threatened with an attack. She, however, declared that she had not time to be sick, and kept on working; so that the disease passed her by, though it made sad havoc all around her, especially with more dainty dames who had leisure to follow the fashion.

Besides all this, there was an historical interest attached to Keeler's tavern; for, deeply imbedded in the north-eastern corner-post, there was a cannon-ball, planted there during the famous fight with the British in 1777. It was one of the chief historical monuments of the town, and was visited by all curious travellers who came that way. Little can the present generation imagine with what glowing interest, what ecstatic wonder, what big, round eyes, the rising generation of Ridgefield, half a century ago, listened to the account of the fight, as given by Lieutenant Smith, himself a witness of the event and a participator in the conflict, sword in hand.

This personage, whom I shall have occasion again to introduce to my readers, was, in my time, a justice of the peace, town librarian, and general oracle in such loose matters as geography, history, and law; then about as uncertain and unsettled in Ridgefield, as is now the longitude of [14] Lilliput. He had a long, lean face; long, lank, silvery hair; and an unctuous, whining voice. With these advantages, he spoke with the authority of a seer, and especially in all things relating to the revolutionary war.

The agitating scenes of that event, so really great in itself, so unspeakably important to the country, had transpired some five-and-twenty years before. The existing generation of middle age had all witnessed it; nearly all had shared in its vicissitudes. On every hand there were corporals, serjeants, lieutenants, captains, and colonels, no strutting fops in militia buckram, raw blue and buff, all fuss and feathers, but soldiers, men who had seen service and won laurels in the tented field. Every old man, every old woman, had stories to tell, radiant with the vivid realities of personal observation or experience. Some had seen Washington, and some Old Put; one was at the capture of Ticonderoga under Ethan Allen; another was at Bennington, and actually heard old Stark say, "Victory this day, or my wife Molly is a widow!" Some were at the taking of Stony Point, and others in the sanguinary struggle of Monmouth. One had witnessed the execution of André, and another had been present at the capture of Burgoyne. The time which had elapsed since these events had served only to magnify and glorify these scenes, as well as the actors, especially in the imagination of the rising generation. If perchance we could now dig up and galvanize into life a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, who was present and saw him cross the Rubicon, and could tell us how he looked and what he said, we should listen with somewhat of the greedy wonder with which the boys of Ridgefield listened to Lieutenant Smith, when of a [15] Saturday afternoon, seated on the stoop of Keeler's tavern, he discoursed upon the discovery of America by Columbus, Braddock's defeat, and the old French war; the latter a real epic, embellished with romantic episodes of Indian massacres and captivities. When he came to the Revolution, and spoke of the fight at Ridgefield, and punctuated his discourse with a present cannon-ball, sunk six inches deep in a corner-post of the very house in which we sat, you may well believe it was something more than words—it was, indeed, "action, action, glorious action!" How little can people now-a-days comprehend or appreciate these things!

CHAPTER II. [16]

THE NEW HOUSE—HIGH RIDGE—NATHAN KELLOGG'S SPY-GLASS—THE SHOVEL—THE BLACK PATCH IN THE ROAD—DISTRUST OF BRITISH INFLUENCE—OLD CHICH-ES-TER—AUNT DELIGHT—RETURN AFTER TWENTY YEARS.

My memory goes distinctly back to the year 1797, when I was four years old. At that time a great event happened—great in the narrow horizon of childhood: we removed from the Old House to the New House! This latter, situated on a road tending westward and branching from the main street, my father had just built; and it then appeared to me quite a stately mansion and very beautiful, inasmuch as it was painted red behind and white in front: most of the dwellings thereabouts being of the dun complexion which pine-boards and chestnut-shingles assume, from exposure to the weather. Long after, having been absent twenty years, I revisited this my early home, and found it shrunk into a very small and ordinary two-story dwelling, wholly divested of its paint, and scarcely thirty feet square.

This building, apart from all other dwellings, was situated on what is called High Ridge, a long hill, looking down upon the village, and commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country. From our upper windows, this was at once beautiful and diversified. On the south, as I have said, the hills sloped in a sea of undulations down to Long Island Sound, a distance of some [17] fourteen miles. This beautiful sheet of water, like a strip of pale sky, with the island itself, more deeply tinted, beyond, was visible in fair weather, for a stretch of sixty miles, to the naked eye.

The vessels, even the smaller ones, sloops, schooners, and fishing-craft, could be seen, creeping like insects over the surface. With a spy-glass—and my father had one bequeathed to him by Nathan Kellogg, a sailor, who made rather a rough voyage of life, but anchored at last in the bosom of the Church, as this bequest intimates—we could see the masts, sails, and rigging. It was a poor, dim affair, compared with modern instruments of the kind; but to me, its revelations of an element which then seemed as beautiful, as remote, and as mystical as the heavens, surpassed the wonders of the firmament.

To the west, at a distance of three miles, lay the undulating ridge of hills, cliffs, and precipices already mentioned, and which bear the name of West Mountain. They are some five hundred feet in height, and from our point of view had an imposing appearance. Beyond them, in the far distance, glimmered the peaks of the highlands along the Hudson. These two prominent features of the spreading landscape—the sea and the mountain, ever present, yet ever remote—impressed themselves on my young imagination with all the enchantment which distance lends to the view. I have never lost my first love. Never, even now, do I catch a glimpse of either of these two rivals of nature, such as I first learned them by heart, but I feel a gush of emotion as if I had suddenly met with the cherished companions of my childhood. In after days, even the purple velvet of the Apennines and the poetic azure of the Mediterranean, have derived additional beauty to my [18] imagination from mingling with these vivid associations of my childhood.

It was to the New House, then, thus situated, that we removed, as I have stated, when I was four years old. On that great occasion, everything available for draught or burden was put in requisition; and I was permitted, or required, I forget which, to carry the *peel*, as it was then called, but which would now bear the title of "shovel." Birmingham had not then been heard of in those parts, or at least was a great way off; so this particular utensil had been forged expressly for my father by David Olmstead, the blacksmith, as was the custom in those days. I recollect it well, and can state that it was a sturdy piece of iron, the handle being four feet long, with a knob at the end. As I carried it along, I doubtless felt a touch of that consciousness of power which must have filled the breast of Samson as he bore off the gates of Gaza. I recollect perfectly well to have perspired under the operation, for the distance of our migration was half-a-mile, and the season was summer.

One thing more I remember: I was barefoot; and as we went up the lane which diverged from the main road to the house, we passed over a patch of earth blackened by cinders, where my feet were hurt by pieces of melted glass and metal. I inquired what this meant, and was told that here a house was burned down by the British troops already mentioned, and then in full retreat, as a signal to the ships that awaited them in the Sound, where they had landed, and where they intended to embark.

This detail may seem trifling; but it is not without significance. It was the custom in those days for boys to go barefoot in the mild season. I recollect few things in life more delightful than, in [19] the spring, to cast away my shoes and stockings, and have a glorious scamper over the fields. Many a time, contrary to the express injunctions of my mother, have I stolen this bliss; and many a time have I been punished by a severe cold for my disobedience. Yet the bliss then seemed a compensation for the retribution. In these exercises I felt as if stepping on air; as if leaping aloft on wings. I was so impressed with the exultant emotions thus experienced, that I repeated them a thousand times in happy dreams; especially in my younger days. Even now these visions sometimes come to me in sleep, though with a lurking consciousness that they are but a mockery of the past; sad monitors of the change which time has wrought upon me.

As to the black patch in the lane, that, too, had its meaning. The story of a house burned down by a foreign army seized upon my imagination. Every time I passed the place I ruminated upon it, and put a hundred questions as to how and when it happened. I was soon master of the whole story, and of other similar events which had occurred all over the country. I was thus initiated into the spirit of that day, and which has never wholly subsided in our country; inasmuch as the war of the Revolution was alike unjust in its origin, and cruel as to the manner in which it was waged. It was, moreover, fought on our own soil; thus making the whole people share, personally, in its miseries. There was scarcely a family in Connecticut whom it did not visit, either immediately or remotely, with the shadows of mourning and desolation. The British nation, to whom this conflict was a foreign war, are slow to comprehend the popular dislike of England, here in America. Could they know the familiar annals of our towns and villages—burn, plundered, [20] sacked—with all the attendant horrors, for the avowed purpose of punishing a nation of rebels, and those rebels of their own kith and kin: could they be made acquainted with the deeds of those twenty thousand Hessians, sent hither by King George, and who have left their name in our language as a word signifying brigands, who sell their blood and commit murder for hire: could they thus read the history of minds and hearts, influenced at the fountains of life for several generations, they would perhaps comprehend, if they could not approve, the habitual distrust of British influence, which lingers among our people.

About three-fourths of a mile from my father's house, on the winding road to Lower Salem, which I have already mentioned, and which bore the name of West Lane, was the school-house where I took my first lessons, and received the foundations of my very slender education. I have since been sometimes asked where I graduated: my reply has always been, "At West Lane." Generally speaking, this has ended the inquiry; whether, because my questioners have confounded this venerable institution with "Lane Seminary," or have not thought it worth while to risk an exposure of their ignorance as to the college in which I was educated, I am unable to say.

The site of the school-house was a triangular piece of land, measuring perhaps a rood in extent, and lying, according to the custom of those days, at the meeting of four roads. The ground

hereabouts—as everywhere else in Ridgefield—was exceedingly stony; and, in making the pathway, the stones had been thrown out right and left, and there remained in heaps on either side, from generation to generation. All around was bleak and desolate. Loose, squat stone walls, [21] with innumerable breaches, inclosed the adjacent fields. A few tufts of elder, with here and there a patch of briers and pokeweed, flourished in the gravelly soil. Not a tree, however, remained; save an aged chestnut, at the western angel of the space. This, certainly, had not been spared for shade or ornament, but probably because it would have cost too much labor to cut it down; for it was of ample girth. At all events, it was the oasis in our desert during summer; and in autumn, as the burrs disclosed its fruit, it resembled a besieged city; the boys, like so many catapults, hurled at it stones and sticks, until every nut had capitulated.

Two houses only were at hand: one, surrounded by an ample barn, a teeming orchard, and an enormous wood-pile, belonging to Granther Baldwin; the other was the property of "Old Chich-ester;" an uncouth, unsocial being, whom everybody, for some reason or other, seemed to despise and shun. His house was of stone, and of one story. He had a cow, which every year had a calf. He had a wife—dirty and uncombed, and vaguely reported to have been brought from the old country. This is about the whole history of the man, so far as it is written in the authentic traditions of the parish. His premises, an acre in extent, consisted of a tongue of land between two of the converging roads. No boy, that I ever heard of, ventured to cast a stone, or to make an incursion into this territory, though it lay close to the school-house. I have often, in passing, peeped timidly over the walls, and caught glimpses of a stout man with a drab coat, drab breeches, and drab gaiters, prowling about the house; but never did I discover him outside of his [22] own dominion. I know it was darkly intimated he had been tarred and feathered in the revolutionary war; but as to the rest, he was a perfect myth.

The school-house itself consisted of rough, unpainted clapboards, upon a wooden frame. It was plastered within, and contained two apartments, a little entry, taken out of a corner for a wardrobe, and the school-room proper. The chimney was of stone, and pointed with mortar, which, by the way, had been dug into a honeycomb by uneasy and enterprising penknives. The fireplace was six feet wide and four feet deep. The flue was so ample and so perpendicular, that the rain, sleet, and snow fell directly to the hearth. In winter, the battle for life with green fizzling fuel, which was brought in lengths and cut up by the scholars, was a stern one. Not unfrequently the wood, gushing with sap as it was, chanced to go out, and as there was no living without fire, the thermometer being ten or twenty degrees below zero, the school was dismissed, whereat all the scholars rejoiced aloud, not having the fear of the schoolmaster before their eyes.

It was the custom at this place to have a woman's school in the summer months, and this was attended only by young children. It was, in fact, what we now call a primary or infant school. In winter, a man was employed as teacher, and then the girls and boys of the neighborhood, up to the age of eighteen, or even twenty, were among the pupils. It was not uncommon, at this season, to have forty scholars crowded into this little building.

I was about six years old when I first went to school. My teacher was Aunt Delight, that is Delight Benedict, a maiden lady of fifty, short and bent, of sallow complexion and solemn aspect. I [23] remember the first day with perfect distinctness. I went alone—for I was familiar with the road, it being that which passed by our old house. I carried a little basket, with bread and butter within, for my dinner, and this was covered over with a white cloth. When I had proceeded about half way, I lifted the cover, and debated whether I would not eat my dinner then. I believe it was a sense of duty only that prevented my doing so, for in those happy days I always had a keen appetite. Bread and butter were then infinitely superior to *pâté de foie gras* now; but still, thanks to my training, I had also a conscience. As my mother had given me the food for dinner, I did not think it right to convert it into lunch, even though I was strongly tempted.

I think we had seventeen scholars—boys and girls—mostly of my own age. Among them were some of my after-companions. I have since met several of them—one at Savannah and two at Mobile—respectably established, and with families around them. Some remain, and are now among the grey old men of the town: the names of others I have seen inscribed on the tombstones of their native village. And the rest—where are they?

The school being assembled, we were all seated upon benches, made of what were called *slabs*—that is, boards having the exterior or rounded part of the log on one side: as they were useless for other purposes, these were converted into school-benches, the rounded part down. They had each four supports, consisting of straddling wooden legs set into augur-holes. Our own legs swayed in the air, for they were too short to touch the floor. Oh, what an awe fell over me, when [24] we were all seated and silence reigned around!

The children were called up one by one to Aunt Delight, who sat on a low chair, and required each, as a preliminary, "to make his manners," which consisted of a small, sudden nod. She then placed the spelling-book—which was Dilworth's—before the pupil, and with a buck-handled penknife pointed, one by one, to the letters of the alphabet, saying, "What's that?" If the child knew his letters, the "what's that?" very soon ran on thus: —

"What's that?"

"A."

"'Stha-a-t?"

"B."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"C."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"D." &c.

I looked upon these operations with intense curiosity and no small respect, until my own turn came. I went up to the schoolmistress with some emotion, and when she said, rather spitefully, as I thought, "Make your obeisance!" my little intellects all fled away, and I did nothing. Having waited a second, gazing at me with indignation, she laid her hand on the top of my head, and gave it a jerk which made my teeth clash. I believe I bit my tongue a little; at all events, my sense of dignity was offended, and when she pointed to A, and asked what it was, it swam before me dim and hazy, and as big as a full moon. She repeated the question, but I was doggedly silent. Again, a third time, she said, "What's that?" I replied: "Why don't you tell me what it is? I didn't [25] come here to learn you your letters." I have not the slightest remembrance of this, for my brains were all a wool-gathering; but as Aunt Delight affirmed it to be a fact, and it passed into a tradition in my family, I put it in.

What immediately followed I do not clearly remember, but one result is distinctly traced in my memory. In the evening of this eventful day the schoolmistress paid my parents a visit, and recounted to their astonished ears this my awful contempt of authority. My father, after hearing the story, got up and went away; but my mother, who was a careful disciplinarian, told me not to do so again! I always had a suspicion that both of them smiled on one side of their faces, even while they seemed to sympathize with the old lady on the other; still, I do not affirm it, for I am bound to say of both my parents, that I never knew them, even in trifles, say one thing while they meant another.

I believe I achieved the alphabet that summer, but my after progress, for a long time, I do not remember. Two years later I went to the winter school at the same place, kept by Lewis Olmstead —a man who made a business of ploughing, mowing, carting manure, &c., in the summer, and of teaching school in the winter; with a talent for music at all seasons, wherefore he became chorister upon occasion, when, peradventure, Deacon Hawley could not officiate. He was a celebrity in ciphering, and Squire Seymour declared that he was the greatest "arithmeticker" in Fairfield county. All I remember of his person is his hand, which seemed to me as big as Goliath's, judging by the claps of thunder it made in my ears on one or two occasions.

The next step of my progress which is marked in my memory, is the spelling of words of two [26] syllables. I did not go very regularly to school, but by the time I was ten years old I had learned to write, and had made a little progress in arithmetic. There was not a grammar, a geography, or a history of any kind in the school. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the only things taught, and these very indifferently—not wholly from the stupidity of the teacher, but because he had forty scholars, and the custom of the age required no more than he performed. I did as well as the other scholars, certainly no better. I had excellent health and joyous spirits; in leaping, running, and wrestling I had but one superior of my age, and that was Stephen Olmstead, a snug-built fellow, smaller than myself, and who, despite our rivalry, was my chosen friend and companion. I seemed to live for play: alas! how the world has changed since then!

After I had left my native town for some twenty years, I returned and paid it a visit. Among the monuments that stood high in my memory was the West Lane school-house. Unconsciously carrying with me the measures of childhood, I had supposed it to be thirty feet square; how had it dwindled when I came to estimate it by the new standards I had formed! It was in all things the same, yet wholly changed to me. What I had deemed a respectable edifice, as it now stood before me was only a weather-beaten little shed, which, upon being measured, I found to be less than twenty feet square. It happened to be a warm summer day, and I ventured to enter the place. I found a girl, some eighteen years old, keeping a ma'am school for about twenty scholars, some of whom were studying Parley's Geography. The mistress was the daughter of one of my [27] schoolmates, and some of the boys and girls were grandchildren of the little brood which gathered under the wing of Aunt Delight, when I was an abecedarian. None of them, not even the schoolmistress, had ever heard of me. The name of my father, as having ministered to the people of Ridgefield in some bygone age, was faintly traced in their recollection. As to Peter Parley, whose geography they were learning, they supposed him to be a decrepit old gentleman hobbling about on a crutch, a long way off, for whom, nevertheless, they had a certain affection, inasmuch as he had made geography into a story-book. The frontispiece picture of the old fellow, with his gouty foot in a chair, threatening the boys that if they touched his tender toe he would tell them no more stories, secured their respect, and placed him among the saints in the calendar of their young hearts. "Well," thought I, "if this goes on, I may yet rival Mother Goose!"

I hope the reader will not imagine that I am thinking too little of his amusement and too much of my own, if I stop a few moments to note the lively recollections I entertain of the joyousness of my early life, and not of mine only, but that of my playmates and companions. In looking back to those early days, the whole circle of the seasons seems to me almost like one unbroken morning of pleasure.

I was of course subjected to the usual crosses incident to my age, those painful and mysterious visitations sent upon children—the measles, mumps, whooping-cough, and the like; usually regarded as retributions for the false step of our mother Eve in the Garden; but they have almost passed from my memory, as if overflowed and borne away by the general drift of happiness which [28] filled my bosom. Among these calamities, one monument alone remains—the small-pox. It was in the year 1798, as I well remember, that my father's house was converted into a hospital, or, as it was then called, a "pest-house," where, with some dozen other children, I was inoculated for this

disease, then the scourge and terror of the world.

The lane in which our house was situated was fenced up, north and south, so as to cut off all intercourse with the world around. A flag was raised, and upon it were inscribed the ominous words, "☞ SMALL-POX." My uncle and aunt, from New Haven, arrived with their three children. Half-a-dozen others of the neighborhood were gathered together, making, with our own children, somewhat over a dozen subjects for the experiment. When all was ready, like Noah and his family, we were shut in. Provisions were deposited in a basket at a point agreed upon, down the lane. Thus we were cut off from the world, excepting only that Dr. Perry, the physician, ventured to visit us.

As to myself, the disease passed lightly over, leaving, however, its indisputable autographs on various parts of my body. Were it not for these testimonials, I should almost suspect that I had escaped the disease, for I only remember, among my symptoms and my sufferings, a little headache, and the privation of salt and butter upon my hasty-pudding. My restoration to these privileges I distinctly recollect: doubtless these gave me more pleasure than the clean bill of health which they implied. Several of the patients suffered severely, and among them my brother and one of my cousins.

But although there is evidence that I was subject to the usual drawbacks upon the happiness of childhood, these were so few that they have passed from my mind; and those early years, as I look back to them, seem to have flowed on in one bright current of uninterrupted enjoyment. [29]

CHAPTER III. [30]

RIDGEFIELD SOCIETY—TRADES AND PROFESSIONS—CHIMNEY-CORNER COURTSHIPS—DOMESTIC ECONOMY—DRAM-DRINKING—FAMILY PRODUCTS—MOLLY GREGORY AND CHURCH MUSIC—TRAVELLING ARTISANS—FESTIVAL OF THE QUILTS—CLERICAL PATRONAGE—RAISING A CHURCH—THE RETIRED TAILOR AND HIS FARM.

Let me now give you a sketch of Ridgefield and of the people, how they lived, thought, and felt, at the beginning of the present century. It will give you a good idea of the rustic life of New England fifty years ago.

From what I have already said, you will easily imagine the prominent physical characteristics and aspect of my native town: a general mass of hills, rising up in a crescent of low mountains, and commanding a wide view on every side. The soil was naturally hard, and thickly sown with stones of every size. The fields were divided by rude stone walls, and the surface of most of them was dotted with gathered heaps of stones and rocks, thus clearing spaces for cultivation, yet leaving a large portion of the land still encumbered. The climate was severe, on account of the elevation of the site, yet this was perhaps fully compensated by its salubrity.

Yet, despite the somewhat forbidding nature of the soil and climate of Ridgefield, it may be regarded as presenting a favorable example of New England country life and society at the time I speak of. The town was originally settled by a sturdy race of men, mostly the immediate descendants of English emigrants, some from Milford. Their migration over an intervening space of savage hills, rocks and ravines, into a territory so uninviting, and their speedy conversion of this into a thriving and smiling village, bear witness to their courage and energy. [31]

At the time referred to, the date of my earliest recollection, the society of Ridgefield was exclusively English. I remember but one Irishman, one negro, and one Indian in the town. The first had begged and blarneyed his way from Long Island, where he had been wrecked; the second was a liberated slave; and the last was the vestige of a tribe which dwelt of yore in a swampy tract, the name of which I have forgotten. We had a professional beggar, called Jagger, who had served in the armies of more than one of the Georges, and insisted upon crying, "God save the king!" even on the 4th of July, and when openly threatened by the boys with a gratuitous ride on a rail. We had one settled pauper, Mrs. Yabacomb, who, for the first dozen years of my life, was my standard type for the witch of Endor.

Nearly all the inhabitants of Ridgefield were farmers, with the few mechanics that were necessary to carry on society in a somewhat primeval state. Even the persons not professionally devoted to agriculture had each his farm, or at least his garden and home lot, with his pigs, poultry, and cattle. The population might have been 1200, comprising two hundred families. All could read and write, but in point of fact, beyond the Almanac and Watts' Psalms and Hymns, their literary acquirements had little scope. There were, I think, four newspapers, all weekly, published in the State: one at Hartford, one at New London, one at New Haven, and one at Litchfield. There were, however, not more than three subscribers to all these in our village. We had, however, a public library of some two hundred volumes, and, what was of equal consequence, the town was on the road which was then the great thoroughfare, connecting Boston with New York; and hence we had means of intelligence from travellers constantly passing through the place, which kept us acquainted with the march of events. [32]

If Ridgefield was thus rather above the average of Connecticut villages in civilization, I suppose the circumstances and modes of life in my father's family were somewhat above those of most

people around us. We had a farm of forty acres, with four cows, two horses, and some dozen sheep, to which may be added a stock of poultry, including a flock of geese. My father carried on the farm, besides preaching two sermons a-week, and visiting the sick, attending funerals, solemnizing marriages, &c. He laid out the beds and planted the garden; pruned the fruit-trees, and worked with the men in the meadow in hay-time. He generally cut the corn-stalks himself, and always shelled the ears; the latter being done by drawing them across the handle of the frying-pan, fastened over a wash-tub. I was sometimes permitted, as an indulgence, to share this favorite employment with my father. With these and a few other exceptions, our agricultural operations were carried on by hired help.

It was the custom in New England, at the time I speak of, for country lawyers, physicians, clergymen, even doctors of divinity, to partake of these homespun labors. In the library of the Athenæum, at Hartford, is a collection of almanacs, formerly belonging to John Cotton Smith—one of the most elegant and accomplished men of his time—a distinguished Member of Congress, [33]
Judge of the Superior Court, and several years Governor of the State; in looking it over, I observed such notes as the following, made with his own hand: "Cut my barley," "began rye harvest," "planted field of potatoes," &c.: thus showing his personal attention to, if not his participation in, the affairs of the farm. Nearly all the judges of the Superior Court occasionally worked in the field, in these hearty old federal times.

But I returned to Ridgefield. The household, as well as political, economy of those days lay in this,—that every family lived as much as possible within itself. Money was scarce, wages being about fifty cents a-day, though these were generally paid in meat, vegetables, and other articles of use—seldom in money. There was not a factory of any kind in the place.[1] There was a butcher, but he only went from house to house to slaughter the cattle and swine of his neighbors. There was a tanner, but he only dressed other people's skins. There was a clothier, but he generally fulled and dressed other people's cloth. All this is typical of the mechanical operations of the place. Even dyeing blue a portion of the wool, so as to make linsey-woolsey for short gowns, aprons, and blue-mixed stockings—vital necessities in those days—was a domestic operation. During the autumn, a dye-tub in the chimney corner—thus placed so as to be cherished by the genial heat—was as familiar in all thrifty houses as the Bible or the back-log. It was covered with a board, and formed [34]
a cosy seat in the wide-mouthed fireplace, especially of a chill evening. When the night had waned, and the family had retired, it frequently became the anxious seat of the lover, who was permitted to carry on his courtship, the object of his addresses sitting demurely in the opposite corner. Some of the first families in Connecticut, I suspect, could their full annals be written, would find their foundations to have been laid in these chimney-corner courtships.

Being thus exposed, the dye-tub was the frequent subject of distressing and exciting accidents. Among the early, indelible incidents in my memory, one of the most prominent is turning this over. Nothing so roused the indignation of thrifty housewives, for, besides the stain left upon the floor by the blue, a most disagreeable odor was diffused by it.

To this general system of domestic economy our family was not an exception. Every autumn, it was a matter of course that we had a fat ox or a fat cow ready for slaughter. One full barrel was salted down; the hams were cut out, slightly salted, and hung up in the chimney for a few days, and thus became "dried" or "hung beef," then as essential as bread. Pork was managed in a similar way, though even on a larger scale, for two barrels were indispensable. A few pieces, as the spare-ribs, &c., were distributed to the neighbors, who paid in kind when they killed their swine.

Mutton and poultry came in their turn, all from our own stock, except when on Thanksgiving-day some of the magnates gave the parson a turkey. This, let me observe, in those good old times, was a bird of mark; no timid, crouching biped, with downcast head and pallid countenance, but stalking like a lord, and having wattles red as a "banner bathed in slaughter." His beard was [35]
long, shining, and wiry. There was, in fact, something of the native bird still in him, for though the race was nearly extinct, a few wild flocks lingered in the remote woods. Occasionally, in the depth of winter, and towards the early spring, these stole to the barnyard, and held communion with their civilized cousins. Severe battles ensued among the leaders for the favors of the fair, and as the wild cocks always conquered, the vigor of the race was kept up.

Our bread was made of rye, mixed with Indian meal. Wheat bread was reserved for the sacrament and company; a proof not of its superiority, but of its scarcity and consequent estimation. All the vegetables came from our garden and farm. The fuel was supplied by our own woods—sweet-scented hickory, snapping chestnut, odoriferous oak, and reeking, fizzling ash—the hot juice of the latter, by the way, being a sovereign antidote for the earache. These were laid in huge piles, all alive with sap, on the tall, gaunt andirons. The building of a fire, a real architectural achievement, was always begun by daybreak. There was first a back-log, from fifteen to four-and-twenty inches in diameter, and five feet long, imbedded in the ashes; then came a top log, then a fore stick, then a middle stick, and then a heap of kindlings, reaching from the bowels down to the bottom. Above all was a pyramid of smaller fragments, artfully adjusted, with spaces for the blaze. Friction matches had not then been invented. So, if there were no coals left from the last night's fire, and none to be borrowed from the neighbors, resort was had to flint, steel, and tinder-box. Often, when the flint was dull, and the steel soft, and the tinder damp, the striking of fire was a task requiring both energy and patience. If the pile on the andirons was [36]
skilfully constructed, the spark being applied, there was soon a furious stinging smoke; but the forked flame soon began to lick the sweating sticks above, and by the time the family had arisen, and assembled in the "keeping-room," there was a roaring blaze, defying the bitter blasts of winter, which found abundant admittance through the crannies of the doors and windows. To

feed the family fire in those days, during the severe season, was fully one man's work.

But to go on with our household history. Sugar was partially supplied by our maple-trees. These were tapped in March, the sap being collected, and boiled down in the woods. This was wholly a domestic operation, and one in which all the children rejoiced, each taking his privilege of tasting, at every stage of the manufacture. The chief supply of sugar, however, was from the West Indies.

MAKING MAPLE-SUGAR.

Rum was largely consumed, but our distilleries had scarcely begun. A half-pint of it was given as a matter of course to every day laborer, more particularly in the summer season. In all families, rich or poor, it was offered to male visitors as an essential point of hospitality, or even good manners. Women—I beg pardon—ladies, took their schnapps, then named "Hopkins' Elixir," which was the most delicious and seductive means of getting tipsy that has been invented. Crying babies were silenced with hot toddy. Every man imbibed his morning dram, and this was esteemed temperance. There is a story of a preacher, about those days, who thus lectured his parish: "I say nothing, my beloved brethren, against taking a little bitters before breakfast, and after breakfast; especially if you are used to it. What I contend against is, this dramming, [37] dramming, dramming, at all hours of the day. There are some men who take a glass at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and at four in the afternoon. I do not purpose to contend against old-established customs, my brethren, rendered respectable by time and authority; but this dramming, dramming, is a crying sin in the land."

As to brandy, I scarcely heard of it, so far as I can recollect, till I was sixteen years old, and, as an apprentice in a country store, was called upon to sell it. Cider was the universal table beverage. Brandy and whisky soon after came into use. I remember, in my boyhood, to have seen a strange zigzag tin tube, denominated a "still," belonging to one of our neighbors, converting, drop by drop, certain innocent liquids into "fire-water." But, in the days I speak of, French brandy was confined to the houses of the rich, and to the drug-shop.

Wine, in our country towns, was then almost exclusively used for the sacrament.

There was, of course, no baker in Ridgefield; each family not only made its own bread, cakes, and pies, but its own soap, candles, butter, cheese, and the like. The manufacture of linen and woollen cloth was no less a domestic operation. Cotton—that is, raw cotton—was then wholly unknown among us at the North, except as a mere curiosity, produced somewhere in the tropics; but whether it grew on a plant, or an animal, was not clearly settled in the public mind.

We raised our own flax, rotted it, hackled it, dressed it, and spun it. The little wheel, turned by the foot, had its place, and was as familiar as if it had been a member of the family. How often have I seen my mother, and my grandmother, too, sit down to it—though this, as I remember, was [38] for the purpose of spinning some finer kind of thread—the burden of the spinning being done by a neighbor of ours, Sally St. John. By the way, she was a good-hearted, cheerful old maid, who petted me beyond my deserts. I grieve to say, that I repaid her partiality by many mischievous

pranks; for which I should have been roundly punished, had not the good creature forgiven and concealed my offences. I did, indeed, get fillipped for catching her foot one day in a steel-trap; but I declare that I was innocent of malice prepense, inasmuch as I had set the trap for a rat, instead of the said Sally. Nevertheless, the verdict was against me; not wholly on account of my misdemeanor in this particular instance, but because, if I did not deserve punishment for that, I had deserved it, and should deserve it for something else; and so it was safe to administer it.

The wool was also spun in the family; partly by my sisters, and partly by Molly Gregory, daughter of our neighbor, the town carpenter. I remember her well as she sang and spun aloft in the attic. In those days, church-singing was the only one of the fine arts which flourished in Ridgefield, except the music of the drum and fife. The choir was divided into four parts, ranged on three sides of the meeting-house gallery. The tenor, led by Deacon Hawley, was in front of the pulpit, the bass to the left, and the treble and counter to the right; the whole being set in motion by a pitch-pipe, made by the deacon himself, who was a cabinet-maker. Molly took upon herself the entire counter, for she had excellent lungs. The fuguing tunes, which had then run a little mad, were her delight. In her solitary operations aloft I have often heard her send forth, from the attic windows, the droning hum of her wheel, with fitful snatches of a hymn, in which the bass began, [39] the tenor followed, then the treble, and, finally, the counter—winding up with irresistible pathos. Molly singing to herself, and all unconscious of eavesdroppers, carried on all the parts thus:—

Bass. "Long for a cooling—
Tenor. "Long for a cooling—
Treble. "Long for a cooling—
Counter. "Long for a cooling stream at hand,
And they must drink or die!"

The knitting of stockings was performed by the women of the family in the evening, and especially at tea-parties. This was considered a moral, as well as an economical, employment; for people held, with Dr. Watts, that

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

Satan, however, dodged the question: for if the hands were occupied the tongue was loose; and it was said that, in some families, he kept them well occupied with idle gossip. At all events, pianos, chess-boards, graces, battledoors and shuttlecocks, with other safety-valves of the kind, were only known by the hearing of the ear, as belonging to some such Vanity Fair as New York or Boston.

The weaving of cloth—linen as well as woollen—was performed by an itinerant workman, who came to the house, put up his loom, and threw his shuttle, till the season's work was done. The linen was bleached and made up by the family; the woollen cloth was sent to the fuller to be dyed and dressed. Twice a-year, that is, in the spring and autumn, the tailor came to the house and [40] made a stock of clothes for the male members; this was called "whipping the cat."

Mantuamakers and milliners came, in their turn, to fit out the female members of the family. There was a similar process as to boots and shoes. We sent the hides of the cattle—cows and calves we had killed—to the tanner, and these came back in assorted leather. Occasionally a little morocco, then wholly a foreign manufacture, was bought at the store, and made up for the ladies' best shoes. Amby Benedict, the travelling shoemaker, came with his bench, lapstone, and awls, and converted some little room into a shop, till the household was duly shod. He was a merry fellow, and threw in lots of singing gratis. He played all the popular airs upon his lapstone—as hurdygurdies and hand-organs do now.

Carpets were then only known in a few families, and were confined to the keeping-room and parlor. They were all home-made: the warp consisting of woollen yarn, and the woof of lists and old woollen cloth, cut into strips, and sewed together at the ends. Coverlids generally consisted of quilts, made of pieces of waste calico, sewed together in octagons, and quilted in rectangles, giving the whole a gay and rich appearance. This process of quilting generally brought together the women of the neighborhood, married and single; and a great time they had of it, what with tea, talk, and stitching. In the evening the men were admitted; so that a quilting was a real festival, not unfrequently leading to love-making and marriage among the young people.

This reminds me of a sort of communism or socialism, which prevailed in our rural districts long before Owen or Fourier was born. At Ridgefield we used to have "stone bees," when all the men of a village or hamlet came together with their draught cattle, and united to clear some patch of [41] earth of stones and rocks. All this labor was gratuitously rendered, save only that the proprietor of the land furnished the grog. Such a meeting was always, of course, a very social and sociable affair.

When the work was done, gymnastic exercises—such as hopping, wrestling, and foot-racing—took place among the athletic young men. My father generally attended these celebrations as a looker-on. It was, indeed, the custom for the clergy of the olden time to mingle with the people, even in their labors and their pastimes. For some reason or other, it seemed that things went better when the parson gave them his countenance. I followed my father's example, and attended these cheerful and beneficial gatherings. Most of the boys of the town did the same. I may add that, if I may trust the traditions of Ridgefield, the cellar of our new house was dug by a "bee" in a single day, and that was Christmas.

House-raising and barn-raising, the framework being always of wood, were done in the same way by a neighborly gathering of the people. I remember an anecdote of a church-raising, which I may as well relate here. In the eastern part of the State, I think at Lyme, or Pautipaug, a meeting-house was destroyed by lightning. After a year or two the society mustered its energies, and raised the frame of another on the site of the old one. It stood about six months, and was then blown over. In due time another frame was prepared, and the neighborhood gathered together to raise it. It was now proposed by Deacon Hart that they should commence the performances by a prayer and hymn, it having been suggested that perhaps the want of these pious preliminaries on former occasions had something to do with the calamitous results which attended them. When all [42] was ready, therefore, a prayer was made, and the chorister of the place gave out two lines of the hymn, thus:—

"If God to build the house deny,
The builders work in vain."

This being sung, the chorister completed the verse thus, adapting the lines to the occasion:—

"Unless the Lord doth shingle it,
It will blow down agin!"

I must not fail to give you a portrait of one of our village homes, of the middle class, at this era. I take as an example that of our neighbor, J. B., who had been a tailor, but having thriven in his affairs, and being now some fifty years old, had become a farmer. It was situated on the road leading to Salem, there being a wide space in front occupied by the wood-pile, which in these days was not only a matter of great importance, but of formidable bulk. The size of the wood-pile was, indeed, in some sort an index to the rank and condition of the proprietor. The house itself was a low edifice, forty feet long, and of two stories in front; the rear being what was called a *breakback*—that is, sloping down to a height of ten feet; this low part furnishing a shelter for garden tools and various household instruments. The whole was constructed of wood, the outside being of the dun complexion assumed by unpainted wood, exposed to the weather for twenty or thirty years, save only that the roof was tinged of a reddish brown by a fine moss that found sustenance in the chestnut shingles.

To the left was the garden, which in the productive season was a wilderness of onions, squashes, [43] cucumbers, beets, parsnips, and currants, with the never-failing tansy for bitters, horseradish for seasoning, and fennel for keeping old women awake in church time.

The interior of the house presented a parlor with plain, whitewashed walls, a home-made carpet upon the floor, calico curtains at the window, and a mirror three feet by two against the side, with a mahogany frame: to these must be added eight chairs and a cherry table, of the manufacture of Deacon Hawley. The "keeping" or sitting-room had also a carpet, a dozen rush-bottom chairs, a table, &c. The kitchen was large—fully twenty feet square, with a fireplace six feet wide and four feet deep. On one side it looked out upon the garden, the squashes and cucumbers climbing up and forming festoons over the door; on the other it commanded a view of the orchard, embracing first a circle of peaches, pears, and plums; and beyond, a wide-spread clover-field, embowered with apple-trees. Just by was the well, with its tall sweep, the old oaken bucket dangling from the pole. The kitchen was, in fact, the most comfortable room in the house; cool in summer, and perfumed with the breath of the garden and the orchard: in winter, with its roaring blaze of hickory, it was a cosy resort, defying the bitterest blasts of the season. Here the whole family assembled at meals, except when the presence of company made it proper to serve tea in the parlor.

The bed-rooms were all without carpets, and the furniture was generally of a simple character. The beds, however, were of ample size, and well filled with geese feathers, these being deemed essential for comfortable people. I must say, by the way, that every decent family had its flock of geese, of course, which was picked thrice a-year, despite the noisy remonstrances of both goose [44] and gander. The sheets of the bed, though of home-made linen, were as white as the driven snow. Indeed, the beds of this era showed that sleep was a luxury, well understood and duly cherished by all classes. The cellar, extending under the whole house, was by no means the least important part of the establishment. In the autumn, it was supplied with three barrels of beef and as many of pork, twenty barrels of cider, with numerous bins of potatoes, turnips, beets, carrots, and cabbages. The garret, which was of huge dimensions, at the same time displayed a labyrinth of dried pumpkins, peaches, and apples, hung in festoons upon the rafters, amid bunches of summer savory, boneset, fennel, and other herbs, the floor being occupied by heaps of wool, flax, tow, and the like.

The barn corresponded to the house. It was a low brown structure, having abundance of sheds built on to it, without the least regard to symmetry. It was well stocked with hay, oats, rye, and buckwheat. Six cows, one or two horses, three dozen sheep, and an ample supply of poultry, including two or three broods of turkeys, constituted its living tenants.

The farm I need not describe in detail, but the orchard must not be overlooked. This consisted of three acres, covered, as I have said, with apple-trees, yielding abundantly—as well for the cider-mill as for the table, including the indispensable winter apple-sauce—according to their kinds. I think an apple orchard in the spring is one of the most beautiful objects in the world. How often have I ventured into Uncle Josey's ample orchard at this joyous season, and stood entranced among the robins, blackbirds, woodpeckers, bluebirds, jays, and orioles,—all seeming to me like [45] playmates, racing, chasing, singing, rollicking, in the exuberance of their joy, or perchance slily

pursuing their courtships, or even more slily building their nests and rearing their young.

The inmates of the house I need not describe, further than to say that Uncle Josey himself was a little deaf, and of moderate abilities; yet he lived to good account, for he reared a large family, and was gathered to his fathers at a good old age, leaving behind him a handsome estate, a fair name, and a good example. His wife, who spent her early life at service in a kitchen, was a handsome, lively, efficient woman, and a universal favorite in the neighborhood.

This is the homely picture of a Ridgefield farmer's home half a century ago. There were other establishments more extensive and more sumptuous in the town, as there were others also of an inferior grade; but this was a fair sample of the houses, barns, and farms of the middle class.

CHAPTER IV.

[46]

HABITS OF THE PEOPLE—THEIR COSTUME—AMUSEMENTS—FESTIVALS—MARRIAGES—FUNERALS—DANCING—WINTER SPORTS—MY TWO GRANDMOTHERS—MECHANICAL GENIUS—IMPORTANCE OF WHITTLING—PIGEONS—SPORTING ADVENTURES.

You will now have some ideas of the household industry and occupations of the country people in Connecticut, at the beginning of the present century. Their manners, in other respects, had a corresponding stamp of homeliness and simplicity.

In most families, the first exercise of the morning was reading the Bible, followed by a prayer, at which all were assembled, including the servants and helpers of the kitchen and the farm. Then came the breakfast, which was a substantial meal, always including hot viands, with vegetables, apple-sauce, pickles, mustard, horseradish, and various other condiments. Cider was the common drink for laboring people: even children drank it at will. Tea was common, but not so general as now. Coffee was almost unknown. Dinner was a still more hearty and varied repast—characterised by abundance of garden vegetables; tea was a light supper.

The day began early: the breakfast hour was six in summer and seven in winter; dinner was at noon—the work-people in the fields being called to their meals by a conchshell winded by some kitchen Triton. Tea was usually taken about sundown. In families where all were laborers, all sat [47] at table, servants as well as masters—the food being served before sitting down. In families where the masters and mistresses did not share the labors of the household or the farm, the meals of the domestics were taken separately. There was, however, in those days a perfectly good understanding and good feeling between the masters and servants. The latter were not Irish: they had not as yet imbibed the plebeian envy of those above them, which has since so generally embittered and embarrassed American domestic life. The terms "democrat" and "aristocrat" had not got into use: these distinctions, and the feelings now implied by them, had indeed no existence in the hearts of the people. Our servants, during all my early life, were generally the daughters of respectable farmers and mechanics in the neighborhood, and, respecting others, were themselves respected and cherished. They were devoted to the interests of the family, and were always relied upon and treated as friends. In health they had the same food, in sickness the same care, as the masters and mistresses or their children.

At the period of my earliest recollections, men of all classes were dressed in long, broad-tailed coats, with huge pockets; long waistcoats, breeches, and hats with low crowns and broad brims: some so wide as to be supported at the sides with cords. The stockings of the parson, and a few others, were of silk in summer and worsted in winter; those of the people were generally of wool. Women dressed in wide bonnets, sometimes of straw and sometimes of silk; and gowns of silk, muslin, gingham, &c., generally close and short-waisted, the breast and shoulders being covered by a full muslin kerchief. Girls ornamented themselves with a large white vandike. On the whole, [48] the dress of both men and women has greatly changed; for at Ridgefield, as at less remote places, the people follow, though at a distance, the fashions of Paris.

The amusements were then much the same as at present, though some striking differences may be noted. Books and newspapers were then scarce, and were read respectfully, and as if they were grave matters, demanding thought and attention. They were not toys and pastimes, taken up every day, and by everybody, in the short intervals of labor, and then hastily dismissed, like waste paper. The aged sat down when they read, and drew forth their spectacles, and put them deliberately and reverently upon the nose. Even the young approached a book with reverence, and a newspaper with awe. How the world has changed!

The two great festivals were Thanksgiving and "Training-day;" the latter deriving, from the still lingering spirit of the revolutionary war, a decidedly martial character. The marching of the troops, and the discharge of gunpowder, which invariably closed the exercises, were glorious and inspiring mementoes of heroic achievements upon many a bloody field. The music of the drum and fife resounded on every side. A match between two rival drummers always drew an admiring crowd, and was in fact one of the chief excitements of the great day.

Tavern-haunting, especially in winter, when there was little to do, for manufactures had not then sprung up to give profitable occupation during this inclement season, was common even with respectable farmers. Marriages were celebrated in the evening, at the house of the bride, with a

general gathering of the neighborhood, and were usually finished off by dancing. Everybody [49]
went, as to a public exhibition, without invitation. Funerals generally drew large processions, which proceeded to the grave. Here the minister always made an address suited to the occasion. If there were anything remarkable in the history of the deceased, it was turned to religious account in the next Sunday's sermon. Singing-meetings, to practise church music, were a great resource for the young in winter. Dances at private houses were common, and drew no reproaches from the sober people present. Balls at the taverns were frequented by the young; the children of deacons and ministers attended, though the parents did not. The winter brought sleighing, skating, and the usual round of indoor sports. In general, the intercourse of all classes was kindly and considerate, no one arrogating superiority, and yet no one refusing to acknowledge it where it existed. You would hardly have noticed that there was a higher and a lower class. Such there were, certainly; for there must always and everywhere be the strong and the weak, the wise and the foolish. But in our society these existed without being felt as a privilege to one, which must give offence to another.

It may serve in some degree to throw light upon the manners and customs of this period, if I give you a sketch of my two grandmothers. Both were widows, and were well stricken in years when they came to visit us at Ridgefield, about the year 1803-4. My grandmother Ely was a lady of the old school, and sustaining the character in her upright carriage, her long, tapering waist, and her high-heeled shoes. The customs of Louis XV.'s time had prevailed in New York and Boston, and even at this period they still lingered there in isolated cases. It is curious enough, that at this [50]
time the female attire of a century ago is revived; and every black-eyed, stately old lady, dressed in black silk, and showing her steel-grey hair beneath her cap, reminds me of my maternal grandmother.

My other grandmother was in all things the opposite; short, fat, blue-eyed, and practical; a good example of a hearty country dame. I scarcely knew which of the two I liked the best. The first sang me plaintive songs, told me stories of the Revolution—her husband, Col. Ely, having had a large and painful share in its vicissitudes—she described Gen. Washington, whom she had seen; and the French officers, Lafayette, Rochambeau, and others, who had been inmates of her house. She told me tales of even more ancient date, and recited poetry, generally ballads, which were suited to my taste. And all this lore was commended to me by a voice of inimitable tenderness, and a manner at once lofty and condescending. My other grandmother was not less kind, but she promoted my happiness and prosperity in another way. Instead of stories, she gave me bread and butter: in place of poetry, she fed me with apple-sauce and pie. Never was there a more hearty old lady: she had a firm conviction that children must be fed, and what she believed she practised.

I can recollect with great vividness the interest I took in the domestic events I have described. The operations of the farm had no great attractions for me. Ploughing, hoeing, digging, seemed to me mere drudgery, imparting no instruction, and affording no scope for ingenuity or invention.

Mechanical operations, especially those of the weaver and carpenter, on the contrary, stimulated my curiosity, and excited my emulation. Thus I soon became familiar with the carpenter's tools, [51]
and made such windmills, kites, and perpetual motions, as to win the admiration of my playmates, and excite the respect of my parents; so that they seriously meditated putting me apprentice to a carpenter. Up to the age of fourteen, I think this was regarded as my manifest destiny. It was a day of great endeavors among all inventive geniuses. Fulton was struggling to develop steam navigation; and other discoverers were seeking to unfold the wonders of art as well as of nature. It was, in fact, the very threshold of the era of steam-boats, railroads, electric telegraphs, and a thousand other useful discoveries, which have since changed the face of the world. In this age of excitement, perpetual motion was the great hobby of aspiring mechanics. I pondered and whittled intensely on this subject before I was ten years old. Despairing of reaching my object by mechanical means, I attempted to arrive at it by magnetism, my father having bought me a pair of horse-shoe magnets in one of his journeys to New Haven. I should have succeeded, had it not been a principle in the nature of this curious element, that no substance will intercept the stream of attraction. I tried to change the poles, and turn the north against the south; but there, too, nature had headed me, and of course I failed.

A word, by the way, on the matter of whittling. This is generally represented as a sort of idle, fidgety, frivolous use of the penknife, and is set down, by foreigners and sketchers of American manners, as a peculiar characteristic of our people. No portrait of an American is deemed complete, unless with penknife and shingle in hand. I feel not the slightest disposition to resent even this, among the thousand caricatures that pass for traits of American life. For my own part, [52]
I can testify that, during my youthful days, I found the penknife a source of great amusement, and even of instruction. Many a long winter evening, many a dull, drizzly day, in spring, and summer, and autumn—sometimes at the kitchen fireside, sometimes in the attic, sometimes in a cosy nook of the barn, sometimes in the shelter of a neighboring stone wall, thatched over with wild grape-vines—have I spent in great ecstasy, making candle-rods, or some other simple article of household goods, for my mother; or in perfecting toys for myself and my young friends; or perhaps in attempts at more ambitious achievements. This was not mere waste of time; mere idleness and dissipation. I was amused: that was something. Some of the pleasantest remembrances of my childhood carry me back to the scenes I have just indicated; when, in happy solitude, absorbed in my mechanical devices, I listened to the rain pattering upon the roof, or the wind roaring down the chimney: thus enjoying a double bliss, a pleasing occupation, with a conscious delight in my sense of security from the rage of the elements without.

Nay more; these occupations were instructive: my mind was stimulated to inquire into the

mechanical powers, and my hand was educated to mechanical dexterity. If you ask me why it is that this important institution of whittling is indigenous among us, I reply that, in the first place, our country is full of a great variety of woods, suited to carpentry, many of them easily wrought, and thus inviting boyhood to try its hands upon them. In the next place, labor is dear; and therefore even children are led to supply themselves with toys, or perchance to furnish some of the simpler articles of use to the household. This dearness of labor, moreover, furnishes a [53] powerful stimulant to the production of labor-saving machines; and hence it is—through all these causes co-operating one with another—that steam-navigation, the electric telegraph, the steam-reaper, &c., &c., are American inventions: hence it is that, whether it be at the World's Fair at London or Paris, we gain a greater proportion of prizes for useful inventions than any other people. That is what comes of whittling!

I must add, that in these early days I was a Nimrod, a mighty hunter; first with a bow and arrow, and afterwards with the old hereditary firelock, which snapped six times and went off once. The smaller kinds of game were abundant. The thickets teemed with quails;[2] partridges drummed in every wood; the gray squirrel—the most picturesque animal of our forests—enlivened every hickory copse with his mocking laugh, his lively gambols, and his long, bushy tail. The pigeons, in spring and autumn, migrated in countless flocks; and many lingered in our woods for the season.

Everybody was then a hunter; not, of course, a sportsman: for the chase was followed more for profit than for pastime. Game was, in point of fact, a substantial portion of the supply of food at certain seasons of the year. All were then good shots, and my father was no exception: he was even beyond his generation in netting pigeons. This was not deemed a reproach at that time in a clergyman; nor was he the only parson that indulged in these occupations. One day, as I was with him on West Mountain, baiting pigeons, we had seduced a flock of three or four dozen down into [54] the bed where they were feeding; my father and myself lying concealed in our bush-hut, close by. Suddenly, whang went a gun into the middle of the flock! Out we ran in great indignation; for at least a dozen of the birds were bleeding and fluttering before us. Scarcely had we reached the spot, when we met Parson M——, of Lower Salem, who had thus unwittingly poached upon us. The two clergymen had first a squabble, and then a good laugh; after which they divided the plunder and then parted.

The stories told by Wilson and Audubon as to the amazing quantity of pigeons in the West, were realized by us in Connecticut half-a-century ago. I have seen, in the county of Fairfield, a stream of these noble birds pouring at brief intervals through the skies, from the rising to the setting sun. Of all the pigeon tribe, this of our country—the passenger pigeon—is the swiftest and most beautiful. At the same time, it is unquestionably superior to any other for the table. All the other species of the eastern, as well as the western continent, which I have tasted, are soft and flavorless in comparison.

I can recollect no sports of my youth which equalled in excitement our pigeon hunts, which generally took place in September and October. We usually started on horseback before daylight, and made a rapid progress to some stubble-field on West Mountain. The ride in the keen, fresh air, especially as the dawn began to break, was delightful. The gradual encroachment of day upon the night filled my mind with sublime images: the waking up of a world from sleep, the joyousness of birds and beasts in the return of morning, and my own sympathy in this cheerful and grateful homage of the heart to God, the Giver of good—all contributed to render these [55] adventures most impressive upon my young heart. My memory is still full of the sights and sounds of those glorious mornings: the silvery whistle of the wings of migrating flocks of plover, invisible in the gray mists of dawn; the faint murmur of the distant mountain torrents; the sonorous gong of the long-trailing flocks of wild geese, seeming to come from the unseen depths of the skies—these were among the suggestive sounds that stole through the dim twilight. As morning advanced, the scene was inconceivably beautiful: the mountain sides, clothed in autumnal green, and purple, and gold, rendered more glowing by the sunrise—with the valleys covered with mists, and spreading out like lakes of silver; while on every side the ear was saluted by the mocking screams of the red-headed woodpecker, the cawing of congresses of crows; and, finally, the rushing sound of the pigeons, pouring like a tide over the tops of the trees.

By this time of course our nets were ready, and our flyers and stool-birds on the alert. What moments of ecstasy were these, and especially when the head of the flock—some red-breasted old father or grandfather—caught the sight of our pigeons, and turning at the call, drew the whole train down into our net-bed! I have often seen a hundred, or two hundred of these splendid birds, come upon us, with a noise absolutely deafening. Sometimes our bush-hut, where we lay concealed, was covered all over with pigeons, and we dared not move a finger, as their red, piercing eyes were upon us. When at last, with a sudden pull of the rope, the net was sprung, and we went out to secure our booty—often fifty, and sometimes even a hundred birds—I felt a fulness of triumph which words are wholly inadequate to express!

Up to the age of eight years I was never trusted with a gun. Whenever I went forth as a [56] sportsman on my own account, it was only with a bow and arrow. My performances as a hunter were very moderate. In truth, I had a rickety old gun, that had belonged to my grandfather, and though it perhaps had done good service in the Revolution, or further back in the times of bears and wolves, it was now very decrepit, and all around the lock seemed to have the shaking palsy. Occasionally I met with adventures, half serious and half ludicrous. Once, in running my hand into a hole in a hollow tree, some twenty feet from the ground, being in search of a woodpecker, I hauled out a blacksnake. At another time, in a similar way, I had my fingers pretty sharply nipped by a screech-owl. My memory supplies me with numerous instances of this kind.

As to fishing, I never had a passion for it: I was too impatient. I had no enthusiasm for nibbles, and there were too many of these in proportion to the bites. I perhaps resembled a man by the name of Bennett, who joined the Shakers of New Canaan about these days, but soon left them, declaring that the Spirit was too long in coming—"he could not wait." Nevertheless, I dreamed away some pleasant hours in angling in the brooks and ponds of my native town. I well remember, that on my eighth birthday I went four miles to Burt's mills, carrying on the old mare two bushels of rye. While my grist was being ground I angled in the pond, and carried home enough for a generous meal.

Now all these things may seem trifles, yet in a review of my life I deem them of some significance. This homely familiarity with the more mechanical arts was a material part of my education: this communion with nature gave me instructive and important lessons from nature's [57] open book of knowledge. My technical education, as will be seen hereafter, was extremely narrow and irregular. This defect was at least partially supplied by the commonplace incidents I have mentioned. The teachings, or rather the training of the senses, in the country—ear and eye, foot and hand, by running, leaping, climbing over hill and mountain, by occasional labor in the garden and on the farm, and by the use of tools, and all this in youth—is sowing seed which is repaid largely and readily to the hand of after-cultivation, however unskilful it may be. This is not so much because of the amount of knowledge available in after-life, which is thus obtained—though this is not to be despised—as it is that healthful, vigorous, manly habits and associations, physical, moral, and intellectual, are thus established and developed.

CHAPTER V. [58]

DEATH OF WASHINGTON—JEROME BONAPARTE AND MISS PATTERSON—SUNDAY TRAVELLING—OLIVER WOLCOTT—TIMOTHY PICKERING—AMERICAN POLITENESS QUITE NATURAL—LOCOMOTION—PUBLIC CONVEYANCES—MY FATHER'S CHAISE.

The incidents I have just related occurred about the year 1800—some a little earlier and some a little later. Among the events of general interest that happened near this time I remember the death of Washington, which took place in 1799, and was commemorated all through the country by the tolling of bells, funeral ceremonies, orations, sermons, hymns, and dirges, attended by a mournful sense of his loss, which seemed to cast a pall over the entire heavens. In Ridgefield the meeting-house was dressed in black, and we had a discourse pronounced by a Mr. Edmonds, of Newtown. The subject, indeed, engrossed all minds. Lieutenant Smith came every day to our house to talk over the event, and to bring us the proceedings in different parts of the country. Among other papers he brought us a copy of the *Connecticut Courant*, which gave us the particulars of the rites and ceremonies which took place in Hartford in commemoration of the great man's decease. The celebrated hymn, written for the occasion by Theodore Dwight, sank into my mother's heart—for she had a constitutional love of things mournful and poetical—and [59] she often repeated it, so that it became a part of the cherished lore of my childhood.

I give you these scenes and feelings in some detail, to impress you with the depth and sincerity of this mourning of the American nation, in cities and towns, in villages and hamlets, for the death of Washington.

I have already said that Ridgefield was on the great thoroughfare between Boston and New York, for the day of steamers and railroads had not dawned. Even the mania for turnpikes, which ere long overspread New England, had not yet arrived. The stage-coaches took four days to make the trip of two hundred miles between the two great cities. In winter, during the furious snow-storms, the journey was often protracted to seven, eight, or ten days. With such public conveyances, great people—for even then the world was divided into the great and little, as it is now—travelled in their own carriages.

About this time—it must have been in the summer of 1804—I remember Jerome Bonaparte coming up to Keeler's tavern with a coach and four, attended by his young wife, Miss Patterson of Baltimore. It was a gay establishment, and the honeymoon sat happily on the tall, sallow stripling and his young bride. You must remember that Napoleon was then filling the world with his fame: at this moment his feet were on the threshold of the empire. The arrival of his brother in the United States of course made a sensation. His marriage, his movements, all were gossipped over from Maine to Georgia, the extreme points of the Union. His entrance into Ridgefield produced a flutter of excitement even there. A crowd gathered around Keeler's tavern to catch a sight of the strangers, and I was among the rest. I had a good look at Jerome, who was the chief object of [60] interest, and the image never faded from my recollection.

Half a century later, I was one evening at the Tuileries, amid the flush and the fair of Louis Napoleon's new court. Among them I saw an old man, taller than the mass around—his nose and chin almost meeting in contact, while his toothless gums were "munching the airy meal of dotage and decrepitude." I was irresistibly chained to this object, as if a spectre had risen up through the floor and stood among the garish throng. My memory travelled back—back among the winding labyrinths of years. Suddenly I found the clue: the stranger was Jerome Bonaparte!

Ah, what a history lay between the past and present—a lapse of nearly fifty years. What a

difference between him then and now! Then he was a gay and gallant bridegroom; now, though he had the title of king, he was throneless and sceptreless—an Invalid Governor of Invalids—the puppet and pageant of an adventurer, whose power lay in the mere magic of a name.

About this time, as I well remember, Oliver Wolcott passed through our village. He arrived at the tavern late on Saturday evening, but he called at our house in the morning, his family being connected with ours. He was a great man then; for not only are the Wolcotts traditionally and historically a distinguished race in Connecticut, but he had recently been a member of Washington's cabinet. I mention him now only for the purpose of noting his deference to public opinion, characteristic of the eminent men of that day. In the morning he went to church, but immediately after the sermon he had his horses brought up, and proceeded on his way. He, however, had requested my father to state to his people, at the opening of the afternoon service, [61] that he was travelling on public business, and though he regretted it, he was obliged to continue his journey on the Sabbath. This my father did, but Deacon Olmstead, the Jeremiah of the parish, shook his white locks, and lifted up his voice against such a desecration of the Lord's day. Some years after, as I remember, Lieutenant-Governor Treadwell arrived at Keeler's tavern on Saturday evening, and prepared to prosecute his journey the next morning, his daughter, who was with him, being ill. This same Deacon Olmstead called upon him, and said, "Sir, if you thus set the example of violation of the Sabbath, you must expect to get one vote less at the next election!" The Governor was so much struck by the appearance of the deacon, who was the very image of a patriarch or a prophet, that he deferred his departure till Monday.

Although great people rode in their own carriages, the principal method of travelling was on horseback. Many of the members of Congress came to Washington in this way. I have a dim recollection of seeing one day, when I was trudging along to school, a tall, pale, gaunt man, approaching on horseback, with his plump saddlebags behind him. I looked at him keenly, and made my obeisance, as in duty bound. He lifted his hat, and bowed in return. By a quick instinct, I sat him down as a man of mark. In the evening, Lieutenant Smith came to our house and told us that Timothy Pickering had passed through the town! He had seen him, and talked with him, and was vastly distended with the portentous news thereby acquired, including the rise and fall of empires for ages to come, and all of which he duly unfolded to our family circle.

Before I proceed, let me note, in passing, a point of manners then universal, but which has now [62] nearly faded away. When travellers met on the highway, they saluted each other with a certain dignified and formal courtesy. All children were regularly taught at school to "make their manners" to strangers; the boys to bow, and the girls to courtesy. It was something different from the frank, familiar, "How are you, stranger?" of the Far West; something different from the "*Bon jour, serviteur*," of the Alps. Our salute was more measured and formal; respect to age and authority being evidently an element of this homage, which was sedulously taught to the young.

For children to salute travellers was, in my early days, as well a duty as a decency. A child who did not "make his manners" to a stranger on the high-road was deemed a low fellow; a stranger who refused to acknowledge this civility was esteemed a *sans culotte*, perhaps a favorer of Jacobinism.

But I must return to locomotion. In Ridgefield, in the year 1800, there was but a single chaise, and that belonged to Colonel Bradley, one of the principal citizens of the place. It was without a top, and had a pair of wide-spreading, asinine ears. That multitudinous generation of travelling vehicles, so universal and so convenient now—such as top-wagons, four-wheeled chaises, tilburies, dearborns, &c., was totally unknown. Even if these things had been invented, the roads would scarcely have permitted the use of them. Physicians who had occasion to go from town to town went on horseback; all clergymen, except perhaps Bishop Seabury, who rode in a coach, travelled in the same way. My father's people, who lived at a distance, came to church on horseback; their wives and daughters being seated on pillions behind them. In a few cases—as in [63] spring-time, when the mud was bottomless—the farm wagon was used for transporting the family.

In winter it was otherwise, for we had three or four months of sleighing. Then the whole country was a railroad, and gay times we had. Oh! those beautiful winters, which would drive me shivering to the fireside now: what vivid delight have I had in their slidings and skatings, their sleddings and sleighings! One thing strikes me now with wonder, and that is, the general indifference in those days to the intensity of winter. No doubt, as I have said before, the climate was then more severe; but, be that as it may, people seemed to suffer less from it than at the present day. Nobody thought of staying at home from church because of the extremity of the weather. We had no thermometers, it is true, to frighten us with the revelation that it was twenty-five degrees below zero. The habits of the people were simple and hardy, and there were few defences against the assaults of the seasons. The houses were not tight; we had no stoves, no Lehigh or Lackawanna coal; yet we lived, and comfortably, too: nay, we even changed burly winter into a season of enjoyment.

I have said that, in the year 1800, there was but a single chaise in Ridgefield; and this was brought, I believe, from New Haven. There was not, I imagine, a coach, or any kind of pleasure-vehicle—that crazy old chaise excepted—in the county of Fairfield, out of the two half-shire towns. Such things, indeed, were known at New York, Boston, and Philadelphia; for already the government had laid a tax upon pleasure conveyances: but they were comparatively few in number, and were mostly imported. In 1798 there was but one public hack in New Haven, and [64] but one coach; the latter, belonging to Pierpoint Edwards, was a large, four-wheeled vehicle, for two persons, called a chariot. In the smaller towns there were no pleasure vehicles in use throughout New England.

About that time there came to our village a man by the name of Jesse Skellinger, an Englishman, and chaisemaker by trade. My father engaged him to build him a chaise. A bench was set up in our barn, and certain trees of oak and ash were cut in our neighboring woods. These were sawed and seasoned, and shaped into wheels and shafts. Thomas Hawley, half blacksmith, and half wheelwright, was duly initiated, and he cunningly wrought the iron necessary for the work. In five months the chaise was finished, with a standing top; greatly to the admiration of our family. What a gaze was there, as this vehicle went through Ridgefield street upon its first expedition!

This was the beginning of the chaise-manufactory in Ridgefield, which has since been a source of large revenue to the town. Skellinger was engaged by Elijah Hawley, who had formerly done something as a wagon-builder; and thus in due time an establishment was founded, which for many years was noted for the beauty and excellence of its pleasure vehicles.

CHAPTER VI.

[65]

THE UPPER AND LOWER CLASSES OF RIDGEFIELD—MASTER STEBBINS AND HIS SCHOOL—WHAT IS A NOUN?—DEACON BENEDICT AND HIS MAN ABIJAH—MY LATIN ACQUIREMENTS—FAMILY WORSHIP—WIDOW BENNETT—THE TEMPLE OF DAGON.

Ridgefield, as well as most other places, had its Up-town and Down-town; terms which have not unfrequently been the occasion of serious divisions in the affairs of Church and State. In London this distinction takes the name of West End and the City. The French philosophers say that every great capital has similar divisions; West End being always the residence of the aristocracy, and East End of the *canaille*.

Ridgefield, being a village, had a right to follow its own whim; and therefore West Lane, instead of being the aristocratic end of the place, was really rather the low end. It constituted, in fact, what was called *Down-town*, in distinction from the more eastern and northern section, called *Up-town*. In this latter portion, and about the middle of the main street, was the Up-town school, the leading seminary of the village; for at this period it had not arrived at the honors of an academy. At the age of ten years I was sent here, the institution being then, and for many years after, under the charge of Master Stebbins. He was a man with a conciliating stoop in the shoulders, a long body, short legs, and a swaying walk. He was at this period some fifty years old, [66] his hair being thin and silvery, and always falling in well-combed rolls over his coat-collar. His eyes were blue, and his dress invariably of the same color. Breeches and knee-buckles, blue-mixed stockings, and shoes with bright buckles, seemed as much a part of the man as his head and shoulders. On the whole, his appearance was that of the middle-class gentleman of the olden time; and he was, in fact, what he seemed.

This seminary of learning for the rising aristocracy of Ridgefield was a wooden edifice, thirty by twenty feet, covered with brown clapboards, and, except an entry, consisted of a single room. Around, and against the walls, ran a continuous line of seats, fronted by a continuous writing-desk. Beneath were depositories for books and writing materials. The centre was occupied by slab seats, similar to those of West Lane. The larger scholars were ranged on the outer sides, at the desks; the smaller fry of abecedarians were seated in the centre. The master was enshrined on the east side of the room, and, regular as the sun, he was in his seat at nine o'clock, and the performances of the school began.

According to the Catechism, which we learned and recited on Saturday, the chief end of man was to glorify God and keep His commandments; according to the routine of this school, one would have thought it to be reading, writing, and arithmetic, to which we may add spelling. From morning to night, in all weathers, through every season of the year, these exercises were carried on with the energy, patience, and perseverance of a manufactory.

Master Stebbins respected his calling: his heart was in his work; and so, what he pretended to [67] teach, he taught well. When I entered the school, I found that a huge stride had been achieved in the march of mind since I left West Lane. Webster's Spelling-book had taken the place of Dilworth, which was a great improvement. The drill in spelling was very thorough, and applied every day to the whole school. I imagine that the exercises might have been amusing to a stranger, especially as one scholar would sometimes go off in a voice as grum as that of a bull-frog, while another would follow in tones as fine and piping as those of a peet-weet. The blunders, too, were often very ludicrous; even we children would sometimes have tittered, had not such an enormity been certain to have brought out the birch. As to rewards and punishments, the system was this: whoever missed, went down; so that perfection mounted to the top. Here was the beginning of the up and down of life.

Reading was performed in classes, which generally plodded on without a hint from the master. Nevertheless, when Zeek Sanford—who was said to have "a streak of lightning in him"—in his haste to be smart, read the 37th verse of the 2nd chapter of the Acts,—"Now when they heard this, they were *pickled* in their heart,"—the birch stick on Master Stebbins's table seemed to quiver and peel at the little end, as if to give warning of the wrath to come. When Orry Keeler—Orry was a girl, you know, and not a boy—drawled out in spelling, "k—o—n, *kon*, s—h—u—n—t—s, *shunts*, konshunts," the bristles in the master's eyebrows fidgeted like Aunt Delight's knitting-

needles. Occasionally, when the reading was insupportably bad, he took a book, and himself read as an example.

Master Stebbins was a great man with a slate and pencil, and I have an idea that we were a [68] generation after his own heart. We certainly achieved wonders in arithmetic, according to our own conceptions, some of us going even beyond the Rule of Three, and making forays into the mysterious regions of Vulgar Fractions.

But, after all, penmanship was Master Stebbins's great accomplishment. He had no pompous lessons upon single lines and bifid lines, and the like. The revelations of inspired copy-book makers had not then been vouchsafed to man. He could not cut an American eagle with a single flourish of a goose-quill. He was guided by good taste and native instinct, and wrote a smooth round hand, like copper-plate. His lessons from A to &, all written by himself, consisted of pithy proverbs and useful moral lessons. On every page of our writing-books he wrote the first line himself. The effect was what might have been expected—with such models, patiently enforced, nearly all became good writers.

Beyond these simple elements, the Up-town school made few pretensions. When I was there, two Webster's Grammars and one or two Dwight's Geographies were in use. The latter was without maps or illustrations, and was, in fact, little more than an expanded table of contents, taken from Morse's Universal Geography—the mammoth monument of American learning and genius of that age and generation. The grammar was a clever book, but I have an idea that neither Master Stebbins nor his pupils ever fathomed its depths. They floundered about in it, as if in a quagmire, and after some time came out pretty nearly where they went in, though perhaps a little confused by the din and dusky atmosphere of these labyrinths.

Let me here repeat an anecdote, which I have indeed told before, but which I had from the lips of [69] its hero, a clergyman, of some note thirty years ago, and which well illustrates this part of my story. At a village school, not many miles from Ridgefield, he was put into Webster's Grammar. Here he read, "*A noun is the name of a thing—as horse, hair, justice*." Now, in his innocence, he read it thus: "*A noun is the name of a thing—as horse-hair justice*."

"What, then," said he, ruminating deeply, "is a noun? But first I must find out what a horse-hair justice is."

Upon this he meditated for some days, but still he was as far as ever from the solution. Now, his father was a man of authority in those parts, and, moreover, he was a justice of the peace. Withal, he was of respectable ancestry, and so there had descended to him a stately high-backed settee, covered with horse-hair. One day, as the youth came from school, pondering upon the great grammatical problem, he entered the front door of the house, and there he saw before him his father, officiating in his legal capacity, and seated upon the old horse-hair settee. "I have found it!" said the boy to himself, greatly delighted—"my father is a horse-hair justice, and therefore a noun!"

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the world got on remarkably well in spite of this narrowness of the country schools. The elements of an English education were pretty well taught throughout the village seminaries of Connecticut, and, I may add, of New England. The teachers were heartily devoted to their profession: they respected their calling, and were respected and encouraged by the community. They had this merit, that while they attempted little, that, at least, [70] was thoroughly performed.

I went steadily to the Up-town school for three winters; being occupied during the summers upon the farm, and in various minor duties. I was a great deal on horseback, often carrying messages to the neighboring towns of Reading, Wilton, Weston, and Lower Salem, for then the post routes were few, and the mails, which were weekly, crept like snails over hill and valley. I became a bold rider at an early age: before I was eight years old I frequently ventured to put a horse to his speed, and that, too, without a saddle. A person who has never tried it, can hardly conceive the wild delight of riding a swift horse, when he lays down his ears, tosses his tail in air, and stretches himself out in a full race. The intense energy of the beast's movements, the rush of the air, the swimming backward of lands, houses, and trees, with the clattering thunder of the hoofs —all convey to the rider a fierce ecstasy, which, perhaps, nothing else can give. About this period, however, I received a lesson, which lasted me a lifetime.

You must know that Deacon Benedict, one of our neighbors, had a fellow living with him named Abijah. He was an adventurous youth, and more than once led me into tribulation. I remember that on one occasion I went with him to shoot a dog that was said to worry the deacon's sheep. It was night, and dark as Egypt, but Bige said he could see the creature close to the cow-house, behind the barn. He banged away, and then jumped over the fence, to pick up the game. After a time he came back, but said not a word. Next morning it was found that he had shot the brindled cow; mistaking a white spot in her forehead for the dog, he had taken a deadly aim, and put the [71] whole charge into her pate. Fortunately her skull was thick and the shot small, so the honest creature was only a little cracked. Bige, however, was terribly scolded by the deacon, who was a justice of the peace, and had a deep sense of the importance of his duties. I came in for a share of blame, though I was only a looker-on. Bige said the deacon called me a "parsnip scrimmage," but more probably it was a *particeps criminis*.

But to proceed. One day I was taking home from the pasture a horse that belonged to some clergyman—I believe Dr. Ripley, of Greensfarms. Just as I came upon the level ground in front of Jerry Mead's old house, Bige came up behind me on the deacon's mare—an ambling brute with a bushy tail and shaggy mane. As he approached he gave a chirrup, and my horse, half in fright and

half in fun, bounded away, like Tam O'Shanter's mare. Away we went, I holding on as well as I could, for the animal was round as a barrel. He was no doubt used to a frolic of this sort, although he belonged to a doctor of divinity, and looked as if he believed in total depravity. When he finally broke into a gallop he flew like the wind, at the same time bounding up and down with a tearing energy, quite frightful to think of. After a short race he went from under me, and I came with a terrible shock to the ground.

The breath was knocked out of me for some seconds, and as I recovered it with a gasping effort, my sensations were indescribably agonizing. Greatly humbled and sorely bruised, I managed to get home, where the story of my adventure had preceded me. I was severely lectured by my parents, which, however, I might have forgotten, had not the concussion made an indelible impression on my memory, thus perpetuating the wholesome counsel. [72]

When I was about twelve years old, a man by the name of Sackett was employed to keep a high-school, or, as it was then called, an academy. Here I went irregularly for a few weeks, and at a public exhibition I remember to have spoken a piece, upon a stage fitted up in the meeting-house, entitled "Charles Chatterbox." This was the substance of my achievements at Sackett's seminary.

The narrowness of my father's income, and the needs of a large family, induced him to take half-a-dozen pupils to be fitted for college. This he continued for a series of years. It might seem natural that I should have shared in these advantages; but, in the first place, my only and elder brother, Charles A. Goodrich—now widely known by his numerous useful publications—had been destined for the clerical profession, partly by his own predilection, partly by encouragement from a relative, and partly, too, from an idea that his somewhat delicate constitution forbade a more hardy career. To this may doubtless be added the natural desire of his parents that at least one of their sons should follow the honored calling to which father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had been devoted. Hence he was put in training for college. The expenses to be thus incurred were formidable enough to my parents, without adding to them by attempting anything of the kind for me. And, besides, I had manifested no love of study, and evidently preferred action to books. Moreover, it must be remembered, that I was regarded as a born carpenter, and it would have seemed tempting Providence to have set me upon any other career. So, with perfect content on my part, from the age of twelve to fourteen, I was chiefly employed in active services about [73] the house and farm. I could read, write, and cipher; this was sufficient for my ambition, and satisfactory to my parents, in view of the life to which I was apparently destined.

Nevertheless, though my school exercises were such as I have described, I doubtless gathered some little odds and ends of learning about those days, beyond the range of my horn-books. I heard a good deal of conversation from the clergymen who visited us, and, above all, I listened to the long discourses of Lieutenant Smith upon matters and things in general. My father, too, had a brother in Congress, from whom he received letters, documents, and messages, all of which became subjects of discussion. I remember, further, that out of some childish imitation, I thumbed over Corderius and Erasmus—the first Latin books, then constantly in the hands of my father's pupils. I was so accustomed to hear them recite their lessons in Virgil, that

Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi—

and

Arma, arms—*virumque*, and the man—*cano*, I sing,

were as familiar to my ears as *hillery, tillery, zachery zan*, and probably conveyed to my mind about as much meaning. Even the first lesson in Greek—

Εν, in—ἀρχή, the beginning—ἠν, was—ὁ λογος, the Word—

was also among the cabalistic jingles in my memory. All this may seem nothing as a matter of education; still, some years after, while I was an apprentice in Hartford, feeling painfully impressed with the scantiness of my knowledge, I borrowed some Latin school-books, under the [74] idea of attempting to master that language. To my delight and surprise, I found that they seemed familiar to me. Thus encouraged, I began, and bending steadily over my task at evening, when my day's duties were over, I made my way nearly through the Latin Grammar and the first two books of Virgil's *Æneid*. In my poverty of knowledge, even these acquisitions became useful to me.

From the age of twelve to fifteen, though generally occupied in the various tasks assigned me, I still found a good deal of time to ramble over the country. Whole days I spent in the long, lonesome lanes that wound between Ridgefield and Salem, in the half-cultivated, half-wooded hills that lay at the foot of West Mountain, and in the deep recesses of the wild and rugged regions beyond. I frequently climbed to the tops of the cliffs and ridges that rose one above another; and having gained the crown of the mountain, cast long and wistful glances over the blue vale that stretched out for many miles to the westward. I had always my gun in hand, and though not insensible to any sport that might fall in my way, I was more absorbed in the fancies that came thronging to my imagination. Thus I became familiar with the whole country around, and especially with the shaded glens and gorges of West Mountain. I must add that these had, besides their native, savage charms, a sort of fascination from being the residence of a strange woman, who had devoted herself to solitude, and was known under the name of "the Hermitess." This personage I had occasionally seen in our village; and I frequently met her as she glided through the forests, while I was pursuing my mountain rambles. I sometimes felt a strange thrill as she passed; but this only seemed to render the recesses where she dwelt still more inviting. [75]

I have no doubt that I inherited from my mother a love of the night side of nature; not a love that begets melancholy, but an appetite that found pleasure in the shadows, as well as the lights, of

life and imagination. Eminently practical as she was—laborious, skilful, and successful in the duties which Providence had assigned her, as the head of a large family, with narrow means—she was still of a poetic temperament. Her lively fancy was vividly set forth by a pair of the finest eyes I have ever seen; dark and serious, yet tender and sentimental. These bespoke, not only the vigor of her conceptions, but the melancholy tinge that shaded her imagination. Sometimes, indeed, the well of sadness in her heart became full, and it ran over in tears. These, however, were like spring showers; brief in duration, and afterwards brightening to all around. She was not the only woman who has felt better after a good cry. It was, in fact, a poetic, not a real sorrow, that thus excited her emotions; for her prevailing humor abounded in wit and vivacity, not unfrequently taking the hue of playful satire. Nevertheless, her taste craved the pathetic, the mournful; not as a bitter medicine, but a spicy condiment. Her favorite poets were King David and Dr. Watts: she preferred the dirge-like melody of Windham to all other music. All the songs she sang were minors.

You will gather, from what I have said, that my father not only prayed in his family night and morning, but before breakfast, and immediately after the household was assembled he always read a chapter in the sacred volume. It is recorded in our family Bible, that he read it through, in course, thirteen times in the space of about five-and-twenty years. He was an excellent reader, [76] having a remarkably clear, frank, hearty voice; so that I was deeply interested, and thus early became familiar with almost every portion of the Old and New Testament.

The practice of family worship, as I before stated, was at this time very general in New England. In Ridgefield, it was not altogether confined to the strictly religious; to clergymen, deacons, and church members. It was a custom which decency hardly allowed to be omitted. No family was thought to go on well without it. There is a good story which well describes this trait of manners.

Somewhere in Vermont, in this golden age, there was a widow by the name of Bennett. In consequence of the death of her husband, the charge of a large farm and an ample household devolved upon her. Her husband had been a pious man, and all things had prospered with him. His widow, alike from religious feeling and affectionate regard for his memory, desired that everything should be conducted as much as possible as it had been during his lifetime. Especially did she wish the day to begin and close with family worship.

Now, she had a foreman on the farm by the name of Ward. He was a good man for work, but he was not a religious man. In vain did the widow, in admitting his merits at the plough, the scythe, and the flail, still urge him to crown her wishes, by leading in family prayer. For a long time the heart of the man was hard, and his ear deaf to her entreaties. At last, however, wearied with her importunities, he seemed to change, and, to her great joy, consented to make a trial.

On a bright morning in June—at early sunrise—the family were all assembled in the parlor, men [77] and maidens, for their devotions. When all was ready, Ward, in a low, troubled voice, began. He had never prayed, or at least not in public, but he had heard many prayers, and possessed a retentive memory. After getting over the first hesitancy, he soon became fluent, and taking passages here and there from the various petitions he had heard—Presbyterian, Methodist, Universalist, and Episcopalian—he went on with great eloquence, gradually elevating his tone and accelerating his delivery. Ere long his voice grew portentous, and some of the men and maids, thinking he was suddenly taken either mad or inspired, stole out on their toes into the kitchen, where, with gaping mouths, they awaited the result. The Widow Bennett bore it all for about half an hour; but at last, as the precious time was passing away, she lost patience, and sprang to her feet. Placing herself directly in front of the speaker, she exclaimed, "Ward, what do you mean?"

As if suddenly relieved from a nightmare, he exclaimed, "Oh dear, ma'am, I'm much obliged to you; for somehow I couldn't wind the thing off."

I must not pass over another incident having reference to the topic in question. Under the biblical influence of those days my father's scholars built a temple of the Philistines, and when it was completed within and without, all the children round about assembled, as did the Gazaites of old. The edifice was chiefly of boards, slenderly constructed, and reached the height of twelve feet; nevertheless, all of us got upon it, according to the 16th chapter of Judges. The oldest of the scholars played Samson. When all was ready, he took hold of the pillars of the temple, one with his right hand and one with his left. "Let me die with the Philistines!" said he, and bowing [78] himself, down we came in a heap! Strange to say, nobody but Samson was hurt, and he only in some skin bruises. If you could see him now—dignified even to solemnity, and seldom condescending to any but the gravest matters—you would scarcely believe the story, even though I write it and verify it. Nevertheless, if he must have played, he should have taken the part of Samson, for he is one of the most gifted men I have ever known.

CHAPTER VII. [79]

THE CLERGY OF FAIRFIELD—A LAUGHING PARSON—THE THREE DEACONS.

Before I complete my narrative so far as it relates to Ridgefield, I should state that in the olden time a country minister's home was a ministers' tavern, and therefore I saw at our house, at different periods, most of the orthodox or Congregational clergymen belonging to that part of the

State. My father frequently exchanged with those of the neighboring towns, and sometimes consociations and associations were held at Ridgefield. Thus, men of the clerical profession constituted a large portion of the strangers who visited us. I may add that my lineage was highly ministerial, from an early period down to my own time. The pulpit of Durham, filled by my paternal grandfather, continued in the same family one hundred and twenty-six consecutive years. A short time since we reckoned among our relations, not going beyond the degree of second cousin, more than a dozen ministers of the Gospel, and all of the same creed.

As to the clergy of Fairfield county, my boyish impressions of them were, that they were of the salt of the earth; nor has a larger experience altered my opinion. If I sometimes indulge a smile at the recollection of particular traits of character, or more general points of manner significant of [80] the age, I still regard them with affection and reverence.

I need not tell you that they were counsellors in religious matters, in the dark and anxious periods of the spirit, in times of sickness, at the approach of death. They sanctified the wedding, not refusing afterward to countenance the festivity which naturally ensued. They administered baptism, but only upon adults who made a profession, or upon the children of professors. I may add that, despite their divinity, they were sociable in their manners and intercourse. The state of the Church was no doubt first in their minds, but ample room was left for the good things of life. Those who came to our house examined my brother in his Greek and Latin, and I went out behind the barn to gather tansy for their morning bitters. They dearly loved a joke, and relished anecdotes, especially if they bore a little hard upon the cloth. The following will suffice as a specimen of the stories they delighted in.

Once upon a time there was a clergyman—the Rev. Dr. T——, a man of high character, and distinguished for his dignity of manner. But it was remarked that frequently as he was ascending the pulpit stairs he would smile, and sometimes almost titter, as if beset by an uncontrollable desire to laugh. This excited remark, and at last scandal. Finally, it was thought necessary for some of his clerical friends, at a meeting of the Association, to bring up the matter for consideration.

The case was stated, the Rev. Dr. T—— being present. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "the fact charged against me is true, but I beg you to permit me to offer an explanation. A few months after I was licensed to preach I was in a country town, and on a Sabbath morning was about to [81] enter upon the services of the church. At the back of the pulpit was a window, which looked out upon a field of clover, then in full bloom, for it was summer. As I rose to commence the reading of the Scriptures, I cast a glance into the field, and there I saw a man performing the most extraordinary evolutions—jumping, whirling, slapping in all directions, and with a ferocious agony of exertion. At first I thought he was mad; but suddenly the truth burst upon me—he had buttoned up a bumblebee in his pantaloons! I am constitutionally nervous, gentlemen, and the shock of this scene upon my risible sensibilities was so great, that I could hardly get through the services. Several times I was upon the point of bursting into a laugh. Even to this day, the remembrance of this scene, through the temptation of the devil, often comes upon me as I am ascending the pulpit. This, I admit, is a weakness, but I trust it will rather excite your sympathy and your prayers than your reproaches."

It may be amusing, perhaps profitable, to give here a few sketches of the remarkable characters of Ridgefield, at the opening of the present century. Some were types of their time; others, however eccentric, were exemplifications of our race and our society, influenced by peculiar circumstances, and showing into what fashions this stuff of humanity may be wrought. They are still prominent in my recollection, and seem to me an essential part of the social landscape which encircled my youth.

I begin with the three deacons of my father's parish. First was Deacon Olmstead, full threescore years and ten at the opening of the present century. His infancy touched upon the verge of Puritanism—the days of Increase and Cotton Mather. The spirit of the Puritans lived in his heart, [82] while the semblance of the patriarchs lingered in his form. He was fully six feet high, with broad shoulders, powerful limbs, and the august step of a giant. His hair was white, and rolled in thin curls upon his shoulders; he was still erect, though he carried a long cane, like that of father Abraham in the old pictures, representing him at the head of his kindred and his camels, going from the land of Haran to the land of Canaan. Indeed, he was my personification of the great progenitor of the Hebrews; and when my father read from the twelfth chapter of Genesis, how he and Lot and their kindred journeyed forth, I half fancied it must be Deacon Olmstead under another name.

DEACON OLMSTEAD.

Deacon Olmstead was in all things a noble specimen of humanity—an honor to human nature, a shining light in the church. I have spoken of him as having something grand about him, yet I remember how kindly he condescended to take me, a child, on his knee, and how gently his great brawny fingers encircled my infant hand. I have said he was wise; yet his book-learning was small, though it might have been as great as that of Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob. He knew, indeed, the Bible by heart, and that is a great teacher. He had also lived long, and profited by observation and experience. Above all, he was calm, just, sincere, and it is wonderful how these lamps light up the path of life. I have said he was proud, yet it was only toward the seductions of the world: to these he was hard and stern: to his God he was simple, obedient, and docile as a child: toward his kindred and his neighbor, toward the poor, toward the suffering, though not so soft, he was sympathetic as a sister of charity.

I must now present a somewhat different portrait—that of Deacon John Benedict. He was a [83] worthy old man, and enjoyed many claims to respect. He was not only a deacon, but a justice of the peace; moreover, he was the father of Aunt Delight, of whom I desire ever to speak with reverence. She, not being a beauty, was never married, and hence, having no children of her own, she combed and crammed the heads of other people's children. In this way she was eminently useful in her day and generation. The Deacon respected the law, especially as it was administered in his own person. He was severe upon those who violated the statutes of the State, but one who violated the statutes of Deacon John Benedict committed the unpardonable sin. He was the entire police of the meeting-house on Sunday, and not a boy or girl, or even a bumblebee, could offend without condign punishment.

Nevertheless, the Deacon is said, in one case—rather before my time—to have met his match. There was in the village a small, smart, nervous woman, with a vigorous clack, which, once set going, was hard to stop. One day she was at church, and having carried her dinner of mince-pie in a little cross-handled basket, she set it down under the seat. In the midst of sermon-time a small dog came into the pew, and getting behind her petticoats, began to devour the pie. She heard what was going on, and gave him a kick. Upon this the dog backed out with a yelp, taking with him the dinner-basket, hung about his neck, across the pew into the broad aisle.

"Oh dear!" said the woman, in a shrill voice, "the dog's got my dinner! There! I've spoken loud in meeting-time! What will Deacon Benedict say? Why! I'm talking all the time. There it goes agin! [84] What shall I du?"

"Hold your tongue!" said the Deacon, who was in his official seat, fronting the explosion. These words operated like a charm, and the nervous lady was silent. The next day Deacon John appeared at the house of the offender, carrying a calf-bound volume in his hand. The woman gave one glance at the book, and one at the Deacon. That was enough: it spoke volumes, and the man of the law returned home, and never mentioned the subject afterward.

Deacon Hawley was very unlike either of his two associates whom I have described. He was younger, and of a peculiarly mild and amiable temper. His countenance wore a tranquil and smooth expression. His hair was fine and silky, and lay, as if oiled, close to his head. He had a

soft voice, and an ear for music. He was a cabinet-maker by trade, a chorister by choice, and a deacon by the vote of the church. In each of these things he found his place, as if designed for it by nature.

In worldly affairs as well as spiritual, Deacon Hawley's path was straight and even: he was successful in business, beloved in society, honored in the church. Exceedingly frugal by habit and disposition, he still loved to give in charity, though he did not talk of it. When he was old, his family being well provided for, he spent much of his time in casting about to find opportunities of doing good. Once he learned that a widow, who had been in good circumstances, was struggling with poverty. He was afraid to offer money as charity, for fear of wounding her pride—the more sensitive, perhaps, because of her change of condition. He therefore intimated that he owed a [85] debt of fifty dollars to her late husband, and wished to pay it to her.

"And how was that?" said the lady, somewhat startled.

"I will tell you," said the Deacon. "About five-and-twenty years ago, soon after you were married, I made some furniture for your husband—to the amount of two hundred dollars. I have been looking over the account, and find that I rather overcharged him in the price of some chairs—that is, I could have afforded them at somewhat less. I have added up the interest, and here, madam, is the money."

The widow listened, and as she suspected the truth, the tears came to her eyes. The Deacon did not pause to reply, but laid the money on the table and departed.

The term *deacon* is associated in many minds with a sort of affectation, a cant in conversation, and an I-am-holier-than-thou air and manner. I remember Deacon C——, who deemed it proper to become scriptural, and talk as much as possible like Isaiah. He was in partnership with his son Laertes, and they sold crockery and furniture. One day a female customer came, and the old gentleman being engaged, went to call his son, who was in the loft above. Placing himself at the foot of the stairs, he said, attuning his voice to the occasion, "La-ar-tes, descend—a lady waits!" Deacon C—— sought to signalize himself by a special respect to the ways of Providence; so he refused to be insured against fire, declaring that if the Lord wished to burn down his house or his barn he should submit without a murmur. He pretended to consider thunder, and lightning, and conflagrations as special acts of the Almighty, and it was distrusting Providence to attempt to [86] avert their effects. Deacon Hawley had none of these follies or frailties. Though a deacon, he was still a man; though aspiring to heaven, he lived cheerily on earth; though a Christian, he was a father, a neighbor, and, according to his rank in life, a gentleman, having in all things the feelings and manners appropriate to each of those relations.

CHAPTER VIII. [87]

MAT OLMSTEAD, THE TOWN WIT—THE SALAMANDER HAT—SOLAR ECLIPSE—THE OLD HEN AND THE PHILOSOPHER—LIEUTENANT SMITH—EXTRAORDINARY METEOR—FULTON AND HIS STEAM-BOAT—GRANTHER BALDWIN AND HIS WIFE—SARAH BISHOP AND HER CAVE.

Another celebrity in Ridgefield, whom I must not forget, was Matthew Olmstead, or Mat Olmstead, as he was usually called; he was a day laborer, and though his specialty was the laying of stone fences, he was equally adroit at hoeing corn, mowing, and farm-work in general. He was rather short and thick-set, with a long nose, a little bulbous in his latter days; with a ruddy complexion, and a mouth shutting like a pair of nippers, the lips having an oblique dip to the left, giving a keen and mischievous expression to his face: qualified, however, by more of mirth than malice. This feature was indicative of his mind and character; for he was sharp in speech, and affected a crisp, biting brevity, called dry wit. He had also a turn for practical jokes, and a great many of these were told of him; to which, perhaps, he had no historical claim. The following is one of them, and is illustrative of his manner, even if it originated elsewhere.

On a cold, stormy day in December, a man chanced to come into the bar-room of Keeler's tavern, where Mat Olmstead and several of his companions were lounging. The stranger had on a new hat of the latest fashion, and still shining with the gloss of the iron. He seemed conscious of his [88] dignity, and carried his head in such a manner as to invite attention to it. Mat's knowing eye immediately detected the weakness of the stranger; so he approached him, and said,—

"What a very nice hat you've got on! Pray who made it?"

"Oh, it came from New York," was the reply.

"Well, let me take it," said Mat.

The stranger took it off his head, gingerly, and handed it to him.

"It is a wonderful nice hat," said Matthew; "and I see it's a real salamander!"

"Salamander?" said the other. "What's that?"

"Why, a real salamander hat won't burn!"

"No? I never heard of that before: I don't believe it's one of that kind."

"Sartain sure; I'll bet you a mug of flip of it."

"Well, I'll stand you!"

"Done: now I'll just put it under the fore-stick?"

"Well."

It being thus arranged, Mat put the hat under the fore-stick into a glowing mass of coals. In an instant it took fire, collapsed, and rolled into a black, crumpled mass of cinders.

"I du declare," said Mat Olmstead, affecting great astonishment, "it ain't a salamander hat arter all! Well, I'll pay the flip!"

Yet wit is not always wisdom. Keen as this man was as to things immediately before him, he was of narrow understanding. He seemed not to possess the faculty of reasoning beyond his senses. He never would admit that the sun was fixed, and that the world turned round.

I remember, that when the great solar eclipse of 1806 was approaching, he with two other men [89]
were at work in one of our fields, not far from the house. The eclipse was to begin at ten or eleven o'clock, and my father invited the workmen to come up and observe it through some pieces of smoked glass. They came, though Mat ridiculed the idea of an eclipse—not but the thing might happen; but it was idle to suppose it could be foretold. While they were waiting and watching, my father explained the cause and nature of the phenomenon.

Mat laughed with that low, scoffing chuckle, with which a woodcock, safe in his den, replies to the bark of a besieging dog.

"So you don't believe this?" said my father.

"No," said Mat, shaking his head; "I don't believe a word of it. You say, Parson Goodrich, that the sun is fixed, and don't move?"

"Yes, I say so."

"Well: didn't you preach last Sunday out of the 10th chapter of Joshua?"

"Yes."

"And didn't you tell us that Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still?"

"Yes."

"Well: what was the use of telling the sun to stand still if it never moved?"

This was a dead shot, especially at a parson, and in the presence of an audience inclined, from the fellowship of ignorance, to receive the argument. Being thus successful, Mat went on,—

"Now, Parson Goodrich, let's try it again. If you turn a thing that's got water in it bottom up, the water'll run out, won't it?"

"No doubt." [90]

"If the world turns round, then, your well will be turned bottom up, and the water'll run out!"

At this point my father applied his eye to the sun, through a piece of smoked glass. The eclipse had begun: a small piece was evidently cut off from the rim. My father stated the fact, and the company around looked through the glass, and saw that it was so. Mat Olmstead, however, sturdily refused to try it, and bore on his face an air of supreme contempt; as much as to say "You don't humbug me!"

But ignorance and denial of the works of God do not interrupt their march. By slow and invisible degrees, a shade crept over the landscape. There was no cloud in the sky; but a chill stole through the atmosphere, and a strange dimness fell over the world. It was mid-day, yet it seemed like the approach of night. All nature seemed chilled and awed by the strange phenomenon. The birds, with startled looks and ominous notes, left their busy cares and gathered in the thick branches of the trees, where they seemed to hold counsel one with another. The hens, with slow and hesitating steps, set their faces toward their roosts. One old hen, with a brood of chickens, walked along with a tall, halting tread, and sought shelter upon the barn-floor, where she gathered her young ones under her wings, continuing to made a low sound, as if saying, "Hush, my babes, lie still and slumber."

I well remember this phenomenon—the first of the kind I had ever witnessed. Though occupied by this seeming conflict of the heavenly bodies, I recollect to have paid some attention to the effect of the scene upon others. Mat Olmstead said not a word; the other workmen were [91]
overwhelmed with emotions of awe.

At length, the eclipse began to pass away, and nature slowly returned to her equanimity. The birds came forth, and sang a jubilee, as if relieved from some impending calamity. The hum of life again filled the air; the old hen with her brood gaily resumed her rambles, and made the leaves and gravel fly with her invigorated scratchings. The workmen, too, having taken a glass of grog, returned thoughtfully to their labors.

"After all," said one of the men, as they passed along to the field, "I guess the parson was right about the sun and the moon."

"Well, perhaps he was," said Mat; "but then Joshua was wrong."

This incident of the total eclipse was, many years later, turned to account in Parley's Magazine, in the following dialogue between Peter Parley and his children:

Parley. Come, John, you promised to write something for this number of the Magazine; is it ready?

John. Well—* * *—not exactly.

Jane. Oh, Mr. Parley—'tis ready—he read it all to me, and it's real good, if anybody could understand it.

P. Bring it here, John. (*John comes up gingerly, and gives Mr. Parley a piece of paper.*)

John. There 'tis—but you mustn't read it aloud.

All the children. Yes, yes, read it! Read it! Go ahead!

P. Well, I'll read it—it looks pretty good. Now let all be perfectly still. (*Parley reads.*)

The Old Hen and the Philosopher: a Fable.

[92]

The Old Hen and the Philosopher: a Fable.

PART I.

REFLECTIONS OF A HEN WITH CHICKENS DURING AN ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.

"Craw * * * craw * * * craw! What's the matter with my eyes? It looks very dark, for a clear summer's day. I must be getting old, for it ain't more than ten o'clock, and it seems exactly like sundown. Craw * * * craw * * * craw! Why, it's getting cold. It seems as chill as evening. Cut, cut, cudawcut! What can be the matter? Why, the sun is going to bed before it's fairly got up. Cur—r-r-r-r-r! Well, after all, it may be only a fit of the vapors—or my gizzard may be put out of order by that toad I ate yesterday. I thought, then, I should pay dear for it. Cur—r-r-r-r-r? Here chicks—come under my wings! I'm going to take a nap. Come along—Nip, Dip, Pip, Rip—come into your featherbed, my little dearies! There! Don't stick your noses out—be still now—I'm going to sing a song.

Hush, my chickies—don't you peep—
Hush, my children—go to sleep!
Now the night is dark and thick—
Go to sleep each little chick!
* * * * *

Fiddle-de-dee—I can't sleep, and the chickens are as lively as bed-bugs. Cut—cut—cu—daw—cut! What on airth is the matter! The sun has got put out, right up there in the sky, just like a candle. Well—never did I see or hear of such a thing afore! And now it's night in the middle of the day! [93] What will come next? Why, I expect I shall walk on my head, and fly with my claws! It ain't half fair, to shave an old hen and chickens out of their dinner and supper in this way. However, it's too dark for decent people to be abroad. So, my chicks, we must get into the coop and go to rest. Cur—r-r-r-r—it's very queer indeed. How thankful I am that I don't make day and night, and get the world into such a scrape as this. Come in! Come in, chicks! It ain't our affair. Come along—there—you rowdies! You ain't sleepy, and I don't wonder at it. But hens and chickens must go to bed when the lamp is put out. Cur—r-r-r-r-r."

PART II.

REFLECTIONS OF A PHILOSOPHER UPON A BLADE OF GRASS.

Here is a leaf, which we call a blade of grass. There are myriads like it in this field; it seems a trifle; it seems insignificant. But let me look at it with my glass. How wonderful is its texture! It seems woven like network, and nothing can exceed the beauty of its structure. And yet every blade of grass is like this. It exceeds all human art in the delicacy of its fabric, yet it grows here out of the ground. *Grows!* What does that mean? What makes it grow? Has it life? It must have life, or it could not grow. And what is that life? It cannot think; it cannot walk; who makes it grow then? Who made this blade of grass? It was not man; it is not the beast of the field. It is God who made it! And is God here in the field, all around me—in every blade of grass, in every leaf, and [94] stem, and flower?

It must be so, indeed. How full of instruction is every thing around us, if we use the powers we possess!

Moral. Some people believe, that birds and beasts have minds and souls as well as human beings; but we see that the most stupendous wonder of nature excited in one of the most intelligent and civilized of birds, only a queer sort of surprise, expressed in the words cut—cut—cu—dawcut! At

the same time it appears that a single blade of grass opens to the philosopher a sublime strain of thought, teaching the profound lesson that God is everywhere!

Is there not a gulf as wide as eternity, between the human soul and animal instinct?

> *All the children.* Bravo, bravo—John!
>
> *Parley.* Well, John—that'll do for a boy. I shan't insert it as my own, you know; people will say, it's good for John Smith, only fourteen years old; but for Peter Parley—why, it's too ridiculous, altogether. At any rate—John—the moral is good—and if people do laugh at the article, you just say to 'em—*keep your tongue between your teeth, till you do better, and you won't speak for a year*! There's nothing like showing a proper spirit upon occasions of importance.

To return to Mat Olmstead. Notwithstanding his habitual incredulity, he had still his weak side, for he was a firm believer in ghosts: not ghosts in general, but in two that he had seen himself. These were of enormous size, white, and winged like angels. He had seen them one dark night as [95]
he was going to his house, which was situated in a lonesome lane that diverged from the high road. It was very late, and Mat had spent the evening at the tavern, like Tam O'Shanter; like him, he "was na fou, but just had plenty." Well, Mat Olmstead's two angels turned out to be a couple of white geese, which he had startled into flight as he stumbled upon them quietly snoozing in the joint of a rail fence!

It has often appeared to me that Mat Olmstead was a type, a representative of a class of men not very rare in this world of ours. It is not at all uncommon to find people, and those who are called strong-minded, who are habitual unbelievers in things possible and probable—nay, in things well established by testimony—while they readily become the dupes of the most absurd illusions and impositions. Dr. Johnson, it is stated, did not believe in the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, until six months after it had happened, while he readily accepted the egregious deception of the Cock Lane Ghost. In our day we see people, and sharp ones, too, who reject the plainest teachings of common sense, sanctioned by the good and wise of centuries, and follow with implicit faith some goose of the imagination, like Joe Smith or Brigham Young. These are Mat Olmsteads, a little intoxicated by their own imaginations, and in their night of ignorance and folly they fall down and worship the grossest and goosiest of illusions.

I now turn to a different character, Lieutenant, or, as we all called him, *Leftenant* Smith, who has been already introduced to you. He was a man of extensive reading and large information; he was also some sixty years old, and had stored in his memory the results of his own observation and experience. He read the newspapers and conversed with travellers, affected philosophy, and [96]
deemed himself the great intelligencer of the town: he dearly loved to dispense his learning, asking only in return attentive listeners; and he liked discussion, provided the talk was all left to himself. He was equal to all questions: with my father, he dilated upon such high matters as the purchase of Louisiana; Lewis and Clarke's exploring expedition; the death of Hamilton in the duel with Aaron Burr; the attack of the Leopard on the Chesapeake; Fulton's attempts at steam navigation, and the other agitating topics of those times, as they came one after another.

I have an impression now that Lieut. Smith, after all, was not very profound; but to me he was a miracle of learning. I listened to his discussions with very little interest, but his narratives engaged my whole attention. These were always descriptive of actual events, for he would have disdained fiction: from them I derived a satisfaction that I never found in fables. The travels of Mungo Park, his strange adventures and melancholy death, which about those days transpired through the newspapers, and all of which Lieut. Smith had at his tongue's end, excited my interest and my imagination, even beyond the romances of Sinbad the Sailor and Robinson Crusoe.

In the year 1807 an event occurred, not only startling in itself, but giving exercise to all the philosophical powers of Lieut. Smith. On the morning of the 14th of December, about daybreak, I had arisen, and was occupied in building a fire, this being my daily duty; suddenly the room was filled with light, and, looking up, I saw through the window a ball of fire, nearly the size of the moon, passing across the heavens from north-west to south-east. It was at an immense height, [97]
and of intense brilliancy. Having passed the zenith, it swiftly descended toward the earth: while still at a great elevation it burst, with three successive explosions, into fiery fragments. The report was like three claps of rattling thunder in quick succession.

My father, who saw the light and heard the sounds, declared it to be a meteor of extraordinary magnitude. It was noticed all over the town, and caused great excitement. On the following day the news came that huge fragments of stone had fallen in the adjacent town of Weston, some eight or ten miles south-east of Ridgefield. It appeared that the people in the neighborhood heard the rushing of the stones through the air, as well as the shock when they struck the earth. One, weighing two hundred pounds, fell on a rock, which it splintered; its huge fragments ploughing up the ground around to the extent of a hundred feet. This meteor was estimated to be half-a-mile in diameter, and to have travelled through the heavens at the rate of two or three hundred miles a minute.

On this extraordinary occasion the Lieutenant came to our house, according to his wont, and for several successive evenings discoursed to us upon the subject. I must endeavor to give you a specimen of his performances.

"I have examined the subject, sir," said he, addressing my father, "and am inclined to the opinion that these phenomena are animals revolving in the orbits of space between the heavenly bodies. Occasionally, one of them comes too near the earth, and rushing through our atmosphere with immense velocity, takes fire and explodes!"

"This is rather a new theory, is it not?" said my father. "It appears that these meteoric stones, in [98] whatever country they fall, are composed of the same ingredients: mostly silex, iron, and nickel: these substances would make rather a hard character, if endowed with animal life, and especially with the capacity of rushing through space at the rate of two or three hundred miles a minute, and then exploding?"

"These substances I consider only as the shell of the animal, sir."

"You regard the creature as a huge shell-fish, then?"

"Not necessarily a fish; for the whole order of nature, called *Crustacea*, has the bones on the outside. In this case of meteors, I suppose them to be covered with some softer substance; for it frequently happens that a jelly-like matter comes down with meteoric stones. This resembles coagulated blood; and thus what is called bloody rain or snow has often fallen over great spaces of country. Now, when the chemists analyze these things—the stones, which I consider the bones; and the jelly, which I consider the fat; and the rain, which I consider the blood—they find them all to consist of the same elements; that is, silex, iron, nickel, &c. None but my animal theory will harmonise all these phenomena, sir."

"But," interposed my father, "consider the enormous size of your aërial monsters. I recollect to have read only a short time since, that in the year 1803, about one o'clock in the afternoon, the inhabitants of several towns of Normandy, in France, heard noises in the sky, like the peals of cannon and musketry, with a long-continued roll of drums. Looking upward, they saw something like a small cloud at an immense elevation, which soon seemed to explode, sending its vapor in all directions. At last a hissing noise was heard, and then stones fell, spreading over a country three [99] miles wide by eight miles long. No less than two thousand pieces were collected, weighing from one ounce to seventeen pounds. That must have been rather a large animal, eight miles long and three miles wide!"

"What is that, sir, in comparison with the earth, which Kepler, the greatest philosopher that ever lived, conceived to be a huge beast?"

"Yes; but did he prove it?"

"He gave good reasons for it, sir. He found very striking analogies between the earth and animal existences: such as the tides, indicating its breathing through vast internal lungs; earthquakes, resembling eructations from the stomach; and volcanoes, suggestive of boils, pimples, and other cutaneous eruptions."

"I think I have seen your theory set to verse."

Saying this, my father rose, and bringing a book, read as follows,—

"To me things are not as to vulgar eyes—
I would all nature's works anatomize:
This world a living monster seems to me,
Rolling and sporting in the aërial sea:
The soil encompasses her rocks and
stones,
As flesh in animals encircles bones.
I see vast ocean, like a heart in play,
Pant systole and diastole every day.
The world's great lungs, monsoons and
trade-winds show—
From east to west, from west to east they
blow.
The hills are pimples, which earth's face
defile,
And burning Etna an eruptive boil.
On her high mountains living forests grow,
And downy grass o'erspreads the vales
below:
From her vast body perspirations rise,
Condense in clouds and float beneath the
skies."

My father having closed the book, the profound Lieutenant, who did not conceive it possible that [100] a thing so serious could be made the subject of a joke, said,—

"A happy illustration of my philosophy, sir, though I cannot commend the form in which it is put. If a man has anything worth saying, sir, he should use prose. Poetry is only proper when one wishes to embellish folly or dignify trifles. In this case it is otherwise, I admit; and I am happy to find so powerful a supporter of my animal theory of meteors. I shall consider the subject, and

present it for the consideration of the philosophic world."

One prominent characteristic of this philosopher was, that when a great event came about, he fancied that he had foreseen and predicted it from the beginning. Now, about this time Fulton actually succeeded in his long-sought application of steam to navigation. The general opinion of the country had been, all along, that he was a monomaniac, attempting an impossibility. He was the standing theme of cheap newspaper wit, and a God-send to orators who were hard run for a joke. Lieutenant Smith, who was only an echo of what passed around him during the period of Fulton's labors, joined in the current contempt; but when the news came, in October, 1807, that he had actually succeeded—that one of his boats had steamed at the rate of five miles an hour against the current of the Hudson river—then, still an echo of the public voice, did he greatly jubilate.

"I told you so! I told you so!" was his first exclamation, as he entered the house, swelling with the account.

"Well, and what is it?" said my father.

"Fulton has made his boat go, sir! I told you how it would be, sir. It opens a new era in the history of navigation. We shall go to Europe in ten days, sir." [101]

Now, you will readily understand, that in these sketches I do not pretend to report with literal precision the profound discourses of our Ridgefield *savant*; I remember only the general outlines, the rest being easily suggested. My desire is to present the portrait of one of the notables of our village—one whom I remember with pleasure, and whom I conceive to be a representative of the amiable, and perhaps useful race of fussy philosophers to be found in most country villages.

From the town oracle I turn to the town miser. Granther Baldwin, as I remember him, was threescore years and ten—perhaps a little more. He was a man of middle size, thin, wiry, and bloodless, and having his body bent forward at a sharp angle with his hips, while his head was thrown back over his shoulders, giving his person the general form of a reversed letter Z. His complexion was brown and stony; his eye grey and twinkling, with a nose and chin almost meeting like a pair of forceps. His hair, standing out with an irritable friz, was of a rusty gray. He always walked and rode with restless rapidity. At church, he wriggled in his seat, tasted fennel, and bobbed his head up and down and around. He could not afford tobacco, so he chewed, with a constant activity, either an oak chip or the roots of elecampane, which was indigenous in the lane near his house. On Sundays he was decent in his attire, but on week-days he was a beggarly curiosity. It was said that he once exchanged hats with a scarecrow, and cheated scandalously in the bargain. His boots—a withered wreck of an old pair of whitetops—dangled over his shrunken calves and a coat in tatters fluttered from his body. He rode a rat-tailed, ambling mare, which [102] always went like the wind, shaking the old gentleman merrily from right to left, and making his bones, boots, and rags rustle like his own bush-harrow. Familiar as he was, the school-boys were never tired of him, and when he passed, "There goes Granther Baldwin!" was the invariable ejaculation.

I must add, in order to complete the picture, that in contrast to his leanness and activity, his wife was very fat, and, either from indolence or lethargy, dozed away half her life in the chimney-corner. She spent a large part of her life in cheating her husband out of fourpence-ha'pennies, of which more than a peck were found secreted in an old chest at her death.

It was the boast of this man that he had risen from poverty to wealth, and he loved to describe the process of his advancement. He always worked in the cornfield till it was so dark that he could see his hoe strike fire. When in the heat of summer he was obliged occasionally to let his cattle breathe, he sat on a sharp stone, lest he should rest too long. He paid half-a-dollar to the parson for marrying him, which he always regretted, as one of his neighbors got the job done for a pint of mustard-seed. On fast-days he made his cattle go without food as well as himself. He systematically stooped to save a crooked pin or a rusty nail, as it would cost more to make it than to pick it up. Such were his boasts—or at least, such were the things traditionally imputed to him.

He was withal a man of keen faculties; sagacious in the purchase of land, as well as in the rotation of crops. He was literally honest, and never cheated any one out of a farthing, according to his arithmetic, though he had sometimes an odd way of reckoning. It is said that in his day the [103] law imposed a fine of one dollar for profane swearing. During this period, Granther Baldwin employed a carpenter who was notoriously addicted to this vice. Granther kept a strict account of every instance of transgression, and when the job was done, and the time came to settle the account, he said to the carpenter,—

"You've worked with me thirty days, I think, Mr. Kellogg?"

"Yes, Granther," was the reply.

"At a dollar a-day: that makes thirty dollars, I think?"

"Yes, Granther."

"Mr. Kellogg, I am sorry to observe that you have a very bad habit of taking the Lord's name in vain."

"Yes, Granther."

"Well, you know that's agin the law."

"Yes, Granther."

"And there's a fine of one dollar for each offence."

"Yes, Granther."

"Well—here's the account I've kept, and I find you've broken the law twenty-five times; that is, sixteen times in April, and nine in May. At a dollar a time, that makes twenty-five dollars—don't it?"

"Yes, Granther."

"So, then, twenty-five from thirty leaves five; it appears, therefore, that there is a balance of five dollars due to you. How'll you take it, Mr. Kellogg? In cash, or in my way—say in 'taters, pork, and other things?"

At this point the carpenter's brow lowered, but with a prodigious effort at composure he replied, —

"Well, Granther, you may keep the five dollars, and I'll take it out in *my* way—that is, in swearing!"

Upon this he hurled at the old gentleman a volley of oaths, too numerous and too profane to repeat. [104]

One sketch more, and my gallery of eccentricities is finished. Men hermits have been frequently heard of, but a woman hermit is of rare occurrence. Nevertheless, Ridgefield could boast of one of these among its curiosities. Sarah Bishop was, at the period of my boyhood, a thin, ghostly old woman, bent and wrinkled, but still possessing a good deal of activity. She lived in a cave, formed by nature, in a mass of projecting rocks that overhung a deep valley or gorge in West Mountain, about four miles from our house.

The rock, bare and desolate, was her home, except that occasionally she strayed to the neighborhood villages; seldom being absent more than one or two days at a time. She never begged, but received such articles as were given to her. She was of a highly religious turn of mind, and at long intervals came to our church, and partook of the sacrament. She sometimes visited our family—the only one thus favored in the town—and occasionally remained overnight. She never would eat with us at the table, nor engage in general conversation. Upon her early history she was invariably silent; indeed, she spoke of her affairs with great reluctance. She neither seemed to have sympathy for others, nor to ask it in return. If there was any exception, it was only in respect to the religious exercises of the family: she listened intently to the reading of the Bible, and joined with apparent devotion in the morning and evening prayer.

My excursions frequently brought me within the wild precincts of her solitary den. Several times I have paid a visit to the spot, and in two instances found her at home. A place more desolate, in its general outline, more absolutely given up to the wildness of nature, it is impossible to [105] conceive. Her cave was a hollow in the rock, about six feet square. Except a few rags and an old basin, it was without furniture; her bed being the floor of the cave, and her pillow a projecting point of the rock. It was entered by a natural door about three feet wide and four feet high, and was closed in severe weather only by pieces of bark. At a distance of a few feet was a cleft, where she kept a supply of roots and nuts, which she gathered, and the food that was given her. She was reputed to have a secret depository, where she kept a quantity of antique dresses; several of them of rich silks, and apparently suited to fashionable life: though I think this was an exaggeration. At a little distance down the ledge there was a fine spring of water, near which she was often found in fair weather.

There was no attempt, either in or around the spot, to bestow upon it an air of convenience or comfort. A small space of cleared ground was occupied by a few thriftless peachtrees, and in summer a patch of starveling beans, cucumbers, and potatoes. Up two or three of the adjacent forest-trees there clambered luxuriant grape-vines, highly productive in their season. With the exception of these feeble marks of cultivation, all was left ghastly and savage as nature made it. The trees, standing upon the tops of the cliff, and exposed to the shock of the tempest, were bent and stooping towards the valley: their limbs contorted, and their roots clinging, as with an agonized grasp, into the rifts of the rocks upon which they stood. Many of them were hoary with age, and hollow with decay; others were stripped of their leaves by the blasts; and others still, grooved and splintered by the lightning. The valley below, enriched with the decay of centuries, [106] and fed with moisture from the surrounding hills, was a wild paradise of towering oaks, and other giants of the vegetable kingdom, with a rank undergrowth of tangled shrubs. In the distance, to the east, the gathered streams spread out into a beautiful expanse of water called Long Pond.

A place at once so secluded and so wild was, of course, the chosen haunt of birds, beasts and reptiles. The eagle built her nest and reared her young in the clefts of the rocks; foxes found shelter in the caverns; and serpents revelled alike in the dry hollows of the cliffs and the dark recesses of the valley. The hermitess had made companionship with these brute tenants of the wood. The birds had become so familiar with her, that they seemed to heed her almost as little as if she had been a stone. The fox fearlessly pursued his hunt and his gambols in her presence. The rattlesnake hushed his monitory signal as he approached her. Such things, at least, were entertained by the popular belief. It was said, indeed, that she had domesticated a particular rattlesnake, and that he paid her daily visits. She was accustomed—so said the legend—to bring him milk from the villages, which he devoured with great relish.

It will not surprise you that a subject like this should have given rise to one of my first poetical efforts; the first verses, in fact, that I ever published. I gave them to Brainard, then editor of the Mirror, at Hartford; and he inserted them, probably about the year 1823.

The facts in respect to this Nun of the Mountain were, indeed, strange enough, without any

embellishment of fancy. During the winter she was confined for several months to her cell. At that period she lived upon roots and nuts, which she had laid in for the season. She had no fire; [107] and, deserted even by her brute companions, she was absolutely alone. She appeared to have no sense of solitude, no weariness at the slow lapse of days and months. When spring returned, she came down from her mountain a mere shadow; each year her form more bent, her limbs more thin and wasted, her hair more blanched, her eye more colorless. At last, life seemed ebbing away, like the faint light of a lamp sinking into the socket. The final winter came; it passed, and she was not seen in the villages around. Some of the inhabitants went to the mountain, and found her standing erect, her feet sunk in the frozen marsh of the valley. In this situation, being unable to extricate herself, she had yielded her breath to Him who gave it!

The early history of this strange personage was involved in some mystery. So much as this, however, was ascertained, that she was of good family, and lived on Long Island. During the Revolutionary war, in one of the numerous forays of the British soldiers, her father's house was burned, and she was infamously treated. Desolate in fortune, blighted at heart, she fled from human society, and for a long time concealed her sorrows in the cavern which she had accidentally found. Her grief—softened by time, perhaps alleviated by a veil of insanity—was at length so far mitigated, that, although she did not seek human society, she could endure it. She continued to occupy her cave till the year 1810 or 1811, when she departed in the manner I have described; and we may hope, for a brighter and happier existence.

CHAPTER IX. [108]

FAREWELL TO HOME—DANBURY—MY NEW VOCATION—MY BROTHER-IN-LAW—HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH LAWYER HATCH—CLERICAL ANECDOTES.

In the autumn of the year 1808, a sudden change took place in my prospects. My eldest sister had married a gentleman by the name of Cooke, in the adjacent town of Danbury. He was a tradesman, and being in want of a clerk, offered me the place. It was considered a desirable situation by my parents, and, overlooking my mechanical aptitudes, they accepted it at once, and at the age of fifteen I found myself installed in a country store.

This arrangement gratified my love of change; and at the same time, as Danbury was a much more considerable town than Ridgefield, going to live there naturally suggested the idea of advancement, especially as I was to exchange my uncertain prospects for a positive profession. However, I little comprehended what it meant to say, "Farewell to home:" I have since learned its significance. In thus bidding adieu to the paternal roof, we part with youth for ever. We part with the spring-tide of life, which strews every path with flowers, fills the air with poetry, and the heart with rejoicing. We part with that genial spirit which endows familiar objects—brooks, lawns, play-grounds, hill-sides—with its own sweet illusions; we bid adieu to this and its fairy companionships. Even if, in after life, we return to the scenes of our childhood, they have lost the [109] bloom of youth, and in its place we see the wrinkles of that age which has graven its hard lines upon our hearts.

Farewell to home implies something even yet more serious: we relinquish, and often with exultation, the tender care of parents, in order to take upon ourselves the responsibilities of independence. What seeming infatuation it is, that renders us thus impatient of the guidance of those who gave us being, and makes us at the same time anxious to spread our untried sails upon an untried sea, to go upon a voyage which involves all the chances, evil as well as good, of existence! And yet it is not infatuation—it is instinct. We cannot always be young; we cannot all remain under the paternal roof. The old birds push the young ones from the nest, and force them to a trial of their wings. It is the system of nature that impels us to go forth and try our fortunes, and it is a kind Providence, after all, which endues us with courage for the outset of our uncertain career.

I was not long in discovering that my new vocation was very different from what I had expected, and very different from my accustomed way of life. My habits had been active, my employments chiefly in the open air. I was accustomed to be frequently on horseback, and to make excursions to the neighboring towns. I had also enjoyed much personal liberty, which I failed not to use in rambling over the fields and forests. All this was now changed. My duties lay exclusively in the store, and this seemed now my prison. From morning to night I remained there, and, as our business was not large, I had many hours upon my hands with nothing to do but to consider the weariness of my situation. My brother-in-law was always present, and being a man of severe [110] aspect and watchful eyes, I felt a sort of restraint, which, for a time, was agonizing. I had, consequently, pretty sharp attacks of homesickness; a disease which, though not dangerous, is one of the most distressing to which suffering humanity is exposed.

This state of misery continued for some weeks, during which time I revolved various plans of escape from my confinement: such as stealing away at night, making my way to Norwalk, getting on board a sloop, and going as cabin-boy to the West Indies. I believe that a small impulse would have set me upon some such mad expedition. By degrees, however, I became habituated to my occupation, and as my situation was eligible in other respects, I found myself ere long reconciled to it.

The father and mother of my brother-in-law were aged people, living with him in the same house, and as one family. They were persons of great amiability and excellence of character: the former, Colonel Cooke, was eighty years of age, but he had still the perfect exercise of his faculties, and though he had ceased all business, he was cheerful, and took a lively interest in passing events. Never have I seen a more pleasing spectacle than this reverend couple, at the age of fourscore, both smoking their pipes in the evening, with two generations of their descendants around them.

My brother-in-law was a man of decided character, and his portrait deserves a place in these annals. He had graduated at Yale College, and had been qualified for the bar; but his health was feeble, and therefore, chiefly for occupation, he succeeded to the store which his father had kept before him. Being in easy circumstances, he made no great efforts in business. Though, as I have said, he was of stern aspect, and his manners were somewhat cold and distant, his character was [111] that of a just and kind man. In business he treated people respectfully, but he never solicited custom: he showed, but never recommended his goods. If his advice were asked, he offered it without regard to his own interest. He gave me no instructions, but left me to the influence of his example. He was of a religious turn of mind, not merely performing the accustomed duties of a Christian, but making devotional books a large part of his study. Perhaps he was conscious of failing health, and already heard the monitory voice of that disease which was ere long to terminate his career.

Nevertheless, he was not insensible to the pleasures of cultivated society, and however grave he might be in his general air and manner, he was particularly gratified with the visits of a man, in all things his opposite, Moses Hatch, then a leading lawyer in Danbury.

This person was a frequent visitor to the store, and the long winter which commenced soon after I entered upon my apprenticeship was not a little enlivened by his conversations with my master. It frequently happened during the deep snows, that the day passed without a single customer, and on these occasions Lawyer Hatch was pretty sure to pay us a visit. It was curious to see these two men, so opposite in character, attracted to each other as if by contradiction. My brother-in-law evidently found a pleasant relaxation in the conversation of his neighbor, embellished with elegant wit and varied learning, while the latter derived equal gratification from the serious, manly intellect of his friend. In general the former was the talker, and the latter the listener; yet sometimes the conversation became discussion, and a keen trial of wit *versus* logic ensued. The lawyer always contended for victory; my brother-in-law for the truth. [112]

The precise form of these conversations has vanished from my mind, but some of the topics remain. I recollect long talks about the embargo, non-intercourse, and other Jeffersonian measures, which were treated with unsparing ridicule and reproach; anecdotes and incidents of Napoleon, who excited mingled admiration and terror; with observations upon public men, as well in Europe as America. I remember also a very keen discussion upon Berkeley's theory of the ideality of nature, mental and material, which so far excited my curiosity, that, finding the "Minute Philosopher" by that author, in the family library, I read it through with great interest and attention. The frequent references to Shakespeare in these conversations led me to look into his works, and, incited by the recommendations of my sister, I read them through, somewhat doggedly, seeking even to penetrate the more difficult and obscure passages.

It frequently happened that my master, owing to the influence of disease, was affected with depression of spirits; and the lawyer's best wit and choicest stories were expended without even exciting a smile. Not discouraged, but rather stimulated by such adversity, he usually went on, and was pretty sure at last to strike the vein, as Moses did the water in the rock, and a gush of uncontrollable laughter was the result. I remember in one instance, Mr. Cooke sat for a long time, looking moodily into the fire, while Squire Hatch went on telling stories, chiefly about clergymen, of which he had a great assortment. I will endeavor to give you a sketch of the scene.

"I know not why it is so," said the lawyer; "but the fact is undeniable, that the most amusing [113] anecdotes are about clergymen. The reason perhaps is, that incongruity is the source of humorous associations; and this is evidently the most frequent and striking in a profession which sets apart its members as above the mass of mankind, in a certain gravity of character and demeanor, of which the black coat is the emblem. A spot upon this strikes every eye, while a brown coat, being the color of dirt, hides rather than reveals what is upon its surface. Thus it is, as we all know, that what would be insipid as coming from a layman, is very laughable if it happens to a parson. I have heard that on a certain occasion, as the Rev. J—— M—— was about to read a hymn, he saw a little boy sitting behind the chorister in the gallery, who had intensely red hair. The day was cold, and the little rogue was pretending to warm his hands by holding them close to the chorister's head. This so disconcerted the minister, that it was some minutes before he could go on with the services."

The only effect of this was, that my master drew down one corner of his mouth.

"I have heard of another clergyman," said the lawyer, "who suffered in a similar way. One day, in the very midst of his sermon, he saw Deacon B—— fast asleep, his head leaning back on the rail of the pew, and his mouth wide open. A young fellow in the gallery above, directly over him, took a quid of tobacco from his mouth, and taking a careful aim, let it drop plump into the deacon's mouth. The latter started from his sleep, and went through a terrible paroxysm of fright and choking before he recovered."

Mr. Cooke bit his lip, but was silent. Lawyer Hatch, although he pretended to be all the while looking into the fire, got a quick side-glance at the face of his auditor, and continued,— [114]

"You know the Rev. Dr. B——, sir? Well, one day he told me, that as he was on his way to New

Haven he came to the house of one of his former parishioners, who, some years before, had removed to that place. As he was about to pass it, he remembered that this person had died recently, and he thought it meet and proper to stop and condole with the widow. She met him very cheerfully, and they had some pleasant chat together.

"'Madam,' said he, after a time, 'it is a painful subject—but you have recently met with a severe loss.'

"She instantly applied her apron to her eyes, and said,—

"'Oh yes, doctor; there's no telling how I feel.'

"'It is indeed a great bereavement you have suffered.'

"'Yes, doctor; very great, indeed.'

"'I hope you bear it with submission?'

"'I try tu; but oh, doctor, I sometimes feel in my heart—Goosy, goosy gander, where shall I wander?'"

The lawyer glanced at the object of his attack, and seeming to see a small breach in the wall, he thought it time to bring up his heavy guns. He went on,—

"There's another story about this same Dr. B——, which is amusing. Some years ago he lost his wife, and after a time he began to look out for another. At last he fixed his mind upon a respectable lady in a neighboring town, and commenced paying her his addresses. This naturally absorbed much of his time and attention, and his parish became dissatisfied. The deacons of the church held several conferences on the subject, and it was finally agreed that Deacon Becket, who had the grace of smooth speech, should give the Reverend Doctor a hint of what they [115] deemed his fearful backsliding. Accordingly, the next Sabbath morning, on going to church, the deacon overtook the parson, and the following dialogue ensued,—

"'Good morning, Dr. B——.'

"'Good morning, Deacon Becket.'

"'Well, Doctor, I'm glad to meet you; for I wanted to say to you as how I thought of changing my pew!'

"'Indeed! And why so?'

"'Well, I'll tell you. I sit, as you know, clear over the backside of the meeting-house; and between me and the pulpit there's Judy Vickar, Molly Warren, Experience Pettibone, and half-a-dozen old maids, who sit with their mouths wide open, and they catch all the best of your sarmon; and when it gets to me, it's plaguy poor stuff!'"

My brother-in-law could hold out no longer: his face was agitated for a moment with nervous spasms; and then, bending forward, he burst into a round, hearty laugh. The lawyer—who made it a point never to smile at his own jokes—still had a look upon his face as much as to say, "Well, sir, I thought I should get my case."

It may be easily imagined that I was greatly interested by these conversations and discussions; and always felt not a little annoyed, if perchance, as sometimes happened, I was called away in the midst of a good story, or a keen debate, to supply a customer with a gallon of treacle, or a paper of pins. I know not if this disgusted me with my trade; but it is very certain that I conceived for it a great dislike, nearly from the beginning. Never, so far as I can recollect, did I for one moment enter heartily into its spirit. I was always, while I continued in it, a mere servile laborer; doing my duty, perhaps, yet with a languid and reluctant heart. However, I got through the [116] winter; and when the summer came, Mr. Cooke nearly gave up personal attention to business in consequence of ill health; and we had a new clerk, who was older than myself, and took the responsible charge of the establishment. He was an excellent merchant, and to me was a kind and indulgent friend. He afterwards settled in Troy, where he is still living, in the enjoyment of an ample fortune, and in excellent reputation as a father, friend, Christian, and neighbor; the natural fruit of good sense, good temper, and good conduct.

CHAPTER X. [117]

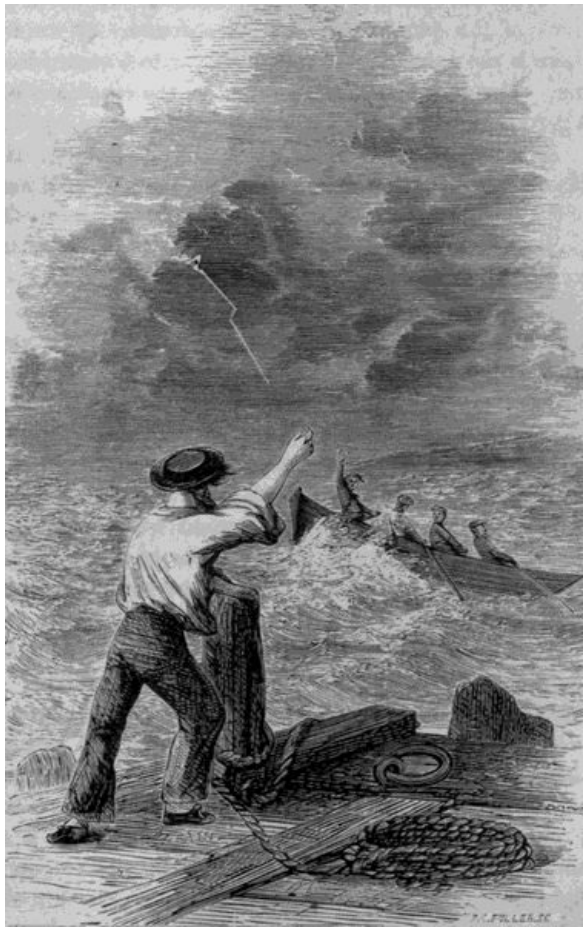
NEW HAVEN—DISTINGUISHED MEN—WHITNEY'S COTTON-GIN—DURHAM—MY GRANDMOTHER'S INDIAN PUDDINGS—IN SEARCH OF A DOCTOR—RETURN TO DANBURY—THE COLD FRIDAY—FACTORY WORKMEN—MATHEMATICS.

In the summer of 1809 I made a short tour with my brother-in-law and my sister, for the health of the former. This, to me, was a grand expedition; for among other places we visited was New Haven, then a sort of Jerusalem in my imagination; a holy place containing Yale College, of which Dr. Dwight was president. Besides all this, one of my uncles and some of my cousins lived there; and, better still, my brother was there, and then a member of the college. Ah, how my heart beat when we set out! Such was the vividness of my perceptions, that I could fill a book with recollections of that short, simple journey; the whole circuit not exceeding one hundred and twenty miles.

I was duly impressed with the beauty of New Haven; for then, as now, it was celebrated for a rare union of rural freshness and city elegance. I have recently, in passing through it, had a transient view of its appearance; and may safely affirm that, after pretty large observation in the Old World as well as in the New, I know of no town or city more inviting; especially to one whose judgment is cultivated by observation and study, and whose feelings are chastened by reflection and [118] experience. There is something of the activity and bustle of commerce in a part of the town, and at one point, all the spasm of a railway station. In other portions of the place, and over three-fourths of its area, there is the quietude and repose proper to a seat of learning. Here the houses seem suited to the city, each with a garden breathing the perfumes of the country.

At the period of the visit I am describing, New Haven had not one-half its present population; and many of the institutions which now adorn it did not exist. The College, however, was then as now, a leading literary institution in the country. To me it was an object of special reverence, as my grandfather and his five sons had all graduated there. My brother and two of my cousins were at this time among its inmates. Of course, I looked with intense curiosity at the several buildings that belonged to it. Many things here excited my admiration. I looked with particular interest—I may add, with some degree of envy—at the students, who seemed to me the privileged sons of the earth. Several were pointed out as promising to be the master-spirits of their age and generation; in some cases, I have since seen these anticipations fulfilled.

Next to the College I visited the Bay, and for the first time actually stood upon the shore of that living sea which, through my whole childhood, had spread its blue bosom before me in the distant horizon. A party of three or four of us took a boat, and went down toward the entrance of the Bay, landing on the eastern side. From this point the view was enchanting; it was a soft summer afternoon, and the sea only breathed upon by light puffs of wind that came from the west. I looked long, and with a species of entrancement, at its heaving and swelling surface: I ran my eye [119] far away, till it met the line where sky and wave are blended together: I followed the lulling surf as it broke, curling and winding, among the mimic bays of the rocky shore. It was a spectacle, not only full of beauty in itself, but to me it was a revelation and a fulfilment of the thousand half-formed fancies which had been struggling in my longing bosom from very childhood.



FIRST ADVENTURE ON THE SEA.

Our party was so occupied with our contemplations, that we had scarcely noticed a thunder-storm, which now approached and menaced us from the west. We set out to return, but before we had got half across the Bay it broke full upon us. The change in the aspect of the sea was fearful: all its gentleness was gone; and now, black and scowling, it seemed as if agitated by a demon, threatening everything with destruction that came within its scope. By a severe struggle we succeeded in reaching Long Walk, though not without risk.

While staying at New Haven, I met many distinguished men; as the house of my uncle, Elizur Goodrich, was frequented by all the celebrities of the place. Among these was Eli Whitney, the inventor of the cotton-gin, a machine for combing out the seeds from the cotton in its raw state, to which America may almost be said to owe her cotton trade. Whitney's first gin was made in

1793, at which time almost the whole of our raw material was imported. The results of his invention may be estimated by the fact, that while in 1789 only one million pounds of cotton were produced in the United States, the product of the year 1855 exceeded fourteen hundred millions!

We saw the original model of Mr. Whitney's gin at his gun-factory, which was situated in a wild, romantic spot, near the foot of East Rock, and about two miles distant from New Haven. [120]

Having spent about a week at New Haven, we proceeded to Durham, an old-fashioned, sleepy town, of a thousand inhabitants. It is chiefly remarkable for the distinguished men it has produced—the Chaunceys, celebrated in the annals of New England, and, I may add, in those of the country at large; the Wadsworths, no less noted in various commanding stations, military and civil, public and private; the Lymans, renowned in the battlefield, the college, the pulpit, and the senate; the Austins—father and son—to whose talent and enterprise Texas owes her position as a member of the Union.

To this list of remarkable names, I trust I may add that of the Goodriches, without the imputation of egotism, for historical justice demands it. At the time I visited the place, nearly all the family had long since left it. My grandfather, Dr. Goodrich, died in 1797, but my grandmother was living, as well as her daughter, Mrs. Smith, wife of Rev. David Smith, the clergyman of the place, who had succeeded to my grandfather's pulpit.

I trust I have all due respect for my paternal grandmother, who has already, by the way, been introduced to your notice. She was now quite lame, but active, energetic, and alive to everything that was passing. She welcomed me heartily, and took the best care of me in the world, lavishing upon me, without stint, all the treasures of her abundant larder. As to her Indian puddings—alas, I shall never see their like again! A comfortable old body she was in all things, and, as I have before remarked, took a special interest in the welfare of the generation of descendants rising up around her. When she saw me eating with a good appetite, her benignant grandmotherly face [121] beamed like a lantern.

As to my uncle and aunt Smith, I may remark that they were plain, pious people, the former worthily filling the pulpit of my grandfather, and enjoying a high degree of respect, alike from his position and character. Besides attending to his parochial duties, he prepared young men for college. Among his pupils were several persons who attained distinction. As a man, he was distinguished for his cheerful, frank, friendly manners: as a preacher, he was practical, sincere, and successful. I must mention a story of him, among my pulpit anecdotes. As sometimes happens, in a congregation of farmers during midsummer, it once chanced that a large number of his people, even the deacons in the sacramental seat, fell asleep in the very midst of the sermon. The minister looked around, and just at this moment, the only person who seemed quite awake was his eldest son, David, sitting in the pew by the side of the pulpit. Pausing a moment, and looking down upon his son, he exclaimed, in a powerful voice:

"David, wake up!"

In a moment the whole congregation roused themselves, and long did they remember the rebuke.

During our stay at Durham, my brother-in-law was so ill as to need the advice of a skilful physician. Accordingly, I was dispatched on horseback to Middletown, a distance of eight or ten miles, for Dr. O——, then famous in all the country round about. On my way I met a man of weather-beaten complexion and threadbare garments, mounted on a lean and jaded mare. Beneath him was a pair of plump saddlebags. He had all the marks of a doctor, for then men of his profession traversed the country on horseback, carrying with them a collection of pills, [122] powders, and elixirs, equivalent to an apothecary's shop. Instinct told me that he was my man. As I was about to pass him I drew in my breath, to ask if he were Dr. O——, but a sudden bashfulness seized me: the propitious moment passed, and I went on.

On arriving at the house of Dr. O——, I learned that he had gone to the village in the south-western part of the town, six or eight miles off. "There!" said I to myself, "I knew it was he: if I had only spoken to him!" However, reflection was vain. I followed to the designated spot, and there I found that he had left about half an hour before, for another village in the central part of the town. I gave chase, but he was too quick for me, so that I was obliged to return to Durham without him. "Ah!" I thought, "how much trouble a little courage would have saved me!" In fact, I took the incident to heart, and have often practised to advantage upon the lesson it suggested; which is, Never to let a doctor, or anything else, slip, for the want of asking an opportune question.

At length we departed from Durham, and took our way homeward, through a series of small towns, arriving at last at Woodbury. The week of our sojourn here flew on golden wings with me. The village itself was after my own heart. It lies in a small tranquil valley, its western boundary consisting of a succession of gentle acclivities, covered with forests; that on the east is formed of basaltic ledges, broken into wild and picturesque forms, rising sharp and hard against the horizon. Through the valley, in long serpentine sweeps, flows a stream, clear and bright, now dashing and now sauntering; here presenting a rapid, and there a glassy pool. In ancient times it [123] was bordered by cities of the beaver; it was now the haunt of a few isolated and persecuted muskrats. In the spring and autumn, the wild ducks, in their migrations, often stooped to its bosom for a night's lodging. At all seasons it was renowned for its trout. In former ages, when the rivers, protected by the deep forests, ran full to the brim, and when the larger streams were filled to repletion with shad and salmon, this was sometimes visited by enterprising individuals of their race, which shot up cataracts, and leaped over obstructing rocks, roots, and mounds, impelled by instinct to seek places remote from the sea, where they might deposit their spawn in safety. In

those days, I imagine, the accidents and incidents of shad and salmon life often rivalled the adventurous annals of Marco Polo or Robinson Crusoe.

There was about this little village a singular union of refinement and rusticity, of cultivated plain and steepling rock, of blooming meadow and dusky forest. The long, wide street, saving the highway and a few stray paths here and there, was a bright, grassy lawn, decorated with abundance of sugar-maples, which appeared to have found their Paradise. Such is the shape of the encircling hills and ledges that the site of the village seemed a sort of secluded Happy Valley, where everything turns to poetry and romance. And this aptitude is abundantly encouraged by history; for here was once the favored home of a tribe of Indians. All around—the rivers, the hills, the forests—are still rife with legends and remembrances of the olden time. A rocky mound, rising above the river on one side, and dark forests on the other, bears the name of "Pomperaug's Castle;" a little to the north, near a bridle-path that traversed the meadows, was a heap of stones, [124] called "Pomperaug's Grave." To the east I found a wild ledge, called "Bethel Rock." And each of these objects has its story.

It was a great time, that happy week—for let it be remembered that for a whole year I had been imprisoned in a country store. What melody was there in the forest echoes then! Ah! I have since heard Catalani, and Garcia, and Pasta, and Sontag, and Grisi; I have even heard "the Swedish Nightingale;" nay, in France and Italy—the very home of music and song—I have listened to the true nightingale, which has given to Jenny Lind her sweetest and most appropriate epithet; but never, in one or all, have I heard such music as filled my ears that incense-breathing morn, when I made a foray into the wilds of Woodbury!

We returned to Danbury after a tour of some five or six weeks. The succeeding autumn and winter presented no peculiar incident—with a single exception. There was, if I rightly remember, in the month of February, a certain "cold Friday," which passed down to succeeding generations as among the marvels of the time. It had snowed heavily for three days, and the ground was covered three feet deep. A driving wind from the north-east then set in, and growing colder and colder, it became at last so severe as to force everybody to shelter. This continued for two days, the whole air being filled with sleet, so that the sun, without a cloud in the sky, shone dim and grey as through a fog. The third day the wind increased, both in force and intensity of cold. Horses, cattle, fowls, sheep, perished in their coverings. The roads were blocked up with enormous drifts; the mails were stopped, travelling was suspended; the world, indeed, seemed [125] paralyzed, and the circulation of life to be arrested.

THE COLD FRIDAY.

On the morning of this third day, which was the ominous and famous Friday, word was brought to my sister that a poor family, about two miles off, to whom she had long been a kind friend, was in danger of starvation. She knew no fear, and tolerated no weakness. A thing that ought to be done, was to be done. Therefore, a sack was filled with bread, meat, candles, and a pint of rum: this was lashed around my waist. The horse was brought to the door—I mounted and set off. I knew the animal well, and we had enjoyed many a scamper together. He was, indeed, after my

own heart—clean limbed, with full, knowing eyes, and small, pointed sensitive ears. He had a cheerful walk, a fleet, skimming trot, a swift gallop, and all these paces we had often tried. I think he knew who was on his back; but when we got to the turning of the road, which brought his nostrils into the very tunnel of the gale, he snorted, whirled backward, and seemed resolved to return. I, however, brought him steady to his work, gave him sharp advice in the ribs, and showed him that I was resolved to be master. Hesitating a moment, as if in doubt whether I could be in earnest, he started forward; yet so keen was the blast, that he turned aside his head, and screamed as if his nostrils were pierced with hot iron. On he went, however, in some instances up to the saddle in the drift, yet clearing it at full bounds.

In a few minutes we were at the door of the miserable hut, now half buried in a snow-drift. I was just in time. The wretched inmates—a mother and three small children—without fire, without food, without help or hope, were in bed, poorly clothed, and only keeping life in their bodies by a [126] mutual cherishing of warmth, like pigs or puppies in a similar extremity. The scene within was dismal in the extreme. The fireplace was choked with snow, which had fallen down the chimney: the ill-adjusted doors and windows admitted alike the drift and the blast, both of which swept across the room in cutting currents. As I entered, the pale, haggard mother comprehend at a glance that relief had come, burst into a flood of tears. I had no time for words. I threw them the sack, remounted my horse, and, the wind at my back, I flew home. One of my ears was a little frost-bitten, and occasionally, for years after, a tingling and itching sensation there reminded me of my ride; which, after all, left an agreeable remembrance upon my mind.

Danbury is a handsome town, chiefly built on a long, wide street, crossed near the northern extremity by a small river, a branch of the Housatonic, which, having numerous rapids, affords abundance of mill-sites in its course. At this crossing there were two extensive hat-factories, famous over the whole country.

Nearly all the workmen in these establishments, of whom there were several hundred at the time I am describing, were foreigners, mostly English and Irish. A large part of the business of our store was the furnishing of rum to these poor wretches, who bought one or two quarts on Saturday night and drank till Monday, and frequently till Tuesday. A factory workman of those days was thought to be born to toil, and to get drunk. Philanthropy itself had not then lifted its eye or its hopes above this hideous malaria of custom. It is a modern discovery that manufacturing towns may rise up, where comfort, education, morals, and religion, in their best [127] and happiest exercise, may be possessed by the toiling masses.

A few words more, and I have done with Danbury. The health of my brother-in-law gradually failed, and at last, as winter approached, he took to his room, and finally to his bed. By almost insensible degrees, and with singular tranquillity of mind and body, he approached his end. It was a trait of his character to believe nothing, to do nothing, by halves. Having founded his faith on Christ, Christianity was now, in its duties, its promises, and its anticipations, as real as life itself. He was afflicted with no doubts, no fears. With his mind in full vigor, his strong intellect vividly awake, he was ready to enter into the presence of his God. The hour came. He had taken leave of his friends, and then, feeling a sense of repose, he asked to be left alone. They all departed save one, who sat apart, listening to every breath. In a few moments she came and found him asleep, but it was the sleep that knows no waking!

I continued in the store alone for several months, selling out the goods, and closing up the affairs of the estate. I had now a good deal of time to myself, and thumbed over several books, completing my reading of Shakspeare, to which I have already alluded. It happened that we had a neighbor over the way, a good-natured, chatty old gentleman, by the name of Ebenezer White. He had been a teacher, and had a great taste for mathematics. In those days it was the custom for the newspapers to publish mathematical questions, and to invite their solution. Master White was sure to give the answer first. In fact, his genius for mathematics was so large, that it left rather a moderate space in his brain for common sense. He was, however, full of good feeling, and was [128] now entirely at leisure. Indeed, time hung heavy on his hands, so he made me frequent visits, and in fact lounged away an hour or two of almost every day at the store. I became at last interested in mathematics, and under his good-natured and gratuitous lessons I learned something of geometry and trigonometry, and thus passed on to surveying and navigation. This was the first drop of real science that I ever tasted—I might almost say the last, for though I have since skimmed a good many books, I feel that I have really mastered almost nothing.

CHAPTER XI. [129]

ARRIVAL AT HARTFORD—MY OCCUPATION THERE—RESTLESSNESS—MY FRIEND GEORGE SHELDON.

I now enter upon a new era in my life. Early in the summer of 1811, I took leave of Danbury, and went to Hartford. On my arrival there, I was installed in the dry-goods store of C. B. K——, my father having made the arrangement some weeks before.

My master had no aptitude for business, and spent much of his time away, leaving the affairs of the shop to an old clerk, by the name of Jones, and to me. Things went rather badly, and he sought to mend his fortune by speculation in Merino sheep—then the rage of the day. A ram sold for a thousand dollars, and a ewe for a hundred. Fortunes were made and lost in a day during

this mania. My master, after buying a flock and driving it to Vermont, where he spent three months, came back pretty well shorn—that is, three thousand dollars out of pocket! This soon brought his affairs to a crisis, and so in the autumn I was transferred to the dry-goods store of J. B. H——.

My new employer had neither wife nor child to take up his time, so he devoted himself sedulously to business. He was, indeed, made for it—elastic in his frame, quick-minded, of even temper, and assiduous politeness. He was already well established, and things marched along as if by rail. For [130] a time we had another clerk, but he was soon dismissed, and I was the only assistant; my master, however, seldom leaving the shop during business hours. Had the capacity for trade been in me, I might now have learned my business. I think I may say that I fulfilled my duty, at least in form. I was regular in my hours, kept the books duly journalized and posted. I never consciously wronged arithmetic to the amount of a farthing. I duly performed my task at the counter. Yet, in all this I was a slave: my heart was not in my work. My mind was away; I dreamed of other things; I thought of other pursuits.

And yet I scarcely knew all this. I had certainly no definite plan for the future. A thousand things floated before my imagination. Every book I read drew me aside into its own vortex. Poetry made me poetical; politics made me political; travels made me truant. I was restless, for I was in a wrong position; yet I asked no advice, for I did not know that I needed it. My head and heart were a hive of thoughts and feelings, without the regulating and sedative supremacy of a clear and controlling intelligence.

I was then eighteen years of age. I had been sufficiently educated for my station. My parents had now removed from Ridgefield to Berlin, a distance of but eleven miles from my present residence, so that I had easy and frequent communication with them. My uncle, Chauncey Goodrich, then a Senator of the United States, lived in an almost contiguous street, and while in the city, always treated me with the kindness and consideration which my relationship to him naturally dictated. In general, then, my situation was eligible enough; and yet I was unhappy.

The truth is, I had now been able to sit in judgment upon myself—to review my acquirements, to [131] analyze my capacities, to estimate my character, to compare myself with others, and to see a little into the future. The decision was painful to my ambition. I had all along, unconsciously, cherished a vague idea of some sort of eminence, and this, unhappily, had nothing to do with selling goods or making money. I had lived in the midst of relations, friends, and alliances, all of which had cultivated in me trains of thought alien to my present employment. My connections were respectable—some of them eminent, but none of them rich. All had acquired their positions without wealth, and I think it was rather their habit to speak of it as a very secondary affair. Brought up under such influences, how could I give up my heart to trade? It was clear, indeed, that I had missed my vocation.

Full of this conviction, I besought my parents to allow me to quit the store, and attempt to make my way through college. Whether for good or ill, I know not, but they decided against the change, and certainly on substantial grounds. Their circumstances did not permit them to offer me any considerable aid, and without it they feared that I should meet with insuperable difficulties. I returned to the store disheartened at first, but after a time my courage revived, and I resolved to re-educate myself. I borrowed some Latin books, and with the aid of George Sheldon, an assistant in a publisher's establishment, and at this time my bosom friend, I passed through the Latin Grammar, and penetrated a little way into Virgil. This was done at night, for during the day I was fully occupied.

At the same time I began, with such light and strength as I possessed, to train my mind, to [132] discipline my thoughts, then as untamed as the birds of the wilderness. *I sought to think*—to think steadily, to acquire the power of forcing my understanding up to a point, and make it stand there and do its work. I attempted to gain the habit of speaking methodically, logically, and with accumulating power, directed to a particular object. I did all this as well by study as by practice. I read Locke on the Understanding and Watts on the Mind. I attempted composition, and aided myself by Blair's Rhetoric.

This was a task; for not only was my time chiefly occupied by my daily duties, but it was a contest against habit—it was myself against myself; and in this I was almost unaided and alone. I was to lay aside the slipshod practice of satisfying myself with impressions, feelings, guesses; in short, of dodging mental labor by jumping at conclusions. I was, indeed, to learn the greatest of all arts, that of reasoning—of discovering the truth; and I was to do this alone, and in the face of difficulties, partly founded in my mental constitution, and partly also in my training.

I did not at first comprehend the extent of my undertaking. By degrees I began to appreciate it: I saw and felt, at last, that it was an enormous task, and even after I had resolved upon it, again and again my courage gave way, and I ceased my efforts in despair. Still I returned to the work by spasms. I found, for instance, that my geography was all wrong: Asia stood up edgewise in my imagination, just as I had seen it on an old smoky map in Lieutenant Smith's study; Africa was in the south-east corner of creation, and Europe was somewhere in the north-east. In fact, my map of the world was very Chinese in its projection. I knew better, but still I had thus conceived it, [133] and the obstinate bump of locality insisted upon presenting its outlines to my mind according to this arrangement. I had similar jumbles of conception and habit as to other things. This would not do; so I re-learned the elements of geography; I revised my history, my chronology, my natural history, in all of which I had caught casual glimpses of knowledge. What I read I read earnestly. I determined to pass no word without ascertaining its meaning, and I persevered in this, doggedly, for five-and-twenty years.

My friend Sheldon was of inestimable service to me in my studies. Possessing advantages over me in age, experience, and education, he made many rough places smooth to my stumbling feet. Especially when, during my early efforts in thinking, my mind was assailed with doubts as to the truth of the Christian religion, his clear intelligence and sincere faith did much to help me through my difficulties.

CHAPTER XII.

[134]

WAR WITH ENGLAND—IN THE ARMY—MY UNCLE'S ADVICE—CAMPAIGNING—ON THE MARCH—OUR MILITARY COSTUME—MY FIRST SOLDIER'S SUPPER.

During my residence at Hartford war was declared against Great Britain. For some time Connecticut held aloof from all participation in the struggle. But when, in 1813, our own territory was threatened, all feeling vanished before the instinct of self-preservation, and the strong feeling of animosity which then raged against England. Anticipating this state of things, the state government had made preparations for the emergency.

As it was midsummer—a period when the husbandmen could ill afford to leave their farms—orders were sent by Governor Smith to dispatch at once the companies of militia from the larger towns to the defence of New London and the neighboring country. At that time I belonged to an artillery company, and this was among those ordered to the coast. I received a summons at four o'clock in the afternoon to be ready to march next day at sunrise. I went at once to consult my uncle—who, by the way, was at that time not only mayor of the city, but Lieutenant-Governor of the State. He had a short time before promised to make me one of his aids, and perhaps thought I should expect him now to fulfill his engagement. He soon set that matter at rest.

"You must, of course, go," said he. "We old federalists cannot shelter our nephews when there is a question of defending our own territory." [135]

"Ought I not to consult my parents?" said I.

"I will go down and see them to-morrow," he replied.

"Certainly, then, I shall go. I wish to go. My only feeling is, that my mother may have some anxiety."

"I will see her to-morrow. You may be at ease on that subject. Be ready to march at sunrise, according to your orders. I will come and see you before you start."

The next morning, while it was yet dark, he came, gave me some letters of introduction, and also supplied me with ten dollars—a welcome addition to my light purse. After a little advice he said,—"I have only one thing to add: If you come to a fight, *don't run away till the rest do*. Goodby!"

The next morning, June 7, 1813, about sunrise, the whole company, nearly sixty in number, mounted in wagons, departed. At sunset we were on the heights two miles back of New London. No provision had been made for us, and so we went supperless to bed in a large empty barn. I scarcely closed my eyes, partly because it was my first experiment in sleeping on the floor, and partly because of the terrific snoring of a fellow-soldier by my side. Never have I heard such a succession of choking, suffocating, strangling sounds, as issued from his throat. I expected that he would die, and, indeed, once or twice I thought he was dead. Strange to say, he got up the next morning in excellent condition, and seemed, indeed, to feel better for the exercise. This man became quite a character before the campaign was over: he got the title, of Æolus, and as he could not be tolerated in the barracks, he was provided with a tent at a good distance, where he blew his blast without restraint. At the close of the campaign he was the fattest man in the company. [136]

I was glad to see the daylight. The weather was fine, and as the sun came up we saw the British fleet—some half-dozen large ships of war—lying off the mouth of the Thames. They seemed very near at hand, and for the first time I realized my situation—that of a soldier who was likely soon to be engaged in battle. I said nothing of my emotions: indeed, words were unnecessary. I watched the countenances of my companions as they first caught a view of the black and portentous squadron, and I read in almost every face a reflection of my own feelings. We were, however, not all sentimentalists. There were among us, as doubtless in all such companies, a supply of witty, reckless Gallios, who gave a cheerful turn to our thoughts. We soon dispersed among the inhabitants, scattered over the neighboring hills and valleys, for breakfast. Like hungry wolves we fell upon the lean larders, and left famine behind. Of course every one offered to pay, but not one person would accept a farthing: we were, indeed, received as protectors and deliverers. It was something, after all, to be soldiers! With our stomachs fortified, and our consciousness flattered, we came cheerfully together.

At ten o'clock we were mustered, and began our march all in our best trim: cocked hats, long-tailed blue coats, with red facings, white pantaloons, and shining cutlasses at our sides. Our glittering cannon moved along with the solemnity of elephants. It was, in fact, a fine company—all young men, and many from the best families in Hartford. As we entered New London the streets presented some confusion, for the people were still removing back into the country, as an attack was daily expected. A few military companies were also gathering into the town. We were, [137]

however, not wholly overlooked: women put their heads out of the windows and smiled their gratitude as we passed along. Men stopped and surveyed us with evident signs of approbation. It was a glorious thing to belong to such a company! At last we came to a halt in one of the public squares. Then there was racing and chasing of aids-de-camp for four mortal hours, during which our martial pride drooped a little in the broiling sun. At four o'clock in the afternoon we were transported across the Thames to the village of Groton, and took up our quarters in a large house on the bank of the river, vacated for our use. Two immense kettles—the one filled with junks of salt beef, and the other with unwashed potatoes—were swung upon the kitchen trammels, and at six o'clock in the evening we were permitted each to fish out his dinner from the seething mass. That was my first soldier's supper; and, after all, it was a welcome meal.

CHAPTER XIII.

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NEW LONDON—OUR MILITARY REPUTATION—SENT WITH A LETTER—BRITISH CANNON-BALLS—OUT OF HARM'S WAY—AN ALARM—ON GUARD—TAKE A PRISONER—STRANGE EMOTIONS—MY LEFT-HAND CHUM—A GRATEFUL COUNTRY.

New London is situated on the western bank of the river Thames, three miles from its mouth. It has now ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, but at the time I am speaking of there were not more than four thousand. The entrance to the river is broad, and affords a fine harbor. This is defended by Fort Trumbull on the western side of the river, half a mile below the city. It contained a garrison of six or seven hundred soldiers during the war of 1812.

Opposite to New London is the village of Groton, the main street running along the river bank; on an eminence some hundred rods from the river, and commanding a view of the surrounding country, including the harbor and the islands which lie scattered near it in the Sound, is the site of Fort Griswold. The old fort is now in ruins, but in my time it was in tolerable repair. Our company, as well as other portions of the militia, labored upon it, and strengthened it, as well by completing its works as by erecting a small redoubt upon the south-eastern side. To the defence of the latter, in case of attack, the Hartford company was assigned.

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The officers of our company were rigid disciplinarians, and accordingly we were drilled for about four hours each day. We soon gained much reputation for our martial exercises and our tidy appearance. Many people came over from New London to witness our performances, among whom were often persons of distinction. On Sundays we marched two miles to church, and being in our best guise, caused quite a sensation. Men and women, boys and girls, streamed along at our flanks, often in a broiling sun, yet always with admiring looks.

After a morning drill we were generally at leisure for the rest of the day, taking our turns, however, on guard, and in other occasional duties. Most of the soldiers gave up their rations of mess beef and potatoes, and lived on their own resources. We formed ourselves into a general club for a supply of fresh fish. Every day three of us went out fishing, and generally returned with a half-bushel basket full of various kinds, among which the blackfish or tataug, now so greatly esteemed, was always abundant. I was employed by the captain to keep his journal of our proceedings, and sometimes I was dispatched to New London, or to some one of the officers along the line, with a letter or a parcel.

I remember that on one occasion H. A——, my special companion, and myself, were sent with a letter to an officer who commanded a small picket on the eastern shore, near the mouth of the river; that is, at Point Groton. It was a distance of some three miles. The weather was pleasant, and our route lay along the shore of the stream, which opens into a wide bay as it meets the Sound. As we approached the southern point of the shore we found ourselves quite near to the British squadron. One of the vessels, which we knew as the "Acasta"—for we had learned all their [140] names—was under full sail in a light wind, and coming up toward the shore. She was already so near that we could see the men, and note every movement on the deck. While we were admiring the beautiful appearance of the ship, we suddenly saw several white puffs issue from her sides and uncoil themselves into volumes of smoke. Then came a deafening roar; a moment after, and in the very midst of it, there were wild howls in the air above our heads. At a little distance beyond the ground was ploughed up, scattering the soil around, and the top of one of the forest trees, of which a few were scattered here and there, was cut asunder and fell almost at our feet.

We understood the joke in an instant, and so did the lieutenant who commanded the picket. He was the object of the attack, and the broadside of the "Acasta," sending its shot over our heads, had hurled one or two balls crashing through the roof of the little fish-hut which he and his men occupied. In less than five minutes they were seen trotting off at a round pace, with their cannon jerking right and left over the rough ground behind them. Several other shots were fired, but the party escaped in safety. My companion and myself ensconced ourselves behind the rocks, and though it was grave sport we enjoyed it exceedingly. We could trace the cannon-balls as they flew by, looking like globes of mist twinkling through the air. Several of them passed close over our heads, and grooved the earth in long trenches at our sides. The noise they made as they rose high in the air was a strange mixture, between a howl and a scream. After having thus showed her teeth and made a great noise the frigate returned to her anchorage, and all was quiet. I hope I shall not degrade myself as a soldier in your eyes by confessing that this was the only battle in [141]

which I was engaged during this glorious war!

I must, however, mention one circumstance which tried the souls of our company. On a certain Saturday a large accession to the British force arrived in the bay, the whole number of vessels of all kinds amounted to fourteen. This looked very much like an attack, and accordingly there was a feverish anxiety among the inhabitants of New London and the vicinity, and a general bustle in the army from Groton Point to Allyn's Mountain. A large body of militia was set to work upon Fort Griswold. Our company was drilled in the little redoubt which we were to defend, and every preparation was made to give the enemy a warm reception. The general idea was, that a landing of British troops would be made on the eastern side, and that we should take the brunt of the first attack.

The sun set in clouds, and as the evening advanced bursts of thunder, attended by flashes of lightning, muttered along the distant horizon. Our company was admonished to sleep on their arms. Everything wore a rather ominous appearance. There were no signs of cowardice in the men, but they looked thoughtful; and when the wit of the company let off some of his best jokes—which would ordinarily have set the whole corps in a roar—he was answered by a dead silence. It chanced that I was that night on guard. My turn came at ten o'clock. Taking my gun, I paced the bank of the river in front of our barracks. I had received orders to let nothing pass by land or water. It was intensely dark, but at frequent intervals thin flashes of lightning sprang up against [142] the distant sky behind dark rolling masses of clouds.

Gradually the lights in the streets and windows of New London, stretching in a long line on the opposite side of the river, were extinguished one by one; a few remaining, however, as sentinels, indicating anxiety and watchfulness. The sounds on all sides were at last hushed, "and left the world to darkness and to me." More than half of my two-hours' watch had passed when I heard the dip of oars and the flapping of waves against the prow of a boat. I looked in the direction of the sounds, and at last descried the dusky outline of a small craft stealing down the river. I cried out,—"Boat ahoy! who goes there?" My voice echoed portentously in the silence, but no answer was given, and the low, black, raking apparition glided on its way. Again I challenged, but there was still no reply. On went the ghost! I cocked my gun. The click sounded ominously on the still night air. I began to consider the horror of shooting some fellow-being in the dark. I called a third time, and not without avail. The rudder was turned, the boat whirled on her heel, and a man came ashore. According to my orders I marshalled him to the guard-room, and gave notice of what had happened to the captain. The man was only a fisherman going home, but he was detained till morning. So, you see, I can boast that I made one prisoner. My watch was soon over, and returning to my station I laid down to sleep.

All was soon quiet, and I was buried in profound repose, when suddenly there was a cry in the main barrack-room overhead,—"Alarm! alarm!"

"Alarm! alarm!" was echoed by twenty voices, attended by quick, shuffling sounds, and followed by a hurried rush of men down the staircase. A moment after the guard in front discharged his [143] musket, and was answered by a long line of reports up and down the river, from the various sentinels, extending for half-a-dozen miles. Then came the roll of drums and the mustering of the men. Several of our company had been out to see what was going on: they came back saying that the enemy was approaching! J. M—— distinctly heard the roar of cannon, and positively saw the flash of muskets. B. W—— found out that the attack had already begun upon our southern pickets. Nobody doubted that our time had come!

In a very few minutes our company was drawn up in line, and the roll was called. It was still dark, but the faint flash gave us now and then a glimpse of each other's faces. I think we were a ghostly-looking set, but it was, perhaps, owing to the blueish complexion of the light. J. S——, of West Hartford, who marched at my left shoulder—usually the lightest-hearted fellow in the company—whispered to me,—"Goodrich, I'd give fifty dollars to be at West Division!" For myself, I felt rather serious, and asked a certain anxious feeling in my stomach,—"What's to be done?" Johnson, our captain, was a man of nerve and ready speech. When the roll was finished, he said in a clear, hearty tone,—"All right, my good fellows! Every man at his post!" These few words—which were, however, more politic than true, for one fellow was taken with sudden colic, and could not be got out—were electrical. We were ready to take our places in the redoubt.

Messengers were now sent to the two neighboring posts to inquire into the state of facts. Word was brought that the first alarm came from our barracks! The matter was inquired into, and it [144] turned out that the whole affair was originated by a corporal of ours, who, in a fit of nightmare, jumped up and cried,—"Alarm! alarm!"

Our martial ardor soon reconciled itself to this rather ludicrous denouement, though several persons, who had been somewhat chapfallen, became suddenly inflated with courage, which signalized itself with outbursts of "Hang the British!" "They're a pack of sneaking cowards, after all!" and the like. The next morning was fresh and fair. The skirmishing thunder-gusts of the night had cleared the air, and even distant objects seemed near at hand. Before us lay the whole British fleet, still and harmless, in the glassy bay. My lefthand chum, J. S——, who, in the dark hour, would have given fifty dollars to be at West Division, was now himself again. "Come on here, you black old Ramilies!" said he, dashing the doubled fist of his right hand into the palm of his left: "Come on here, you black-hearted British bull-dogs, and we'll do your business for you!"

Our period of service was brief. In about six weeks from the time of our departure we were dismissed, and returned to our homes. Thus closed my military career, so far as relates to active service. The remembrances of my first and last campaign are, on the whole, pleasant. There were feelings of fraternity established between the members of the company which have continued to

this day. My country has not been unmindful of my services; for I have received two land-warrants, giving me a title to some hundred and sixty acres, with the fresh virgin soil of the Far West upon them. Say not that republics are ungrateful!

CHAPTER XIV.

[145]

EFFECTS OF WAR IN NEW ENGLAND—PERSONAL EXPERIENCE—NEWS OF PEACE—ILLUMINATIONS—CONFESSIONS.

I remember perfectly well the universal state of anxiety and depression which prevailed in New England during the latter part of the war. The acts of government, the movements of fleets and armies, furnish no idea of the condition of society in its daily life. Let me give you a few items as indications of the embarrassments, vexations, and privations which the war had brought unto every man's house and home. Such a thing as silver or gold money was almost unknown. The chief circulation consisted of bills of suspended banks, or what were called "facilities;" that is, bank notes, authorized by the legislature of Connecticut, redeemable in three years after the war. These were at fifteen to twenty-five per cent. discount compared with specie. Banks issued notes of fifty, twenty-five, and twelve-and-a-half cents. Barbers issued bills payable in shaving, and various institutions adopted a similar course. The whole mass acquired the title of "rag-money," "shin-plasters," &c.: a large portion of it was notoriously worthless, either as being counterfeit, or issued by irresponsible parties, yet it generally passed without scrutiny.

I had personal experience of the universal depression. In the summer of 1814 I was out of my time, and cast about for some employment. I went to New York for this object, but found not the [146] slightest encouragement. After some reflection I established a manufactory of pocket-books, in connection with one of my friends, who furnished the capital. The greatest difficulty was to find the materials. I made expeditions to Boston, Charlestown, Providence, &c., and was not able to obtain over fifty pieces of morocco fit for the purpose. In December I went to New York, and was more successful. I made a considerable purchase, and dispatched my goods by the carrier. Pretty well content with my success, I had gone in the evening to a concert at the City Hotel. While listening to the music there was a murmur in the streets. Soon the door of the concert-room was thrown open, and in rushed a man all breathless with excitement. He mounted on a table, and swinging a white handkerchief aloft, cried out,—

"Peace! peace! peace!"

The music ceased: the hall was speedily vacated. I rushed into the street, and oh, what a scene!

It was on the evening of Saturday, the 11th of February, 1815, that the news of the treaty of peace reached New York. In half-an-hour after Broadway was one living sea of shouting, rejoicing people. "Peace! peace! peace!" was the deep, harmonious, universal anthem. The whole spectacle was enlivened by a sudden inspiration. Somebody came with a torch: the bright idea passed into a thousand brains. In a few minutes thousands and tens of thousands of people were marching about with candles, lamps, torches, making the jubilant street appear like a gay and gorgeous procession. The whole night Broadway sang its song of peace. We were all democrats—all federalists! Old enemies rushed into each other's arms: every house was in a revel: every heart [147] seemed melted by a joy which banished all evil thought and feeling. Nobody asked, that happy night, what were the terms of the treaty: we had got peace—that was enough! I moved about for hours in the ebbing and flowing tide of people, not being aware that I had opened my lips. The next morning I found that I was hoarse from having joined in the exulting cry of "Peace! peace!"

The next day, Sunday, all the churches sent up hymns of thanksgiving for the joyous tidings. I set out in the stage-coach on Monday morning for Connecticut. All along the road the people saluted us with swinging of hats and cries of rejoicing. At one place, in a rather lonesome part of the road, a schoolmaster came with the whole school at his heels to ask us if the news was true. We told him it was; whereupon he tied his bandanna pocket-handkerchief to a broom, swung it aloft, and the whole school hosannaed, "Peace! peace!" At all our stopping-places the people were gathered to rejoice in the good tidings. At one little tavern I looked into a room, by chance, the door being open, and there I saw the good-wife, with a chubby boy in her lap—both in a perfect gale of merriment—the child crying out, "Peath! peath!" Oh, ye makers of war, reflect upon this heartfelt verdict of the people in behalf of peace!

We arrived at New Haven in the evening, and found it illuminated: the next day I reached Hartford, and there also was a grand illumination. The news spread over the country, carrying with it a wave of shouts and rejoicings. Boston became clamorous with pealing bells; the schools had a jubilee; the blockaded shipping, rotting at the dilapidated wharves, got out their dusty buntings, and these, ragged and forlorn, now flapped merrily in the breeze. At night the city [148] flamed far and wide—from Beacon street down the Bay, telling the glorious tale even unto Cape Cod. So spread the news over the country, everywhere, carrying joy to every heart—with, perhaps, a single exception. At Washington, the authors of the war peeped into the dispatches, and found that the treaty had no stipulations against the Orders in Council, Paper Blockades, and Impressments, which were the pretexts for the war. All that could be maintained was, that we had made war, charging the enemy with very gross enormities, and we had made peace, saying not one word about them!

So the war was ended.

Let us be frank, and confess the truth: the war, in the aspects in which history thus presents it, was disgraceful to the authors of it: it was, in many respects, disastrous to the country; and yet it has left us some wholesome lessons. It has shown the danger and folly of plunging a great country into a national conflict for narrow and selfish purposes, because, under such circumstances, the people will be divided, and it will be a partisan, and not a patriotic war; it has put on record another instance in which war has been declared in boasting, and ended precisely where it began, after years of violence, sorrow, and bloodshed. It has shown, also—in connection with subsequent events—the superiority of peace to war, even in obtaining the ends of justice; for let it be remembered that Daniel Webster extorted from Great Britain, by the force of argument, that which the sword could not achieve.

CHAPTER XV.

[149]

EVIL EFFECTS OF NIGHT STUDY—COMMENCEMENT OF A LITERARY CAREER—THOUGHTS ON DANCING—NEW YORK—SARATOGA—DEATH OF MY UNCLE—BECOME A BOOKSELLER—COLD SUMMER—T'OTHER SIDE OF OHIO.

I have told you that my apprenticeship terminated in the summer of 1814. Previous to that time I had made some advances in the study of the French language, under M. Value, or, to give him his title, the Count Value. This person had spent his early life in Paris, but afterward migrated to St. Domingo, where he owned a large estate. In the insurrection of 1794 he escaped only with his life. With admirable cheerfulness and serenity he devoted himself to teaching French and dancing, as means of support. He settled for a time at New Haven, where, at the age of seventy, he was captivated by a tall, red-haired schoolmistress of twenty, whom he married.

The Count finally established himself at Hartford, and I became one of his pupils. I pursued my studies with considerable assiduity, and to practise myself in French, I translated Chateaubriand's René. One of my friends had just established a newspaper at Middletown, and my translation was published there. About this time my health was feeble, and my eyes became seriously affected in consequence of my night studies. Unaware of the danger, I persevered, and thus laid the foundation of a nervous weakness and irritability of my eyes, which has since been [150] to me a rock ahead in the whole voyage of life. From that time I have never been able to read or write without pain. As if by a kind of fatality, I seemed to be afterwards drawn into a literary career, for which I was doubly disqualified—first by an imperfect education, and next by defective eyesight. Oh! what penalties have I paid for thus persisting in a course which seems to have been forbidden to me by Providence. After a long and laborious life, I feel a profound consciousness that I have done nothing well; at the same time, days, months, nay years, have I struggled with the constant apprehension that I should terminate my career in blindness! How little do we know, especially in the outset of our existence, what is before us! It is well that we do not know, for the prospect would often overwhelm us.

In the autumn of 1814, as already stated, I established, in company with a friend, a pocket-book factory at Hartford; but the peace put a speedy termination to that enterprise. We came out of it with a small loss, and my kind-hearted partner pocketed this, "for he had money, and I had none." He forgave me, and would have done the same had the deficit been more considerable, for he was a true friend.

Early in the following spring, I made an arrangement to go to Paris as a clerk in the branch of the importing house of Richards, Taylor & Wilder, of New York. About a month afterwards the news came that Napoleon had suddenly returned from Elba, and as business was prostrated by that event, my engagement failed. For nearly a year, my health continued indifferent, and my eyes in such a state that I was incapable of undertaking any serious business. I spent my time partly at [151] Berlin, and partly at Hartford. I read a little, and practised my French with Value and his scholars. I also felt the need of disciplining my hands and feet, which about these days seemed to me to have acquired a most absurd development, giving me a feeling of great embarrassment when I entered into company. I therefore took lessons in dancing, and, whether I profited by it or not as to manners, I am persuaded that this portion of my education was highly beneficial to me in other points of view.

As many good people have a prejudice against dancing, I am disposed to write down my experience on the subject. In the winter, our good old teacher had weekly cotillion parties, for the purpose of improving his scholars. The young men invited the young women, and took them to these gatherings, and after the exercises conducted them home again. I know this will sound strange to those who only understand metropolitan manners at the present day; but I never knew an instance, in my own experience or observation, in which the strictest propriety was departed from. These parties took place in the evening: they began at eight o'clock, and continued till ten or eleven—sometimes till twelve. The company consisted entirely of young persons, from fifteen to twenty years of age: they included the children of the respectable inhabitants, with a number of young ladies from the boarding-schools. Some of these I have since seen the wives of bishops, senators, and governors of States—filling the first stations to which women can aspire in this country, and I am satisfied that these Hartford parties, under the auspices of our amiable and respected old teacher, were every way refining and elevating: not only did they impart ease of [152]

manner, but, as I think, purity of sentiment.

In the spring of 1815 I paid a visit to New York, and having letters of introduction to Oliver Wolcott and Archibald Gracie, I called on these gentlemen. My lodgings were at the City Hotel, situated on the western side of Broadway, between Thames and Cedar Streets, the space being now occupied by warehouses. It was then the chief hotel of New York, and was kept by a model landlord, named Jennings, with a model bar-keeper by the name of Willard. The latter was said never to sleep night or day, for at all hours he was at his post, and never forgot a customer, even after an absence of twenty years.

It was late in the spring, and Mr. Gracie called for me and took me to his country seat, occupying a little promontory on the western side of Hurlgate, a charming spot. Contiguous to it were the summer residences of many of the leading citizens of New York.

Here I spent a fortnight very agreeably. Mr. Gracie was at this period distinguished alike on account of his wealth, his intelligence, and his amiable and honorable character. Never have I witnessed anything more charming—more affectionate, dignified, and graceful, than the intercourse of the family with one another. Not many years after, Mr. Gracie lost his entire fortune by the vicissitudes of commerce, but his character was beyond the reach of accident. He is still remembered with affectionate respect by all those whose memories reach back to the times in which he flourished, and when it might be said, without disparagement to any other man, that he was the first merchant in New York.

Early in the ensuing summer, my uncle, Chauncey Goodrich, being in bad health, paid a visit to [153]
Saratoga and Ballston for the benefit of the waters, and I accompanied him. We soon returned, however, for it was now apparent that he had a disease of the heart, which was rapidly tending to a fatal result. Experiencing great suffering at intervals, he gradually yielded to the progress of his malady, and at last, on the 18th of August, 1815, while walking the room, and engaged in cheerful conversation, he faltered, sank into a chair, and instantly expired. "His death," says the historian, "was a shock to the whole community. Party distinctions were forgotten, under a sense of the general calamity; and in the simple but expressive language which was used at his funeral, 'all united in a tribute of respect to the man who had so long been dear to us, and done us so much good.'" To me, the loss was irreparable; leaving, however, in my heart a feeling of gratitude that I had witnessed an example of the highest intellectual power united with the greatest moral excellence, and that, too, in one whose relationship to me enforced and commended its teachings to my special observance. Alas, how little have I done in life that is worthy of such inspiration!

Not long after this, my friend George Sheldon, who had established himself as a bookseller and publisher, invited me to become his partner, and this I did early in the year 1816. We pursued the business for nearly two years, during which time we published, among other works, Scott's Family Bible, in five volumes quarto—a considerable enterprise for that period in a place like Hartford. In the autumn of 1817 I had gone to Berlin, for the purpose of making a short excursion for the benefit of my health, when a messenger came from Hartford, saying that my partner was very ill, and wished me to return. I immediately complied, and on entering the room of my friend [154]
I found him in a high fever, his mind already wandering in painful dreams. As I came to his bedside he said,—"Oh, take away these horrid knives, they cut me to the heart!" I stooped over him and said,—

"There are no knives here; you are only dreaming."

"Oh, is it you?" said he. "I am glad you have come. Do stay with me, and speak to me, so as to keep off these dreadful fancies."

I did stay by him for four days and nights; but his doom was sealed. His mind continued in a state of wild delirium till a few minutes before his death. I stood gazing at his face, when a sudden change came over him: the agitated and disturbed look of insanity had passed—a quiet pallor had come over his countenance, leaving it calm and peaceful. He opened his eyes, and, as if waking from sleep, looked on me with an aspect of recognition. His lips moved, and he pronounced the name of his wife: she came, with all the feelings of youth and love—ay, and of hope, too, in her heart. She bent over him: he raised his feeble and emaciated arms and clasped her to his heart: he gave her one kiss, and passed to another life!

The summer of 1816 was probably the coldest that has been known in this century. In New England—from Connecticut to Maine—there were severe frosts in every month. The crop of Indian corn was almost entirely cut off: of potatoes, hay, oats, &c., there was not, probably, more than half the usual supply. The means of averting the effects of such a calamity—now afforded by railroads, steam navigation, canals, and other facilities of intercommunication—did not then exist. The following winter was severe, and the ensuing spring backward. At this time I made a [155]
journey into New Hampshire, passing along the Connecticut river, in the region of Hanover. It was then June, and the hills were almost as barren as in November. I saw a man at Orford who had been forty miles for a half-bushel of Indian corn, and paid two dollars for it!

Along the seaboard it was not difficult to obtain a supply of food, although every article was dear. In the interior it was otherwise: the cattle died for want of fodder, and many of the inhabitants nearly perished from starvation. The desolating effects of the war still lingered over the country, and at last a kind of despair seized upon some of the people. In the pressure of adversity many persons lost their judgment, and thousands feared or felt that New England was destined, henceforth, to become a part of the frigid zone. At the same time, Ohio—with its rich soil, its mild climate, its inviting prairies—was opened fully upon the alarmed and anxious vision. As was natural under the circumstances, a sort of stampede took place from cold, desolate, worn-out

New England, to this land of promise.

I remember very well the tide of emigration through Connecticut on its way to the West, during the summer of 1817. Some persons went in covered wagons—frequently a family consisting of father, mother, and nine small children, with one at the breast—some on foot, and some crowded together under the cover, with kettle, gridirons, feather-beds, crockery, and the family Bible, Watts's Psalms and Hymns, and Webster's Spelling book—the lares and penates of the household. Others started in ox-carts, and trudged on at the rate of ten miles a-day. In several instances I saw families on foot—the father and boys taking turns in dragging along an improvised hand- [156] wagon, loaded with the wreck of the household goods—occasionally giving the mother and baby a ride. Many of these persons were in a state of poverty, and begged their way as they went. Some died before they reached the expected Canaan; many perished after their arrival, from fatigue and privation; and others from the fever and ague, which was then certain to attack the new settlers.

It was, I think, in 1818, that I published a small tract, entitled, "T'other Side of Ohio," that is, the other view, in contrast to the popular notion that it was the paradise of the world. It was written by Dr. Hand, a talented young physician of Berlin, who had made a visit to the West about this time. It consisted mainly of vivid but painful pictures of the accidents and incidents attending this wholesale migration. The roads over the Alleghanies, between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, were then rude, steep, and dangerous, and some of the more precipitous slopes were consequently strewn with the carcases of wagons, carts, horses, oxen, which had made ship-wreck in their perilous descents. The scenes on the road—of families gathered at night in miserable sheds, called taverns—mothers frying, children crying, fathers swearing, were a mingled comedy and tragedy of errors. Even when they arrived at their new homes, along the banks of the Muskingum, or the Scioto, frequently the whole family—father, mother, children—speedily exchanged the fresh complexion and elastic step of their first abodes, for the sunken cheek and languid movement, which mark the victim of intermittent fever.

The instances of homesickness, described by this vivid sketcher, were touching. Not even the captive Israelites, who hung their harps upon the willows along the banks of the Euphrates, wept [157] more bitter tears, or looked back with more longing to their native homes, than did these exiles from New England; mourning the land they had left, with its roads, schools, meeting-houses; its hope, health, and happiness! Two instances, related by the traveller, I must mention. He was one day riding in the woods, apart from the settlements, when he met a youth some eighteen years of age, in a hunting-frock, and with a fowling-piece in his hand. The two fell into conversation.

"Where are you from?" said the youth, at last.

"From Connecticut," was the reply.

"That is near the old Bay State?"

"Yes."

"And have you been there?"

"To Massachusetts? Yes, many a time."

"Let me take your hand, stranger. My mother was from the Bay State, and brought me here when I was an infant. I have heard her speak of it. Oh, it must be a lovely land! I wish I could see a meeting-house and a school-house, for she is always talking about them. And the sea—the sea—oh, if I could see that! Did you ever see it, stranger?"

"Yes, often."

"What, the real, salt sea—the ocean—with the ships upon it?"

"Yes."

"Well," said the youth, scarcely able to suppress his emotion, "if I could see the old Bay State and the ocean, I should be willing then to die!"

In another instance the traveller met, somewhere in the valley of the Scioto, a man from Hartford, by the name of Bull. He was a severe democrat, and feeling sorely oppressed with the [158] idea that he was no better off in Connecticut under federalism than the Hebrews in Egypt, joined the throng and migrated to Ohio. He was a man of substance, but his wealth was of little avail in a new country, where all the comforts and luxuries of civilization were unknown.

"When I left Connecticut," said he, "I was wretched from thinking of the sins of federalism. After I had got across Byram river, which divides that State from New York, I knelt down and thanked the Lord for that He had brought me and mine out of such a priest-ridden land. But I've been well punished, and I'm now preparing to return; when I again cross Byram river, I shall thank God that He has permitted me to get back again!"

CHAPTER XVI. [159]

MARRIAGE—WALTER SCOTT—BYRON—SIDNEY SMITH'S TAUNT—PUBLICATION OF ORIGINAL AMERICAN WORKS—MRS. SIGOURNEY.

Early in the year 1818 I was married to the daughter of Stephen Rowe Bradley, of Westminster, Vermont. Thus established in life, I pursued the business of bookseller and publisher at Hartford for four years. My vocation gave me the command of books, but I was able to read very little—my eyes continuing to be so weak that I could hardly do justice to my affairs. However, I dipped into a good many books, and acquired a considerable knowledge of authors and their works.

During the period in which Scott had been enchanting the world with his poetry—that is, from 1805 to 1815—I had shared in the general intoxication. The Lady of the Lake delighted me beyond expression, and even now, it seems to me the most pleasing and perfect of metrical romances. These productions seized powerfully upon the popular mind, partly on account of the romance of their revelations, and partly also because of the simplicity of the style, and the easy flow of the versification. Everybody could read and comprehend them. One of my younger sisters committed the whole of the Lady of the Lake to memory, and was accustomed of an evening to sit at her sewing, while she recited it to an admiring circle of listeners. All young poets were inoculated with the octo-syllabic verse, and newspapers, magazines, and even volumes, teemed [160] with imitations and variations inspired by the "Wizard Harp of the North." Not only did Scott himself continue to pour out volume after volume, but others produced set poems in his style, some of them so close in their imitation as to be supposed the works of Scott himself, trying the effect of a disguise. At last, however, the market was overstocked, and the general appetite began to pall with a surfeit, when a sudden change took place in the public taste.

It was just at this point that Byron produced his first canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Scott speedily appreciated the eclipse to which his poetical career was doomed by the rising genius of Byron. He now turned his attention to prose fiction, and in July, 1814, completed and published Waverley, which had been begun some eight or ten years before. Guy Mannering came out the next year, and was received with a certain degree of eagerness. The Antiquary, Black Dwarf, Old Mortality, Rob Roy, and the Heart of Mid-Lothian, followed in quick succession. I suspect that never, in any age, have the productions of any author created in the world so wide and deep an enthusiasm. This emotion reached its height upon the appearance of Ivanhoe in 1819, which, I think, proved the most popular of these marvellous productions.

At this period, although there was a good deal of mystery as to their authorship, the public generally referred them to Scott. He was called the "Great Unknown"—a title which served to create even an adventitious interest in his career. The appearance of a new tale from his pen caused a greater sensation in the United States than did some of the battles of Napoleon, which decided the fate of thrones and empires. Everybody read these works; everybody—the refined [161] and the simple—shared in the delightful dreams which seemed to transport them to remote ages and distant climes, and made them live and breathe in the presence of the stern Covenanters of Scotland, the gallant bowmen of Sherwood Forest, or even the Crusaders in Palestine, where Cœur de Lion and Saladin were seen struggling for the mastery! I can testify to my own share in this intoxication. I was not able, on account of my eyes, to read these works myself, but I found friends to read them to me. To one good old maid—Heaven bless her!—I was indebted for the perusal of no less than seven of these tales.

Of course, there were many editions of these works in the United States, and among others, I published an edition, I think, in eight volumes, octavo—including those which had appeared at that time.

About this time I began to think of trying to bring out original American works. It must be remembered that I am speaking of a period prior to 1820. At that date, Bryant, Irving, and Cooper, the founders of our modern literature, had just commenced their literary career. Neither of them had acquired a positive reputation. Halleck, Percival, Brainard, Longfellow, Willis, were at school—at least, all were unknown. The general impression was that we had not, and could not have, a literature. It was the precise point at which Sydney Smith had uttered that bitter taunt in the Edinburgh Review—"Who reads an American book?" It proved to be that "darkest hour just before the dawn." The successful booksellers of the country were for the most part the mere reproducers and sellers of English books. It was positively injurious to the commercial credit of a bookseller to undertake American works, unless they might be Morse's Geographies, classical [162] books, school-books, devotional books, or other utilitarian works.

Nevertheless, about this time, I published an edition of Trumbull's poems, in two volumes, octavo, and paid him a thousand dollars and a hundred copies of the work, for the copyright. I was seriously counselled against this by several booksellers—and, in fact, Trumbull had sought a publisher in vain for several years previous. There was an association of designers and engravers at Hartford, called the "Graphic Company," and as I desired to patronize the liberal arts there, I employed them to execute the embellishments. For so considerable an enterprise, I took the precaution to get a subscription, in which I was tolerably successful. The work was at last produced, but it did not come up to the public expectation, or the patriotic zeal had cooled, and more than half the subscribers declined taking the work. I did not press it, but putting a good face upon the affair, I let it pass, and—while the public supposed I had made money by my enterprise, and even the author looked askance at me in the jealous apprehension that I had made too good a bargain out of him—I quietly pocketed a loss of about a thousand dollars. This was my first serious adventure in patronizing American literature.

About the same period I turned my attention to books for education and books for children, being strongly impressed with the idea that there was here a large field for improvement. I wrote, myself, a small arithmetic, and half-a-dozen toy-books, and published them anonymously. I also employed several persons to write school histories, and educational manuals of chemistry, natural philosophy, &c., upon plans which I prescribed—all of which I published; but none of [163]

these were very successful at that time. Some of them, passing into other hands, are now among the most popular and profitable school-books in the country.

It was before this period that Miss Huntly, now Mrs. Sigourney, was induced to leave her home in Norwich, and make Hartford her residence. This occurred about the year 1814. Ere long she was the presiding genius of our social circle. I shall not write her history, nor dilate upon her literary career, yet I may speak of her influence in this new relation—a part of which fell upon myself. Mingling in the gayeties of our social gatherings, and in no respect clouding their festivity, she led us all toward intellectual pursuits and amusements. We had even a literary coterie under her inspiration, its first meetings being held at Mr. Wadsworth's. I believe one of my earliest attempts at composition was made here. The ripples thus begun, extended over the whole surface of our young society, producing a lasting and refining effect. It could not but be beneficial thus to mingle in intercourse with one who has the faculty of seeing poetry in all things and good everywhere. Few persons living have exercised a wider influence than Mrs. Sigourney. No one that I now know can look back upon a long and earnest career of such unblemished beneficence.

CHAPTER XVII.

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DOMESTIC TROUBLES—SKETCH OF BRAINARD—AUNT LUCY'S BACK-PARLOR—THE FALL OF NIAGARA—DEATH OF BRAINARD.

In 1821, clouds and darkness began to gather around my path. By a fall from a horse, I was put upon crutches for more than a year, and a cane for the rest of my life. Ere long death entered my door, and my home was desolate. I was once more alone—save only that a child was left me, to grow to womanhood, and to die a youthful mother, loving and beloved. My affairs became embarrassed, my health failed, and my only hope of renovation was in a change of scene.

Before I give you a sketch of my experience and observations abroad, I must present the portrait of my friend Brainard. He came to Hartford in February, 1822, to take the editorial charge of the Connecticut Mirror. He was now twenty-six years old, and had gained some reputation for wit and poetical talent. One day a young man, small in stature, with a curious mixture of ease and awkwardness, of humor and humility, came into my office, and introduced himself as Mr. Brainard. I gave him a hearty welcome, for I had heard very pleasant accounts of him. As was natural, I made a complimentary allusion to his poems, which I had seen and admired. A smile, [165] yet shaded with something of melancholy, came over his face as he replied,—

"Don't expect too much of me; I never succeeded in anything yet. I never could draw a mug of cider without spilling more than half of it!"

I afterwards found that much truth was thus spoken in jest. This was, in point of fact, precisely Brainard's appreciation of himself. All his life, feeling that he could do something, he still entertained a mournful and disheartening conviction that, on the whole, he was doomed to failure and disappointment. There was sad prophecy in this presentment—a prophecy which he at once made and fulfilled.

We soon became friends, and, at last, intimates. I was now boarding at "Ripley's"—a good old-fashioned tavern, over which presided Major Ripley, respected for revolutionary services, an amiable character, and a long Continental queue. In the administration of the establishment he was ably supported by his daughter, Aunt Lucy—the very genius of tavern courtesy, cookery, and comfort. Here Brainard joined me, and we took rooms side by side. Thus, for more than a year, we were together, as intimate as brothers. He was of a child-like disposition, and craved constant sympathy. He soon got into the habit of depending upon me in many things, and at last—especially in dull weather, or when he was sad, or something went wrong with him—he would creep into my bed, as if it were his right. At that period of gloom in my own fortunes, this was as well a solace to me as to him. After my return from Europe we resumed these relations, and for some months more we were thus together.

I cannot do better than sketch a single incident, which will give you some insight into Brainard's [166] character. The scene opens in Miss Lucy's little back-parlor—a small, cosy, carpeted room, with two cushioned rocking-chairs, and a bright hickory fire. It is a chill November night, about seven o'clock of a Friday evening. The Mirror—Brainard's paper—is to appear the next morning. The week has thus far passed, and he has not written for it a line. How the days have gone he can hardly tell. He has read a little—dipped into Byron, pored over the last Waverly novel, and been to see his friends; at all events, he has got rid of the time. He has not felt competent to bend down to his work, and has put it off till the last moment. No further delay is possible. He is now not well; he has a severe cold.

Miss Lucy, who takes a motherly interest in him, tells him not to go out, and his own inclinations suggest the charms of a quiet evening in the rocking chair, by a good fire—especially in comparison with going to his comfortless office, and drudging for the press. He lingers till eight, and then suddenly rousing himself, by a desperate effort, throws on his cloak and sallies forth. As was not uncommon, I go with him. A dim fire is kindled in the small Franklin stove in his office, and we sit down. Brainard, as was his wont, especially when he was in trouble, falls into a curious train of reflections, half comic and half serious.

"Would to Heaven," he says, "I were a slave! I think a slave, with a good master, has a good time of it. The responsibility of taking care of himself—the most terrible burden of life—is put on his master's shoulders. Madame Roland, with a slight alteration, would have uttered a profound truth. She should have said—'Oh, Liberty, Liberty, thou art a humbug!' After all, liberty is the [167] greatest possible slavery, for it puts upon a man the responsibility of taking care of himself. If he goes wrong, why, he's condemned! If a slave sins, he's only flogged, and gets over it, and there's an end of it. Now, if I could only be flogged, and settle the matter that way, I should be perfectly happy. But here comes my tormentor."

The door is now opened, a boy with a touselled head and inky countenance enters, saying curtly —"Copy, Mr. Brainard!"

"Come in fifteen minutes!" says the editor, with a droll mixture of fun and despair.

WHITTLING.

Brainard makes a few observations, and sits down at his little narrow pine table—hacked along edges with many a restless penknife. He seems to notice the marks, and pausing a moment, says, —

"This table reminds me of one of my brother William's stories. There was an old man in Groton, who had but one child, and she was a daughter. When she was about eighteen, several young men came to see her. At last she picked out one of them, and desired to marry him. He seemed a fit match enough, but the father positively refused his consent. For a long time he persisted, and would give no reason for his conduct. At last he took his daughter aside, and said—'Now, Sarah, I think pretty well of this young man in general, but I've observed that he's given to whittling. There's no harm in that, but the point is this: he whittles and whittles, and never makes nothing! Now, I tell you, I'll never give my only daughter to such a feller as that!' Whenever Bill told this story, he used to insinuate that this whittling chap, who never made anything, was me! At any rate, I think it would have suited me exactly."

Some time passed in similar talk, when, at last, Brainard turned suddenly, took up his pen, and [168] began to write. I sat apart, and left him to his work. Some twenty minutes passed, when, with a smile on his face, he got up, approached the fire, and taking the candle to light his paper, read as follows:—

"THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

"The thoughts are strange that crowd into
my brain,
While I look upwards to thee. It would
seem
As if God pour'd thee from his 'hollow
hand,'
And hung his bow upon thy awful front;

And spoke in that loud voice that seem'd to
him
Who dwelt in Patmos for his Saviour's
sake,
'The sound of many waters;' and had bade
Thy flood to chronicle the ages back,
And notch his cent'ries in the eternal
rocks!"

He had hardly done reading when the boy came. Brainard handed him the lines—on a small scrap of coarse paper—and told him to come again in half-an-hour. Before this time had elapsed, he had finished and read me the following stanza:—

"Deep calleth unto deep. And what are we
That hear the question of that voice
sublime?
Oh! what are all the notes that ever rung
From war's vain trumpet by thy
thundering side?
Yea, what is all the riot man can make,
In his short life, to thy unceasing roar?
And yet, bold babbler, what art thou to
Him
Who drown'd a world, and heap'd the
waters far
Above its loftiest mountains? A light wave,
That breathes and whispers of its Maker's
might."

These lines having been furnished, Brainard left his office, and we returned to Miss Lucy's parlor. He seemed utterly unconscious of what he had done. I praised the verses, but he thought I only [169] spoke warmly from friendly interest. The lines went forth, and produced a sensation of delight over the whole country. Almost every exchange paper that came to the office had extracted them. Even then he would scarcely believe that he had done anything very clever. And thus, under these precise circumstances, were composed the most suggestive and sublime stanzas upon Niagara that were ever penned. Brainard had never, as he told me, been within less than five hundred miles of the cataract, nor do I believe that, when he went to the office, he had meditated upon the subject.

The reader will see, from the circumstances I have mentioned, that I know the history of most of Brainard's pieces, as they came out, from time to time, in his newspaper. Nearly all of them were occasional—that is, suggested by passing events, or incidents in the poet's experience.

Early in the year 1825 I persuaded Brainard to make a collection of his poems, and have them published. At first his lip curled at the idea, as being too pretentious. He insisted that he had done nothing to justify the publication of a volume. Gradually he began to think of it, and, at length, I induced him to sign a contract authorizing me to make arrangements for the work. He set about the preparation, and at length—after much lagging and many lapses—the pieces were selected and arranged. When all was ready, I persuaded him to go to New York with me to settle the matter with a publisher.

One anecdote, in addition to those already before the public, and I shall close this sketch. Brainard's talent for repartee was of the first order. On one occasion, Nathan Smith, an eminent [170] lawyer, was at Ripley's tavern, in the midst of a circle of judges and lawyers attending the court. He was an Episcopalian, and at this time was considered by his political adversaries—unjustly, no doubt—as the paid agent of that persuasion, now clamoring for a sum of money from the State, to lay the foundation of a "Bishops' Fund." He was thus regarded somewhat in the same light as O'Connell, who, while he was the great patriot leader of Irish independence, was, at the same time, liberally supported by the "rint." By accident, Brainard came in, and Smith, noticing a little feathery attempt at whiskers down his cheeks, rallied him upon it.

"It will never do," said he; "you cannot raise it, Brainard. Come, here's sixpence—take that, and go to the barber's and get it shaved off! It will smooth your cheek, and ease your conscience."

Brainard drew himself up, and said with great dignity—as Smith held out the sixpence on the point of his forefinger—"No, sir, you had better keep it for the Bishops' Fund!"

In Brainard's editorial career—though he was negligent, dilatory, sometimes almost imbecile, from a sort of constitutional inertness—still a train of inextinguishable light remains to gleam along his path. Many a busy, toiling editor has filled his daily columns for years, without leaving a living page behind him; while Brainard, with all his failings and irregularities, has left a collection of gems which will be cherished to immortality. And among all that he wrote idly and recklessly, as it might seem—there is not a line that, "dying, he could wish to blot." His love of parents, of home, of kindred, was beautiful indeed; his love of nature, and especially of the scenes of his [171] childhood, was the affection of one never weaned from the remembrance of his mother's breast. He was true in friendship, chivalrous in all that belonged to personal honor. I never heard him utter a malignant thought—I never knew him to pursue an unjust design. At the early age of eight-and-twenty, with a submissive spirit, he resigned himself to death, and in pious, gentle,

cheerful faith, he departed on the 26th of September, 1828.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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MY FIRST VISIT TO EUROPE—HURRICANE—ARRIVAL AT LIVERPOOL—LONDON—TRAVEL ON THE CONTINENT—RETURN TO BRISTOL—INTERVIEW WITH HANNAH MORE—DESIGN IN TRAVELLING—VISIT TO IRELAND AND SCOTLAND.

It was on the 16th of November, 1823, that I set sail in the "Canada," Captain Macy, on my first visit to Europe. I have now before me four volumes of notes made during my tour; which I might, perhaps, have ventured to publish when they were fresh; but since that period the world has been inundated with tales of travels, I shall therefore only indulge in a rapid outline of my adventures, and a few sketches of men and things, which may perchance be of interest to the reader.

Our voyage was, as usual at that season of the year, tempestuous. As we approached the British Islands we were beset by a regular hurricane. On the 5th of December, the Captain kindly informed us that we were almost precisely in the situation of the "Albion," the day before she was wrecked on the rocky headland of Kinsale, at the south-east extremity of Ireland; an event which had spread a general gloom throughout the United States. As night set in we were struck by a squall, and with difficulty the vessel was brought round, so as to lie to. The storm was fearful; and the frequent concussions of the waves upon the ship, sounding like reports of artillery, made [173] her reel and stagger like a drunken man. The morning came at last, and the weather was fair, but our deck was swept of its boats, bulwarks, and hen-coops. Our old cow in her hovel, the covering of the steerage, and that of the companion-way, were saved. The next morning we took a pilot, and on the 8th of December entered the dock at Liverpool.

I had suffered fearfully by sea-sickness, and had scarcely strength to walk ashore. I felt such horror—such disgust of the sea—that I could easily have pledged myself never to venture upon it again. However, this all passed away like a dream: my strength revived; and even my constitution, shattered by long suffering, seemed to be renovated. With the return of health and spirits, my journey to London was delightful. Though it was December, the landscape was intensely green, while the atmosphere was dark as twilight. And this was England! Oh, what emotions filled my breast as I looked on Kenilworth, Warwick, and Lichfield, and at last on London!

I remained in the latter place about a month, and then went to Paris. In April I visited Switzerland and a portion of Germany, and followed the Rhine to Cologne. Thence I travelled through Flanders and Holland, and taking a sloop at Rotterdam, swung down the Maese, and in May reached London again. I soon after departed for Bristol, taking Salisbury and Stonehenge on my way. Having reached that city, and seen its sights, I hired a post-coach, and went to Barley-wood, some ten miles distant. Hannah More was still living there! The house was a small thatched edifice—half cottage and half villa—tidily kept, and garnished with vines and trellises. Its site was on a gentle hill, sloping to the south-east, and commanding a charming view over the [174] undulating country around, including the adjacent village of Wrington, with a wide valley sloping to the Bristol Channel; the latter sparkling in the distance, and bounded by the Welsh mountains in the far horizon. Behind the house, and on the crown of the hill, was a small copse, threaded with neat gravel walks, and at particular points embellished with objects of interest. In one place there was a little rustic temple, with this motto—"*Audi, Hospes, contemnere opes*;" in another, there was a stone monument, erected to the memory of Bishop Porteus, who had been a particular friend of the proprietor of the place. A little further on I found another monument, with this inscription: "*To John Locke, born in this village, this monument is erected by Mrs. Montague, and presented to Hannah More.*" From this sequestered spot an artificial opening was cut through the foliage of the trees, giving a view of the house—about a mile distant—in which Locke was born!

Mrs. More was now seventy-nine years of age, and was very infirm, having kept her room for two years. She received me with great cordiality, and mentioned several Americans who had visited her, and others, with whom she had held correspondence. Her mind and feelings were alive to every subject that was suggested. She spoke very freely of her writings and her career. I told her of the interest I had taken, when a child, in the story of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain; upon which she recounted its history, remarking that the character of the hero was modelled from life, though the incidents were fictitious. Her tract, called Village Politics, by Will Chip, was written at the request of the British Ministry, and two million copies were sold the first year, She showed [175] me copies of Cœlebs in Search of a Wife—the most successful of her works—in French and German; and a copy of one of her Sacred Dramas, Moses in the Bulrushes, on palm-leaves, in the Cingalese tongue; it having been translated into that language by the Missionary School at Ceylon. She showed me also the knife with which the leaf had been prepared, and the scratches made in it to receive the ink. She expressed a warm interest in America, and stated that Wilberforce had always exerted himself to establish and maintain good relations between Great Britain and our country. I suggested to her that, in the United States, the general impression—that of the great mass of the people—was that the English were unfriendly to us. She said it was

not so. I replied that the Americans all read the English newspapers, and generally the products of the British press; that feelings of dislike, disgust, animosity, certainly pervaded most of these publications; and it was natural to suppose that these were the reflections of public opinion in Great Britain: at all events, our people regarded them as such, and hence inferred that England was our enemy. She expressed great regret at this state of things, and said all good people should strive to keep peace between the two countries: to all which I warmly assented.

My interview with this excellent lady was, on the whole, most gratifying. Regarding her as one of the greatest benefactors of the age—as, indeed, one of the most remarkable women that had ever lived—I looked upon her not only with veneration, but affection. Besides, I felt that I owed her a special debt; and my visit to her was almost like a pilgrimage to the shrine of a divinity. When I left America, I had it in mind to render my travels subservient to a desire I had long entertained [176] of making an improvement in books for the young. I had sought in London, France, and Germany, for works that might aid my design. It is true I had little success; for while scientific and classical education was sedulously encouraged on the Continent, as well as in England, it seemed to be thought that Dilworth and Mother Goose had done all that could be done. In this interview with Mrs. More I had the subject still in mind; and discerning by what she had accomplished the vast field that was open, and actually inviting cultivation, I began from this time to think of attempting to realize the project I had formed. It is true that, in some respects, the example I had just contemplated differed from my own scheme. Hannah More had written chiefly for the grown-up masses; whereas my plan was to begin further back—with the children. Her means, however, seemed adapted to my purpose: her success, to encourage my attempt. She had discovered that truth could be made attractive to simple minds. Fiction was, indeed, often her vehicle; but it was not her end. The great charm of these works, which had captivated the million, was their verisimilitude. Was there not, then, a natural relish for truth in all minds; or, at least, was there not a way of presenting it, which made it even more interesting than romance? Did not children love truth? If so, was it necessary to feed them on fiction? Could not History, Natural History, Geography, Biography, become the elements of juvenile works, in place of fairies and giants, and mere monsters of the imagination? These were the inquiries that from this time filled my mind.

Taking leave of Barley-wood and its interesting occupant, I traversed Wales, and embarking at Holyhead, passed over to Ireland. Having seen Dublin, with the extraordinary contrasts of [177] sumptuousness in some of its streets and edifices, with the fearful squalidness and poverty in others, I passed on to the North; and after visiting the Giant's Causeway returned to Belfast, and embarked in a steamboat for Greenock. Thence I proceeded toward Dumbarton, and in the early evening, as I approached the town in a small steamer, I realized in the distance before me the scene of the song,—

"The sun has gone down o'er the lofty Ben
Lomond,
And left the red clouds to preside o'er the
scene."

On the morrow I went to Loch Lomond, crossing the lake in a steamboat; thence on foot to Callender; and spent two days around Loch Katrine, amid the scenery of the Lady of the Lake. With a copy of that poem in my hand, which I had bought of a countryman on the borders of Loch Lomond, I easily traced out the principal landmarks of the story: "Ellen's Isle," nearly in the middle of the lake; on the northern shore, "the Silver Strand," where the maiden met Fitz-James; far to the east, Benain, rearing its "forehead fair" to the sky; to the south, the rocky pyramid called "Roderick's Watchtower;" and still beyond, the "Goblin's Cave." Leaving the lake, I passed through the Trosachs, a wild, rocky glen, and the scene of the most startling events in the poem. At last I came to Coilantogle Ford, where the deadly struggle took place between the two heroes of the poem—Roderick and Fitz-James. Finally, I went to the borders of Loch Achray, a placid sheet of water, beautiful by nature, but still more enchanting through the delightful associations of poetic art.

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"The minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For, ere he parted, he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray.
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!"
* * * * *

But I must forbear. I have pledged myself not to weary my reader with descriptions of scenery, and especially with that which is familiar to every one. I will try not to sin again: at least till I get out of Scotland. Having spent two days in this region of poetry and romance, I left for Glasgow, and at last reached Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XIX.

[179]

THE EDINBURGH LIONS—LITERARY CELEBRITIES—JEFFREY IN THE FORUM—SIR WALTER AT THE DESK—RIDING WITH

Edinburgh was then decidedly the literary metropolis of the three kingdoms; not through the amount of its productions, but their superiority. I had several letters of introduction; among them one to Blackwood; another to Constable; another to Miss Y——. The latter proved fortunate. Her father was a Writer to the Signet; an elderly gentleman of excellent position, and exceedingly fond of showing off "Auld Reekie." Well, indeed, might he be; for of all the cities I have seen, it is, in many respects, the most interesting. I am told it is gloomy in winter; but now it was summer. And in these high latitudes, nature makes ample amends in this season for the gloom and inclemency of the winter.

The day after delivering my letters, Mr. Y—— called on me, and showed me the lions of the town. Many of them—all, indeed—were interesting; but I pass them by, and shall only linger a short time at the Court of Sessions, which is the supreme civil court of Scotland. This, with the High Court of Justiciary—the supreme criminal court—forms the College of Justice, and constitutes the supreme tribunal of Scotland. Their sessions are held in the old Parliament House, situated in the [180] centre of the Old Town.

We entered a large Gothic hall, opening, as I observed, into various contiguous apartments. Here I saw a considerable number of persons, mostly lawyers and their clients; some sauntering, some meditating, some gathered in groups and conversing together. There was a large number of people distributed through the several apartments, and in the grand hall there was a pervading hum of voices, which rose and rumbled, and died away amid the groinings of the roof above.

Among the persons in this hall, a man some thirty years of age, tall and handsome, dressed in a gown, but without the wig, attracted my particular attention. He was walking apart, and there was a certain look of coldness and haughtiness about him. Nevertheless, for some undefinable reason, he excited in me a lively curiosity.

"Who is that gentleman?" said I, to my guide.

"That large, noble-looking person, with a gown and wig? That is Cranstoun, one of our first lawyers, and the brother-in-law of Dugald Stuart."

"No: that person beyond, and to the left? He is without a wig."

"Oh, that's Cockburn; a fiery Whig, and one of the keenest fellows we have at the bar."

"Yes: but I mean that younger person near the corner."

"Oh, that small, red-faced, freckled man? Why, that's Moncrief; a very sound lawyer. His father, Sir Harry Moncrief, is one of the most celebrated divines in Scotland."

"No, no; it is that tall, handsome, proud-looking person, walking by himself."

"Oh, I see: that's Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law. Would you like to know him?" [181]

"Yes."

And so I was introduced to a man who, at that time, was hardly less an object of interest to me than Scott himself. Though a lawyer by profession, he had devoted himself to literature, and was now in the very height of his career. Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk, Valerius, and other works, had given him a prominent rank as a man of talent; and, besides, in 1820, he had married the eldest daughter of the "Great Unknown." My conversation with him was brief at this time, but I afterwards became well acquainted with him.

My guide now led me into one of the side-rooms, where I saw a judge and jury, and a lawyer addressing them. The latter was a very small man, without gown or wig, apparently about forty years of age, though he might be somewhat older. He was of dark complexion, with an eye of intense blackness, and almost painfully-piercing expression. His motions were quick and energetic, his voice sharp and penetrating; his general aspect exciting curiosity rather than affection. He was speaking energetically, and as we approached the bar my conductor said to me, in a whisper, "Jeffrey!"

We paused, and listened intently. The case in itself seemed dry enough: something, I believe, about a *stoppage in transitu*. But Jeffrey's pleading was admirable; clear, progressive, logical. Occasionally, in fixing upon a weak point of his adversary, he displayed a leopard-like spring of energy, altogether startling. He seized upon a certain point in the history of the case, and insisted that the property in question rested at that period in the hands of the defendant's agent, for at least a fortnight. This he claimed to be fatal to his adversary's plea. Having stated the facts, [182] with a clearness which seemed to prove them, he said, turning with startling quickness upon his antagonist,—"Now, I ask my learned brother to tell me, what was the state of the soul during that fortnight?" To a jury of Scotch Presbyterians, familiar with theological metaphysics, this allusion was exceedingly pertinent and effective.

We passed into another room. Three full-wigged judges were seated upon a lofty bench, and beneath them, at a little table in front, was a large man, bent down and writing laboriously. As I approached, I caught a side-view of his face. There was no mistaking him: it was Sir Walter himself!

Was it not curious to see the most renowned personage in the three kingdoms sitting at the very feet of these men: they the court, and he the clerk? They were indeed all "lords," and their individual names were suggestive to the ear: one was Robertson, son of the historian of Charles V.; another was Gillies, brother of the renowned Grecian scholar of that name; another,

Mackenzie, son of the author of the Man of Feeling. These are high titles; but what were they to the author of Waverley?

Mr. Y—— introduced me to him at once, breaking in upon his occupation with easy familiarity. As he arose from his seat, I was surprised at his robust, vigorous frame. He was very nearly six feet in height, full-chested, and of a farmer-like aspect. His complexion seemed to have been originally sandy, but now his hair was grey. He had the rough, freckled, weather-beaten skin of a man who is much in the open air; his eye was small and grey, and peering out keenly and inquisitively from beneath a heavy brow, edged with something like grey, twisted bristles: the [183] whole expression of his face, however, was exceedingly agreeable.

He greeted me kindly, the tone of his voice being hearty, yet with a very decided Scotch accent. A few commonplace remarks, and one or two inquiries as to my acquaintance with American literary men, was all that passed between us on this occasion; but subsequently, as will be seen, I was more highly favored.

One morning I found a note at my hotel, from Miss Y——, inviting me to breakfast. I went at ten, and we had a pleasant chat. She then proposed a ride, to which I acceded. She was already in her riding-habit; so without delay we went forth, calling first upon Mrs. Russell. She led us into another room, and there, on the floor, in a romp with her two boys, was Francis Jeffrey! Think of the first lawyer in Scotland, the lawgiver of the great republic of letters throughout Christendom, having a rough-and-tumble on the floor, as if he were himself a boy! Let others think as they will, I loved him from that moment; and ever after, as I read his criticisms, cutting and scorching as they often were, I fancied that I could still see a kind and genial spirit shining through them all. At least it is certain that, behind his editorial causticity, there was in private life a fund of gentleness and geniality which endeared him to all who enjoyed his intimacy. I was now introduced to him, and he seemed a totally different being from the fierce and fiery gladiator of the legal arena, where I had before seen him. His manners were gentle and gentlemanly: polite to the ladies and gracious to me.

We found Mrs. Russell in a riding-dress, and prepared to accompany us in our excursion. Taking leave of Mr. Jeffrey, we went to the stable, and having mounted, walked our steeds gently out of [184] the town by Holyrood, and to the east of Arthur's seat, leaving Portobello on the left. We rode steadily, noting a few objects as we passed, until at last, reaching an elevated mound, we paused, and the ladies directed my attention to the scenes around. We were some two miles south of the town, upon one of the slopes of the Braid Hills. What a view was before us! The city, a vast smoking hive, to the north; and to the right, Arthur's Seat, bald and blue, seeming to rise up and almost peep into its streets and chimneys. Over and beyond all was the sea. The whole area between the point where we stood and that vast azure line, blending with the sky, was a series of abrupt hills and dimpling valleys, threaded by a network of highways and byways; honeycombed in spots by cities and villages, and elsewhere sprinkled with country seats.

It is an unrivalled scene of varied beauty and interest. The natural site of Edinburgh is remarkable, consisting of three rocky ledges, steepling over deep ravines. These have all been modified by art; in one place a lake has been dried up, and is now covered with roads, bridges, tenements, gardens, and lawns. The sides of the cliffs are in some instances covered with masses of buildings, occasionally rising tier above tier—in one place presenting a line of houses a dozen stories in height! The city is divided by a deep chasm into two distinct parts: the Old Town, dark and smoky, and justifying the popular appellation of "Auld Reekie;" the other, the New Town, with the fresh architecture and the rich and elaborate embellishments of a modern city. Nearly from the centre of the Old Town rises the Castle, three hundred and eighty feet above the level of the sea; on one side looking down almost perpendicularly, two hundred feet into the vale [185] beneath; on the other, holding communication with the streets by means of a winding pathway. In the new town is Calton Hill, rich with monuments of art and memorials of history. From these two commanding positions the views are unrivalled.

But I forget that I have taken you to the Braid Hills. My amiable guides directed my attention to various objects—some far and some near, and all with names familiar to history, or song, or romance. Yonder mass of dun and dismal ruins was Craigmillar Castle, once the residence of Queen Mary. Nearly in the same direction, and not remote, is the cliff, above whose bosky sides peer out the massive ruins of Roslin Castle; further south are glimpses of Dalkieth Palace, the sumptuous seat of the Duke of Buccleuch; there is the busy little village of Lasswade, which takes the name of "Gandercleugh" in the Tales of my Landlord; yonder winds the Esk, and there the Galawater—both familiar in many a song; and there is the scenery of the Gentle Shepherd, presenting the very spot where that inimitable colloquy took place between Peggy and her companion Jenny,—

"Gae farer up the burn to Habbie's How
Where a' the sweets o' spring an' summer
grow:
Between twa birks, out o'er a little linn,
The water fa's and makes a singan din:
A pool, breast deep, beneath as clear as
glass,
Kisses wi' easy whirls the bordering grass.
We'll end our washing while the morning's
cool,
And when the day grows hot we'll to the

pool,
There wash oursels—it's healthful now in
May,
An' sweetly caller on sae warm a day."

While we were surveying these scenes the rain began to fall in a fine, insinuating mizzle; soon large drops pattered through the fog, and at last there was a drenching shower. I supposed the [186] ladies would seek some shelter; not they: accustomed to all the humors of this drizzly climate, and of course defying them. They pulled off their green veils, and stuffed them into their saddle-pockets: then chirruping to their steeds, they sped along the road, as if mounted on broomsticks. I was soon wet through, and so, doubtless, were they. However, they took to it as ducks to a pond. On we went, the water—accelerated by our speed—spouting in torrents from our stirrups. In all my days I had never such an adventure. And the coolness with which the ladies took it, that was the most remarkable. Indeed, it was provoking; for as they would not accept sympathy, of course they could not give it, though my reeking condition would have touched any other heart than theirs. On we went, till at last, coming to the top of the hill, we suddenly cropped out into the sunshine, the shower still scudding along the valley beneath us. We continued our ride, getting once more soaked on our way, and again drying in the sun. At last we reached home, having made a circuit of fifteen miles. Scarcely a word was said of the rain. I saw the ladies to their residences, and was thankful when I found myself once more in my hotel.

As a just moral of this adventure, I suggest to any American, who may ride with Scotch ladies around Edinburgh, not to go forth in his best dress-coat, and pantaloons without straps.

CHAPTER XX. [187]

BLACKWOOD—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY—SIR WALTER SCOTT —MR. AND MRS. LOCKHART—ORIGIN OF "TAM O'SHANTER"—LAST WORDS OF SCOTT.

I delivered my letter of introduction to Blackwood, and he treated me very kindly. I found him an exceedingly intelligent and agreeable gentleman. The Magazine which bears his name was then in its glory, and of course a part of its radiance shone on him. He was a man of excellent judgment in literary matters, and his taste, no doubt, contributed largely to the success of the Magazine.

Of course I was gratified at receiving from him a note, inviting me to dine with him the next day. His house was on the south of the old town, nearly two miles distant. The persons present were such as I should myself have selected: among them Lockhart and James Ballantyne. I sat next the latter, and found him exceedingly agreeable and gentlemanlike. He was a rather large man, handsome, smooth in person and manner, and very well dressed. It must be remembered, that at this time Scott did not acknowledge that he was the author of the Waverley novels, nor did his friends. Perhaps the mystery was even promoted by them; for, no doubt, it added to the interest excited by his works. However, the veil was not closely preserved in the circle of intimacy. Ballantyne said to me, in the course of a conversation which turned upon the popularity of [188] authors, as indicated by the sale of their works,—"We have now in course of preparation forty thousand volumes of Scott's poems and the works of the author of Waverley:" evidently intimating the identity of their authorship.

The next day I went to St. Giles's Church, to see the General Assembly, then holding its annual session there. This body consisted of nearly four hundred members, chosen by different parishes, boroughs, and universities. The sessions are attended by a Commissioner appointed by the Crown, but he is seated outside of the area assigned to the Assembly, and has no vote, and no right of debate. He sits under a canopy, with the insignia of royalty, and a train of gaily-dressed pages. He opens the sessions in the name of the King, the Head of the Church: the Moderator then opens it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *the only true Head of the Church*! It appears that the Scotch, in bargaining for a union with England, took good care to provide for their religious independence, and this they still jealously preserve.

The aspect of the Assembly was similar to that of the House of Commons, though somewhat graver. I observed that the debates were often stormy, with scraping of the floor, laughing aloud, and cries of "Hear, hear!" The members were, in fact, quite disorderly, showing at least as little regard for decorum as ordinary legislatures. Sir Walter Scott once remarked, in my hearing, that it had never yet been decided how many more than six members could speak at once!

The persons here pointed out to me as celebrities were Dr. Chalmers, the famous pulpit orator; Dr. Cook, the ecclesiastical historian; and Dr. Baird, principal of the University. The first of these was now at the height of his fame. He had already begun those reforms which, some years later, [189] resulted in a disruption of the Scottish Church.

A few days after the dinner at Mr. Blackwood's I dined with Mr. Lockhart. Besides the host and hostess, there were present Sir Walter Scott, his son, Charles Scott, Mr. Blackwood, and three or four other persons. At dinner I sat next Sir Walter. Everything went off pleasantly, with the usual ease, hospitality, and heartiness of an English dinner.

After the ladies had retired the conversation became general and animated. Byron was the

engrossing topic. Sir Walter spoke of him with the deepest feeling of admiration and regret. A few weeks before, on the receipt of the news of his death, he had written an obituary notice of him, in which he compared him to the sun, withdrawn from the heavens at the very moment when every telescope was levelled to discover either his glory or his spots.

Lockhart and Blackwood both told stories, and we passed a pleasant half hour. The wine was at last rather low, and our host ordered the servant to bring more. Upon which Scott said, "No, no, Lokert"—such was his pronunciation of his son-in-law's name—"we have had enough: let us go and see the ladies." And so we gathered to the parlor.

Mrs. Lockhart spoke with great interest of Washington Irving, who had visited the family at Abbotsford. She said that he slept in a room which looked out on the Tweed. In the morning, when he came down to breakfast, he was very pale, and being asked the reason, confessed that he had not been able to sleep. The sight of the Tweed from his window, and the consciousness of [190] being at Abbotsford, so filled his imagination, so excited his feelings, as to deprive him of slumber.

Our lively hostess was requested to give us some music, and instantly complied—the harp being her instrument. She sang Scotch airs, and played several pibrochs, all with taste and feeling. Her range of tunes seemed inexhaustible. Her father sat by, and entered heartily into the performances. He beat time vigorously with his lame leg, and frequently helped out a chorus, the heartiness of his tones making up for some delinquencies in tune and time. Often he made remarks upon the songs, and told anecdotes respecting them. When a certain pibroch had been played, he said it reminded him of the first time he ever saw Miss Edgeworth. There had come to Abbotsford a wild Gaelic peasant from the neighborhood of Staffa, and it was proposed to him to sing a a pibroch common in that region. He had consented, but required the whole party present to sit in a circle on the floor, while he should sing the song, and perform a certain pantomimic accompaniment, in the centre. All was accordingly arranged in the great hall, and the performer had just begun his wild chant, when in walked a small but stately lady, and announced herself as Miss Edgeworth!

Mrs. Lockhart asked me about the American Indians, expressing great curiosity concerning them. I told the story of one who was tempted to go into the rapids of the Niagara river, just above the Falls, for a bottle of rum. This he took with him, and having swam out to the point agreed upon, he turned back and attempted to regain the land. For a long time the result was doubtful: he struggled powerfully, but in vain; inch by inch he receded from the shore; and at last, finding his doom sealed, he raised himself above the water, wrenched the cork from the bottle, and putting [191] the latter to his lips, yielded to the current, and thus went down to his doom.

Sir Walter then said that he had read an account of an Indian, who was in a boat, approaching a cataract; by some accident it was drawn into the current, and the savage saw that his escape was impossible. Upon this he arose, wrapped his robe of skins around him, seated himself erect, and, with an air of imperturbable gravity, went over the falls.

"The most remarkable thing about the American Indians," said Blackwood, "is their being able to follow in the trail of their enemies, by their footprints left in the leaves, upon the grass, and even upon the moss of the rocks. The accounts given of this seem hardly credible."

"I can readily believe it, however," said Sir Walter. "You must remember that this is a part of their education. I have learned at Abbotsford to discriminate between the hoof-marks of all our neighbors' horses, and I taught the same thing to Mrs. Lockhart. It is, after all, not so difficult as you might think. Every horse's foot has some peculiarity, either of size, shoeing, or manner of striking the earth. I was once walking with Southey—a mile or more from home—across the fields. At last we came to a bridle-path leading towards Abbotsford, and here I noticed fresh hoof-prints. Of this I said nothing; but pausing, and looking up with an inspired expression, I said to Southey,—'I have a gift of second sight: we shall have a stranger to dinner!'

"'And what may be his name?' was the reply.

"'Scott,' said I.

"'Ah, it is some relation of yours,' he said; 'you have invited him, and you would pass off, as an example of your Scottish gift of prophecy, a matter previously agreed upon!' [192]

"'Not at all,' said I. 'I assure you that, till this moment, I never thought of such a thing.'

"When we got home, I was told that Mr. Scott, a farmer living some three or four miles distant, and a relative of mine, was waiting to see me. Southey looked astounded. The man remained to dinner, and he was asked if he had given any intimation of his coming. He replied in the negative: that, indeed, he had no idea of visiting Abbotsford when he left home. After enjoying Southey's wonder for some time, I told him that I saw the tracks of Mr. Scott's horse in the bridle-path, and inferring that he was going to Abbotsford, easily foresaw that we should have him to dinner."

Presently the conversation turned upon Burns. Scott knew him well. He said that Tam O'Shanter was written to please a stonecutter, who had executed a monument for the poet's father, on condition that he should write him a witch-story in verse. He stated that Burns was accustomed in his correspondence, more especially with ladies, to write an elaborate letter, and then send a copy of it to several persons; modifying local and personal passages to suit each individual. He said that of some of these letters he had three or four copies, thus addressed to different persons, and all in the poet's handwriting.

The evening passed in pleasant conversation, varied by the music of Mrs. Lockhart's voice and harp; and some amusing imitations by a gentleman of the party, till twelve o'clock. It will readily

be supposed that my eye often turned upon the chief figure in this interesting group. I could not for a moment forget his presence; though nothing could be more unpretending and modest than his whole air and bearing. [193]

The general effect of his face was that of calm dignity; and now, in the presence of children and friends, lighted by genial emotions, it was one of the pleasantest countenances I have ever seen. When standing or walking, his manly form, added to an aspect of benevolence, completed the image; at once exciting affection and commanding respect.

His manners were quiet, unpretending, absolutely without self-assertion. He appeared to be happy, and desirous of making others so. He was the only person present who seemed unconscious that he was the author of Waverley. His intercourse with his daughter was most charming. She seemed quite devoted to him; watching his lips when he was speaking, and seeking in everything to anticipate and fulfil his wishes. When she was singing, his eye dwelt upon her; his ear catching and seeming to relish every tone. Frequently, when she was silent, his eye rested upon her, and the lines came to my mind,—

"Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven:
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek:
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!"

Eight years later, when I was again in London, Scott was on his death-bed at Abbotsford. Overburdened with the struggle to extricate himself from the wreck of his fortunes, his brain had given way, and the mighty intellect was in ruins. On the morning of the 17th he woke from a paralytic slumber; his eye clear and calm, every trace of delirium having passed away. Lockhart came to his bedside. "My dear," he said, "I may have but a moment to speak to you. Be a good man: be virtuous; be religious: be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you are called upon to lie here!" [194]

These were almost the last words he spoke; he soon fell into a stupor, which became the sleep of death. So he died, with all his children around him. "It was a beautiful day," says his biographer; "so warm, that every window was wide open; and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear—the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles—was distinctly audible, as we knelt around the bed; and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes!"

CHAPTER XXI. [195]

EN ROUTE FOR LONDON—"THE LAIRD O'COCKPEN"—LOCALITIES OF LEGENDARY FAME—DIFFERENCE OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SCENERY.

Early in June I set out for London. My route led me through the village of Dalkeith, and the possessions of the Duke of Buccleuch, which extended for thirty miles on both sides of the road. We were constantly meeting objects which revived historical or poetic reminiscences. Among these was Cockpen, the scene of the celebrated ballad; and as I rode by the whole romance passed before my mind. I fancied that I could even trace the pathway along which the old laird proceeded upon his courtship, as well as the residence of

"The penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree;"

who was so daft as to reject his offer, although

"His wig was well powthered and as gude
as new;
His waistcoat was red, and his coat it was
blue;
A ring on his finger, a sword and cocked
hat—
And wha could refuse the laird wi' a' that?"

We crossed the Galawater and the Ettrick, and travelled along the banks of the Tweed. We passed Abbotsford on our left; and further on saw the Eildon Hills, "cleft in three" by the wondrous wizard, Michael Scott; as duly chronicled in the Lay of the Last Minstrel. We proceeded along the banks of the Teviot, a small limpid stream, where barefooted lassies were washing, as in the days of Allan Ramsay. We saw Netherby Hall, and a little beyond Cannobie Lea, the scenes of the song Young Lochinvar. All these, and many more localities of legendary fame, were passed in the course of a forenoon's progress in the stage-coach. [196]

One day's journey brought me to Carlisle: thence I travelled through the lake district, looking with delight upon Windermere, Rydal, Grassmere, Helvellyn, Derwentwater, and Skiddaw. Then

turning eastward, I passed over a hilly and picturesque country, to the ancient and renowned city of York. Having lingered, half entranced, amid its antiquities, and looked almost with worship upon its cathedral—the most beautiful I have ever seen—I departed, and soon found myself once more in London.

As I shall not return to the subject again, I must say a few words as to the impression England makes upon the mind of an American traveller. I have visited this country several times within the last thirty years, and I shall group my impressions in one general view. The whole may be summed up in a single sentence, which is, that England is incomparably the most beautiful country in the world! I do not speak of it in winter, when encumbered with fogs; when there is

"No sun, no moon, no morn, no noon,
No dusk, no dawn—no proper time of day;
No sky, no earthly view, no distance looking blue;
No road, no street, no t'other side the way!"

I take her, as I do any other beauty who sits for her portrait, in her best attire; that is, in summer. [197] The sun rises here as high in June as it does in America. Vegetation is just about as far advanced. The meadows, the wheat-fields, the orchards, the forests are in their glory. There is one difference, however, between the two countries; the sun in England is not so hot, the air is not so highly perfumed, the buzz of the insects is not so intense. Everything is more tranquil. With us, all nature, during summer, appears to be in haste: as if its time was short; as if it feared the coming frost. In England, on the contrary, there seems to be a confidence in the seasons, as if there were time for the ripening harvests; as if the wheat might swell out its fat sides, the hop amplify its many-plaited flowers, the oats multiply and increase their tassels; each and all attaining their perfection at leisure. In the United States, the period of growth of most vegetables is compressed into ten weeks; in Great Britain, it extends to sixteen.

If we select the middle of June as a point of comparison, we shall see that in America there is a spirit, vigor, energy in the climate, as indicated by vegetable and animal life, unknown in Europe. The air is clearer, the landscape is more distinct, the bloom more vivid, the odors more pungent. A clover-field in America, in full bloom, is by many shades more ruddy than the same thing in England: its breath even is sweeter: the music of the bees stealing its honey is of a higher key. A summer forest with us is of a livelier green than in any part of Great Britain; the incense breathed upon the heart, morning and evening, is, I think, more full and fragrant. And yet, if we take the summer through, this season is pleasanter in England than with us. It is longer, its excitements are more tranquil, and, being spread over a larger space, the heart has more leisure [198] to appreciate them, than in the haste and hurry of our American climate.

There is one fact worthy of notice, which illustrates this peculiarity of the English summer: the trees there are all of a more sturdy, or, as we say, *stubbed* form and character. The oaks, the elms, the walnuts, beeches, are shorter and thicker, as well in the trunks as the branches, than ours. The leaves are thicker, the twigs larger in circumference. I have noticed particularly the recent growths of apple-trees, and they are at once shorter and stouter than in America. This quality in the trees gives a peculiarity to the landscape: the forest is more solid and less graceful than ours. If you will look at an English painting of trees, you notice the fact I state, and perceive the effect it gives, especially to scenes of which trees constitute a prevailing element. All over Europe, in fact, the leaves of the trees have a less feathery appearance than in America; and in general the forms of the branches are less arching, and, of course, less beautiful. Hence it will be perceived that European pictures of trees differ in this respect from American ones: the foliage in the former being more solid, and the sweep of the branches more angular.

But it is in respect to the effects of human art and industry that the English landscape has the chief advantage over ours. England is an old country, and shows on its face the influences of fifteen centuries of cultivation. It is, with the exception of Belgium, the most thickly-settled country of Europe.

It is under a garden-like cultivation; the ploughing is straight and even, as if regulated by machinery; the boundaries of estates consist, for the most part, of stone mason-work, the [199] intermediate divisions being hedges, neatly trimmed, and forming a beautiful contrast to our stiff stone walls and rail fences. In looking from the top of a hill over a large extent of country, it is impossible not to feel a glow of delight at the splendor of the scene: the richness of the soil, its careful and skilful cultivation, its green, tidy boundaries chequering the scene, its teeming crops, its fat herds, its numberless and full-fleeced sheep.

Nor must the dwellings be overlooked. I pass by the cities and the manufacturing villages, which, in most parts, are visible in every extended landscape; sometimes, as in the region of Manchester, spreading out for miles, and sending up wreaths of smoke from a thousand tall, tapering chimneys. I am speaking now of the country; and here are such residences as are unknown to us. An English castle would swallow up a dozen of our wood or brick villas. The adjacent estate often includes a thousand acres; and these, be it remembered, are kept almost as much for ornament as use. Think of a dwelling that might gratify the pride of a prince, surrounded by several square miles of wooded park, and shaven lawn, and winding stream, and swelling hill; and all having been for a hundred, perhaps five hundred years, subjected to every improvement which the highest art could suggest! There is certainly a union of unrivalled beauty

and magnificence in the lordly estates of England. We have nothing in America which at all resembles them.

And then there is every grade of imitation of these high examples scattered over the whole country. The greater part of the surface of England belongs to wealthy proprietors, and these have alike the desire and the ability to give an aspect of neatness, finish, and elegance, not only [200] to their dwellings and the immediate grounds, but to their entire estates. The prevailing standard of taste thus leads to a universal beautifying of the surface of the country. Even the cottager feels the influence of this omnipresent spirit: the brown thatch over his dwelling, and the hedge before his door, must be neatly trimmed: the green ivy must clamber up and festoon his windows; and the little yard in front must bloom with roses and lilies, and other gentle flowers, in their season.

So much for the common aspect of England as the traveller passes over it. The seeker after the picturesque may find abundant gratification in Devonshire, Derbyshire, Westmoreland, though Wales and Scotland, and parts of Ireland, are still more renowned for their beauty. So far as combinations of nature are concerned, nothing in the world can surpass some of our own scenery; as along the upper waters of the Housatonic and the Connecticut, or among the islands of Lake George, and a thousand other places: but these lack the embellishments of art and the associations of romance or song, which belong to the rival beauties of British landscapes.

I confine these remarks to a single topic, the aspect of England as it meets the eye of an American traveller. The English do not and cannot enjoy the spectacle as an American does; for they are born to it, and have no experience which teaches them to estimate it by common and inferior standards. Having said so much on this subject, I shall not venture to speak of English society: of the lights and shadows of life beneath the myriad roofs of towns and cities. The subject would be too extensive; and besides, it has been abundantly treated by others. I only say, in passing, that the English people are the best studied at home. John Bull, out of his own house, is [201] generally a rough customer: here, by his fireside, with wife, children, and friends, he is generous, genial, gentlemanly. There is no hospitality like that of an Englishman, when you have crossed his threshold. Everywhere else he will annoy you. He will poke his elbow into your sides in a crowded thoroughfare; he will rebuff you if, sitting at his side in a railway-carriage, you ask a question by way of provoking a little conversation: he carries at his back a load of prejudices, like the bundle of Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress; and, instead of seeking to get rid of them, he is always striving to increase his collection. If he becomes a diplomat, his great business is to meddle in everybody's affairs; if an editor, he is only happy in proportion as he can say annoying and irritating things. And yet, catch this same John Bull at home, and his crusty, crocodile armor falls off, and he is the very best fellow in the world: liberal, hearty, sincere,—the perfection of a gentleman.

CHAPTER XXII. [202]

LONDON AGAIN—JACOB PERKINS AND HIS STEAM-GUN—DUKES OF WELLINGTON, SUSSEX, AND YORK—BRITISH LADIES AT A REVIEW—HOUSE OF COMMONS AND ITS ORATORS—CATALANI—DISTINGUISHED FOREIGNERS—EDWARD IRVING COMPARED TO EDMUND KEAN—BYRON LYING IN STATE.

London, when I first knew it, was not what it is now. Its population has at least doubled since 1824. At that time Charing Cross was a filthy, triangular thoroughfare, a stand for hackney-coaches, a grand panorama of show-bills pasted over the surrounding walls, with the King's Mews in the immediate vicinity: this whole area is now the site of Trafalgar Square. This is an index of other and similar changes that have taken place all over the city. At the present day, London not only surpasses in its extent, its wealth, its accumulations of all that belongs to art, the extent of its commerce, the vastness of its influence, all the cities that now exist, but all that the world has before known.

King George IV. was then on the throne, and though he was shy of showing himself in public, I chanced to see him several times, and once to advantage, at Ascot Races. For more than an hour his majesty stood in the pavilion, surrounded by the Duke of Wellington, the Duke of York, the Marquis of Anglesea, and other persons of note. But for the star on his left breast, and the respect paid to him, he might have passed as only an over-dressed and rather sour old rake. I noticed that his coat sat very close and smooth, and was told that he was trussed and braced by [203] stays. It was said to be the labor of at least two hours to prepare him for a public exhibition. He was a dandy to the last. The wrinkles of his coat, after it was on, were cut out by the tailor, and carefully drawn up with the needle. He had the gout, and walked badly. I imagine there were few among the thousands gathered to the spectacle who were really less happy than his majesty—the monarch of the three kingdoms.

I saw the Duke of Wellington not only on this, but on many subsequent occasions. I think the portraits give a false idea of his personal appearance. He was really a rather small, thin, insignificant-looking man, unless you saw him on horseback. He then seemed rather stately, and in a military dress, riding always with inimitable ease, he sustained the image of the great general. At other times I never could discover in his appearance anything but the features and aspect of an ordinary, and certainly not prepossessing, old man. I say this with great respect for

his character, which, as a personification of solid sense, indomitable purpose, steady loyalty, and unflinching devotion to a sense of public duty, I conceive to be one of the finest in British history.

At this period our countryman, Jacob Perkins, was astonishing London with his steam-gun. He was certainly a man of extraordinary genius, and was the originator of numerous useful inventions. At the time of which I write, he fancied that he had discovered a new mode of generating steam, by which he was not only to save a vast amount of fuel, but to obtain a marvellous increase of power. So confident was he of success, that he told me he felt certain of being able, in a few months, to go from London to Liverpool with the steam produced by a gallon [204] of oil. Such was his fertility of invention, that while pursuing one discovery others came into his mind, and, seizing upon his attention, kept him in a whirl of experiments, in which many things were begun, and comparatively nothing completed.

Though the steam-gun never reached any practical result, it was for some time the admiration of London. I was present at an exhibition of its wonderful performances in the presence of the Duke of Sussex, the Duke of Wellington, and other persons of note. The purpose of the machine was to discharge bullets by steam, instead of gunpowder, and with great rapidity—at least a hundred a minute. The balls were put in a sort of tunnel, and by working a crank back and forward, they were let into the chamber of the barrel one by one, and expelled by the steam. The noise of each explosion was like that of a musket; and when the discharges were rapid, there was a ripping uproar, quite shocking to tender nerves. The balls—carried about a hundred feet across the smithy—struck upon an iron target, and were flattened to the thickness of a shilling piece.

The whole performance was indeed quite formidable, and the Duke of Sussex seemed greatly excited. I stood close to him; and when the bullets flew pretty thick, and the discharge came to its climax, I heard him say to the Duke of Wellington, in an under-tone,—"Wonderful, wonderful—wonderful! wonderful, wonderful—wonderful! wonderful, wonderful—wonderful!" and so he went on, without variation. It was, in fact, a very good commentary upon the performance.

Having spoken of the Duke of Sussex, I must say a few words of his brother, the Duke of York, whom I had seen at Ascot. He was there interested in the race, for he had entered a horse by the [205] name of Moses, for one of the prizes. Some person reflected upon him for this. His ready reply was, that he was devoted to *Moses and the profits*. Despite his disgrace in the Flanders campaign, and his notorious profligacy, he was still a favorite among the British people. There was about him a certain native honorableness and goodness of heart, which always existed, even in the midst of his worst career.

I saw the Duke on another occasion, at a cavalry review on Hounslow Heath. The Duke of Wellington was among the spectators. He was now in military dress, and mounted on a fine chestnut-colored horse. His motions were quick, and frequently seemed to indicate impatience. Several ladies and gentlemen on horseback were admitted to the review, and within the circle of the sentries stationed to exclude the crowd. I obtained admission by paying five shillings; for I learned that in England money is quite as mighty as in America. The privileged group of fair ladies and brave men, gathered upon a grassy knoll to observe the evolutions of the soldiers, presented an assemblage such as the aristocracy of England alone can furnish. Those who imagine that this is an effeminate generation, should learn that both the men and women belonging to the British nobility, taken together, are without doubt the finest race in the world. One thing is certain, these ladies could stand fire; for although the horses leaped and pranced at the discharges of the troops, their fair riders seemed as much at ease as if upon their own feet. Their horsemanship was indeed admirable, and suggested those habits of exercise and training, to which their full rounded forms and blooming countenances gave ample testimony.

The performances consisted of various marches and counter-marches—sometimes slow, and [206] sometimes quick—across the extended plain. The evolutions of the flying-artillery excited universal admiration. When the whole body—about four thousand horse—rushed in a furious gallop over the ground, the clash of arms, the thunder of hoofs, the universal shudder of the earth—all together created more thrilling emotions in my mind, than any other military parade I ever beheld. I have seen eighty thousand infantry in the field; but they did not impress my imagination as forcibly as these few regiments of cavalry at Hounslow Heath. One incident gave painful effect to the spectacle. As the whole body were sweeping across the field, a single trooper was pitched from his horse and fell to the ground. A hundred hoofs passed over him, and trampled him into the sod. On swept the gallant host, as heedless of their fallen companion as if only a feather had dropped from of their caps. The conflict of cavalry in real battle, must be the most fearful exhibition which the dread drama of war can furnish. On this occasion both the King and the Duke of York were present; so that it was one off universal interest. About fifty ladies on horseback rode back and forth over the field, on the flanks of the troops, imitating their evolutions.

I have been often at the House of Commons; but I shall now only speak of a debate, in July, 1824, upon the petition, I believe, of the City of London, for a recognition of the independence of some of the South American States. Canning was then Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and took the brunt of the battle made upon the Ministry. Sir James Mackintosh led, and Brougham followed him, on the same side.

I shall not attempt to give you a sketch of the speeches: a mere description of the appearance [207] and manner of the prominent orators will suffice. Sir James, then nearly sixty years old, was a man rather above the ordinary size; and with a fine, philanthropic face. His accent was decidedly Scotch, and his voice shrill and dry. He spoke slowly, often hesitated, and was entirely destitute of what we call eloquence. There was no easy flow of sentences, no gush of feeling, no apparent

attempt to address the heart or the imagination. His speech was a rigid lecture, rather abstract and philosophical; evidently addressed to the stern intellect of stern men. He had a good deal of gesture, and once or twice was boisterous in tone and manner. His matter was logical; and occasionally he illustrated his propositions by historical facts, happily narrated. On the whole he made the impression upon my mind that he was a very philosophical, but not very practical, statesman.

Brougham's face and figure are familiar to every one; and making allowance for added years, there is little change in his appearance since the time of which I speak. He had abundance of words, as well as ideas. In his speech on the occasion I describe, he piled thought upon thought, laced sentence within sentence, mingled satire and philosophy, fact and argument, history and anecdote, as if he had been a cornucopia, and was anxious to disburden himself of his abundance. In all this there were several hard hits, and Canning evidently felt them. As he rose to reply, I took careful note of his appearance; for he was then, I imagine, the most conspicuous of the British Statesmen. He was a handsome man, with a bald, shining head, and a figure slightly stooping in the shoulders. His face was round, his eye large and full, his lips a little voluptuous: [208] the whole bearing a lively and refined expression. In other respects, his appearance was not remarkable. His voice was musical; and he spoke with more ease and fluency than most other orators of the House of Commons; yet even he hesitated, paused, and repeated his words, not only in the beginning, but sometimes in the very midst of his argument. He, however, riveted the attention of the Members; and his observations frequently brought out the ejaculation of "hear, hear," from both sides of the House. Brougham and Mackintosh watched him with vigilant attention; now giving nods of assent, and now signs of disapprobation.

Of course, I visited the House of Lords, paying two shillings and sixpence for admittance. The general aspect of the assembly was eminently grave and dignified. Lord Eldon was the Chancellor—a large, heavy, iron-looking man—the personification of bigoted Conservatism. He was so opposed to reforms, that he shed tears when the punishment of death was abolished for stealing five shillings in a dwelling-house! When I saw him, his head was covered with the official wig: his face sufficed, however, to satisfy any one that his obstinacy of character was innate.

While I was here, a Committee from the House of Commons was announced; they had brought up a message to the Lords. The Chancellor, taking the seals in his hands, approached the Committee, bowing three times, and they doing the same. Then they separated, each moving backward, and bowing. To persons used to such a ceremony, this might be sublime; to me it was ludicrous: and all the more so, on account of the ponderous starchness of the chief performer in the solemn farce. There was a somewhat animated debate while I was present, in which Lords [209] Liverpool, Lauderdale, Harrowby and Grey participated; yet nothing was said or done that would justify particular notice at this late day.

A great event happened in the musical world while I was in London—the appearance of Catalani at the Italian Opera, after several years of absence. The opera was *Le Nozze di Figaro*. I had never before seen an opera; and could not, even by the enchantments of music, have my habits of thought and my common sense so completely overturned and bewitched, as to see the whole business of life—intrigue, courtship, marriage, cursing, shaving, preaching, praying, loving, hating—done by singing, instead of talking, and yet feel that it was all right and proper. It requires both a musical ear and early training fully to appreciate and feel the opera.

Madame Catalani was a large handsome woman; a little masculine and past forty. She was not only a very clever actress, but was deemed to have every musical merit—volume, compass, clearness of tone, surpassing powers of execution. Her whole style was dramatic; bending even the music to the sentiments of the character and the song. I could appreciate, uninstructed as I was, her amazing powers; though, to say the truth, I was quite as much astonished as pleased. Pasta and Garcia, both of whom I afterwards heard, gave me infinitely greater pleasure; chiefly because their voices possessed that melody of tone which excites sympathy in every heart; even the most untutored. Madame Catalani gave the opera a sort of epic grandeur—an almost tragic vehemence of expression; Pasta and Garcia rendered it the interpreter of those soft and tender emotions, for the expression of which God seems to have given music to mankind. It was, no [210] doubt, a great thing to hear the greatest cantatrice of the age; but I remember Madame Catalani as a prodigy, rather than as an enchantress. On the occasion I am describing, she sang, by request, "Rule Britannia" between the acts; which drew forth immense applause, in which I heartily joined: not that I liked the words, but that I felt the music.

It was about this time that a great attraction was announced at one of the theatres; nothing less than the King and Queen of the Sandwich Islands, who had graciously condescended to honor the performance with their presence. They had come to visit England, and pay their homage to George the Fourth; hence the Government deemed it necessary to receive them with hospitality, and pay them such attentions as were due to their rank and royal blood. The king's name was Kamehamaha; but he had also the sub-title or surname of Rhio-Rhio: which, being interpreted, meant Dog of Dogs. Canning's wit got the better of his reverence, and so he profanely suggested that, if his majesty was a Dog of Dogs, what must the queen be? However, there was an old man about the court, who had acquired the title of Poodle, and he was selected as a fit person to attend upon their majesties. They had their lodgings at the Adelphi Hotel, and might be seen at all hours of the day, looking at the puppet-shows in the streets with intense delight. Of all the institutions of Great Britain, Punch and Judy evidently made the strongest and most favorable impression upon the royal party.

They were, I believe, received at a private interview by the King at Windsor: everything calculated to gratify them was done. I saw them at the theatre, dressed in a European costume,

with the addition of some barbarous finery. The king was an enormous man—six feet three or [211]
four inches; the queen was short, but otherwise of ample dimensions. Besides these persons, the party comprised five or six other members of the king's household. They had all large, round, flat faces, of a coarse, though good-humored expression. Their complexion was a ruddy brown, not very unlike the American Indians; their general aspect, however, was very different. They looked with a kind of vacant wonder at the play, evidently not comprehending it; the farce, on the contrary, seemed greatly to delight them. It is sad to relate that this amiable couple never returned to their country; both died in England—victims either to the climate, or to the change in their habits of living.

Among the prominent objects of interest in London at this period was Edward Irving, then preaching at the Caledonian Chapel, Cross Street, Hatton Garden. He was now in the full flush of his fame; and such was the eagerness to hear him, that it was difficult to get admission. People of all ranks—literary men, philosophers, statesmen, noblemen, persons of the highest name and influence, with a full and diversified representation of the fair sex—crowded to his church. I was so fortunate as to get a seat in the pew of a friend, a privilege which I appreciated all the more when I counted twenty coroneted coaches standing at the door, some of those who came in them not being able to obtain even an entrance into the building. The interior was crowded to excess; the aisles were full; and even fine ladies seemed happy to get seats upon the pulpit stairway. Persons of the highest title were scattered here and there, and cabinet ministers were squeezed in with the mass of common humanity.

Mr. Irving's appearance was very remarkable. He was over six feet in height, very broad- [212]
shouldered, with long, black hair hanging in heavy, twisted ringlets down upon his shoulders. His complexion was pallid, yet swarthy; the whole expression of his face, owing chiefly to an unfortunate squint, was half-sinister and half-sanctified, creating in the minds of the beholder a painful doubt whether he was a great saint or a great sinner.

There was a strange mixture of saintliness and dandyism in the whole appearance of this man. His prayer was affected—strange, quaint, peculiar in its phraseology, yet solemn and striking. His reading of the psalm was peculiar, and a fancy crossed my mind that I had heard something like it, but certainly not in a church. I was seeking to trace out a resemblance between this strange parson and some star of Drury Lane or Covent Garden. Suddenly I found the clue: Edward Irving in the pulpit was imitating Edmund Kean upon the stage! And he succeeded admirably—his tall and commanding person giving him an immense advantage over the little, insignificant, yet inspired actor. He had the tones of the latter, his gestures, his looks even, as I had often seen him in Richard the Third and Shylock. He had evidently taken lessons of the renowned tragedian, but whether in public or private is not for me to say.

In spite of the evident affectation, the solemn dandyism, the dramatic artifices of the performer—for, after all, I could only consider the preacher as an actor—the sermon was very impressive. The phraseology was rich, flowing, redundant, abounding in illustration, and seemed to me carefully modelled after that of Jeremy Taylor. Some of the pictures presented to the imagination were startling, and once or twice it seemed as if the whole audience was heaving and swelling with intense emotion, like a sea rolling beneath the impulses of a tempest. Considered as a [213]
display of oratorical art, it was certainly equal to anything I have ever heard from the pulpit; yet it did not appear to me calculated to have any permanent effect in enforcing Christian truth upon the conscience. The preacher seemed too much a player, and too little an apostle. The after-thought was, that the whole effect was the result of stage trick, and not of sober truth.

The character and career of Edward Irving present a strange series of incongruities. He was born in Scotland in 1792; he became a preacher, and acquired speedy notoriety, as much by his peculiarities as his merits. He attracted the attention of Dr. Chalmers, and through his influence was for a time assistant-minister in the parish of St. John's, at Glasgow. From this place he was called to the Caledonian Chapel, where I heard him. His fame continued to increase; and having published a volume of discourses, under the quaint title, For the Oracles of God, four Orations: for Judgment to come, an Argument in Nine Parts: three large editions of the work were sold in the space of six months. Wherever he preached crowds of eager listeners flocked to hear him. His eccentricities increased with his fame. He drew out his discourses to an enormous length, and on several occasions protracted the services to four hours! He soon became mystical, and took to studying unfulfilled prophecy as the true key to the interpretation of the Scriptures. From this extravagance he passed to the doctrine that Christians, by the power of faith, can attain to the working of miracles, and speaking with unknown tongues, as in the primitive ages. Such at last were his vagaries, that he was cut off from communion with the Scottish Church; in consequence, he became the founder of a sect which continues to the present time in England, bearing the title [214]
of "Irvingites." Worn out with anxiety and incessant labors, he died at Glasgow, while on a journey for his health, in 1834, at the early age of forty-two.

One more event I must notice—the arrival in London of the remains of Lord Byron, and their lying in state previous to interment. His body had been preserved in spirits, and was thus brought from Greece, attended by five persons of his lordship's suite. Having been transferred to the coffin, it lay in state at the house of Sir Edward Knatchbull, where such were the crowds that rushed to behold the spectacle, that it was necessary to defend the coffin with a stout wooden railing. When I arrived at the place the lid was closed. I was told, however, that the countenance, though the finer lines had collapsed, was so little changed as to be easily recognised by his acquaintances. The general muscular form of the body was perfectly preserved.

The aspect of the scene, even as I witnessed it, was altogether very impressive. The coffin was covered with a pall, enriched by escutcheons wrought in gold. On the top was a lid, set round

with black plumes. Upon it were these words,—

"GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON.
BORN IN LONDON, 22D JANUARY, 1788.
DIED AT MISSOLONGHI, APRIL 19TH, 1824."

At the head of the coffin was an urn containing the ashes of his brain and heart: this being also covered with a rich pall, wrought with figures in gold. The windows were closed, and the darkened room was feebly illumined by numerous wax tapers.

And this was all that remained of Byron! What a lesson upon the pride of genius, the vanity of rank, the fatuity of fame,—all levelled in the dust, and, despite the garnished pall and magnificent coffin, their possessor bound to pass through the same process of corruption as the body of a common beggar! [215]

CHAPTER XXIII. [216]

RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES—BOSTON AND ITS WORTHIES—BUSINESS OPERATIONS—ACKERMANN'S "FORGET-ME-NOT" THE PARENT OF ALL OTHER ANNUALS—THE AMERICAN SPECIES—THEIR DECLINE.

Having made a hurried excursion to Paris and back to London, I departed for Liverpool, and thence embarked for the United States, arriving there in October, 1824. I remained at Hartford till October, 1826, and then removed to Boston, with the intention of publishing original works, and at the same time of trying my hand at authorship—the latter part of my plan, however, known only to myself.

At that time Boston was recognized as the literary metropolis of the Union—the admitted Athens of America. Edward Everett had established the North-American Review, and though he had now just left the editorial chair, his spirit dwelt in it, and his fame lingered around it. R. H. Dana, Edward T. Channing, George Bancroft, and others, were among the rising lights of the literary horizon. Society was strongly impressed with literary tastes, and genius was respected and cherished. The day had not yet come when it was glory enough for a college professor to marry a hundred thousand dollars of stocks, or when it was the chief end of a lawyer to become the attorney of an insurance company, or a bank, or a manufacturing corporation. A Boston imprint on a book was equal to a certificate of good paper, good print, good binding, and good matter. And while such was the state of things at Boston, at New York the Harpers, who till recently had been mere printers in Dover street, had scarcely entered upon their career as publishers; and the other shining lights in the trade, at the present time, were either unborn, or in the nursery, or at school. [217]

What a revolution do these simple items suggest, wrought in the space of thirty years! The sceptre has departed from Judah: New York is now the acknowledged metropolis of American literature, as well as of art and commerce. Nevertheless, if we look at Boston literature at the present time, as reflected in its publishing lists, we shall see that the light of other days has not degenerated; for since the period of which I speak, Prescott, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Whipple, Holmes, Lowell, Hilliard, have joined the Boston constellation of letters.

It cannot interest the reader to hear in detail my business operations in Boston at this period. It will be sufficient to say that, among other works, I published an edition of the novels of Charles Brockden Brown, with a life of the author, furnished by his widow, she having a share of the edition. I also published an edition of Hannah More's works, and of Mrs. Opie's works: these being, I believe, the first complete collections of the writings of these authors. In 1827 I published Sketches by N. P. Willis, his first adventure in responsible authorship. The next year I issued the Commonplace Book of Prose, the first work of the now celebrated Dr. Cheever. This was speedily followed by the Commonplace Book of Poetry, and Studies in Poetry, by the same author.

In 1828 I published a first, and soon after a second, volume of the Legendary, designed as a periodical, and intended to consist of original pieces in prose and verse, principally illustrative of American history, scenery, and manners. This was edited by N. P. Willis, and was, I believe, his first editorial engagement. Among the contributors were Halleck, Miss Sedgwick, Miss Francis, Mrs. Sigourney, Willis, Pierpont, and other popular writers of that day. It was kindly treated by the press, which generously published, without charge, the best pieces in full, saving the reading million the trouble of buying the book and paying for the chaff, which was naturally found with the wheat. Despite this courtesy, the work proved a miserable failure. The time had not come for such a publication. At the present day, with the present accessories and the present public spirit, I doubt not that such an enterprise would be eminently successful. [218]

The first work of the Annual kind, entitled the Forget-Me-Not, was issued by the Ackermanns of London, in the winter of 1823, while I was in that city. It was successfully imitated by Carey and Lea at Philadelphia, in a work entitled the Atlantic Souvenir, and which was sustained with great spirit for several years. In 1828 I commenced and published the first volume of the Token, which I continued for fifteen years; editing it myself, with the exception of the volume for 1829, which

came out under the auspices of Mr. Willis. In 1836, the Atlantic Souvenir ceased; and after that time, by arrangement with the publishers, its title was added to that of the Token.

The success of this species of publication stimulated new enterprises of the kind, and a rage for them spread over Europe and America. The efforts of the first artists and the best writers were at length drawn into them; and for nearly twenty years every autumn produced an abundant harvest [219] of Diadems, Bijous, Amaranths, Bouquets, Hyacinths, Amulets, Talismans, Forget-Me-Nots, &c. Under these seductive titles they became messengers of love, tokens of friendship, signs and symbols of affection, and luxury and refinement; and thus they stole alike into the palace and the cottage, the library, the parlor, and the boudoir. The public taste grew by feeding on these luscious gifts, and soon craved even more gorgeous works of the kind; whence came Heath's Book of Beauty, Lady Blessington's Flowers of Loveliness, Bulwer's Pilgrims of the Rhine, Butler's Leaflets of Memory, Christmas with the Poets, and many others of similar design and execution. Many of the engravings of these works cost 500 dollars each, and many a piece of poetry 50 dollars a page. On several of these works the public spent 50,000 dollars a-year!

At last the race of Annuals drew near the end of its career, yet not without having produced a certain revolution in the public taste. Their existence had sprung, at least in part, from steel-engraving, which had been invented and introduced by our countryman, Jacob Perkins. This enabled the artist to produce works of greater delicacy than had ever before been achieved; steel also gave the large number of impressions which the extensive sales of the Annuals demanded, and which could not have been obtained from copper. These works scattered gems of art far and wide, making the reading mass familiar with fine specimens of engraving; and not only cultivating an appetite for this species of luxury, but exalting the general standard of taste all over the civilized world.

And thus, though the Annuals, by name, have perished, they have left a strong necessity in the [220] public mind for books enriched by all the embellishments of art. Hence we have illustrated editions of Byron, Rogers, Thomson, Cowper, Campbell, and others; including our own poets, Bryant, Halleck, Sigourney, Longfellow, Read, &c. Wood-engraving, which since then has risen into such importance, has lent its potent aid in making books one of the chief luxuries of society, from the nursery to the parlor.

In comparison with many of these works, the Token was a very modest affair. The first year I offered prizes for the best pieces in prose and poetry. The highest for prose was awarded to the author of Some Passages in the Life of an Old Maid. A mysterious man, in a mysterious way, presented himself for the money, and, giving due evidence of his authority to receive it, it was paid to him; but who the author really was never transpired, though I had, and still have, my confident guess upon the subject. Even the subsequent volumes, though they obtained favor in their day, did not approach the splendor of the modern works of a similar kind. Nevertheless, some of the engravings, from the designs of Allston, Leslie, Newton, Cole, Inman, Chapman, Fisher, Brown, Alexander, Healy, and others, were very clever, even compared with the finest works of the present day.

The literary contributions were, I believe, equal, on the whole, to any of the Annuals, American or European. Here were inserted some of the earliest productions of Willis, Hawthorne, Miss Francis (now Mrs. Child), Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Hale, Pierpont, Greenwood, and Longfellow. Several of these authors first made acquaintance with the public through the pages of this work. It is a curious fact that the latter, Longfellow, wrote prose, and at that period had shown neither [221] a strong bias nor a particular talent for poetry.

The Token was continued annually till 1842, when it finally ceased. The day of Annuals had, indeed, passed before this was given up; and the last two or three years it had only lingered out a poor and fading existence. As a matter of business, it scarcely paid its expenses, and was a serious drawback upon my time and resources for fifteen years; a punishment, no doubt, fairly due to an obstinate pride, which made me reluctant to abandon a work with which my name and feelings had become somewhat identified.

CHAPTER XXIV. [222]

"THE TOKEN"—N. P. WILLIS AND NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE—COMPARISON BETWEEN THEM—LADY AUTHORS—PUBLISHERS' PROFITS—AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS.

I may here say, with propriety, a few words more as to the contributors for the Token. The most prominent writer for it was N. P. Willis; his articles were the most read, the most admired, the most abused, and the most advantageous to the work. I published his first book; and his two first editorial engagements were with me: hence the early portion of his literary career fell under my special notice.

He had begun to write verses very early; and while in College, before he was eighteen, he had acquired an extended reputation, under the signature of "Roy." In 1827, when he was just twenty years old, I published his volume, entitled Sketches. It elicited quite a shower of criticism, in which praise and blame were about equally dispensed: at the same time the work sold with a readiness quite unusual for a book of poetry at that period. It is not calculated to establish the infallibility of critics, to look over these notices at the present day: many of the pieces which were

then condemned have now taken their places among the acknowledged gems of our literature; and others, which excited praise at the time, have faded from the public remembrance.

One thing is certain, everybody thought Willis worth criticising. He has been, I suspect, more written about than any other literary man in the history of American literature. Some of the attacks upon him proceeded, no doubt, from a conviction that he was a man of extraordinary gifts, and yet of extraordinary affectations; and the lash was applied in kindness, as that of a schoolmaster to a beloved pupil's back; some of them were dictated by envy; for we have had no other example of literary success so early, so general, and so flattering. That Mr. Willis made mistakes in literature and life, at the outset, may be admitted by his best friends; for it must be remembered that, before he was five-and-twenty, he was more read than any other American poet of his time; and besides, being possessed of an easy and captivating address, he became the pet of society, and especially of the fairer portion of it. Since that period, his life, on the whole, has been one of serious, useful, and successful labor. His reputation as a poet has hardly advanced, and probably the public generally regard some of his early verses as his best. As an essayist, however, he stands in the first rank; distinguished for a keen sagacity in analyzing society, a fine perception of the beauties of nature, and an extraordinary talent for endowing trifles with interest and meaning. As a traveller, he is among the most entertaining, sagacious, and instructive. [223]

His style is certainly peculiar, and is deemed affected, tending to an excess of refinement, and displaying an undue hankering for grace and melody; sometimes sacrificing sense to sound. This might once have been a just criticism, but the candid reader of his works now before the public will deem it hypercritical. His style is suited to his thought; it is flexible, graceful, musical, and is adapted to the playful wit, the piquant sentiment, the artistic descriptions of sea, earth, and sky, of which they are the vehicle. In the seeming exhaustlessness of his resources, in his prolonged freshness, in his constantly-increasing strength, Mr. Willis has refuted all the early prophets, who regarded him only as a precocity, destined to shine a few brief years and fade away. [224]

As to his personal character, I need only say, that from the beginning he had a larger circle of steadfast friends than almost any man within my knowledge. There has been something in his works which has made women generally both his literary and personal admirers. For so many favors he has given the world an ample return; for, with all his imputed literary faults—some real and some imaginary—I regard him as having contributed more to the amusement of society than almost any other of our living authors.

It is not easy to conceive of a stronger contrast than is presented by comparing Nathaniel Hawthorne with N. P. Willis. The former was for a time one of the principal writers for the Token, and his admirable sketches were published side by side with those of the latter. Yet it is curious to remark, that everything Willis wrote attracted immediate attention, and excited ready praise, while the productions of Hawthorne were almost entirely unnoticed.

The personal appearance and demeanor of these two gifted young men, at the early period of which I speak, was also in striking contrast. Willis was slender, his hair sunny and silken, his cheeks ruddy, his aspect cheerful and confident. He met society with a ready and welcome hand, and was received readily and with welcome. Hawthorne, on the contrary, was of a rather sturdy form, his hair dark and bushy, his eyes steel-grey, his brow thick, his mouth sarcastic, his complexion stony, his whole aspect cold, moody, distrustful. He stood aloof, and surveyed the world from shy and sheltered positions. [225]

There was a corresponding difference in the writings of these two persons. Willis was all sunshine and summer, the other chill, dark, and wintry; the one was full of love and hope, the other of doubt and distrust; the one sought the open daylight—sunshine, flowers, music—and found them everywhere; the other plunged into the dim caverns of the mind, and studied the grisly spectres of jealousy, remorse, despair.

I had seen some anonymous publication which seemed to me to indicate extraordinary powers. I inquired of the publishers as to the writer, and through them a correspondence ensued between me and "N. Hawthorne." This name I considered a disguise, and it was not till after many letters had passed that I met the author, and found it to be his true title, representing a very substantial personage. At this period he was unsettled as to his views: he had tried his hand in literature, and considered himself to have met with a fatal rebuff from the reading world. His mind vacillated between various projects, verging, I think, toward a mercantile profession. I combated his despondence, and assured him of triumph, if he would persevere in a literary career.

He wrote numerous articles, which appeared in the Token: occasionally an astute critic seemed to see through them, and to discover the mind that was in them; but in general they passed without notice. Such articles as "Sights from a Steeple," "Sketches beneath an Umbrella," the "Wives of the Dead," the "Prophetic Pictures," now universally acknowledged to be productions of extraordinary depth, meaning, and power,—extorted hardly a word of either praise or blame, while columns were given to pieces since totally forgotten. I felt annoyed, almost angry, indeed, at this. I wrote several articles in the papers, directing attention to these productions, and finding no echo of my views, I recollect to have asked John Pickering, a gentleman in whose critical powers I had great confidence, to read some of them, and give me his opinion of them. He did as I requested; his answer was that they displayed a wonderful beauty of style, with a sort of second-sight, which revealed, beyond the outward forms of life and being, a sort of spirit-world, somewhat as a lake reflects the earth around it and the sky above it; yet he deemed them too mystical to be popular. He was right, no doubt, at that period; but, ere long, a large portion of the reading world obtained a new sense—how, or where, or whence, is not easily determined—which [226]

led them to study the mystical, to dive beneath and beyond the senses. Hawthorne was, in fact, a kind of Wordsworth in prose: less kindly, less genial toward mankind, but deeper and more philosophical. His fate was similar: at first he was neglected, at last he had worshippers.

In 1837 I recommended Mr. Hawthorne to publish a volume, comprising his various pieces, which had appeared in the Token and elsewhere. He consented, but as I had ceased to be a publisher, it was difficult to find any one who would undertake to bring out the work. I applied to the agent of the Stationers' Company, but he refused; until at last I relinquished my copyrights on such of the tales as I had published to Mr. Hawthorne, and joined a friend of his in a bond to indemnify them against loss; and thus the work was published by the Stationers' Company, under [227]
the title of Twice-Told Tales, and for the author's benefit. It was deemed a failure for more than a year, when a breeze seemed to rise and fill its sails, and with it the author was carried on to fame and fortune.

Among the most successful of the writers for the Token was Miss Francis, now Mrs. Child. I have not seen her for many years, but I have many pleasant remembrances of her lively conversation, her saucy wit, her strong good sense, and her most agreeable person and presence. To Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood I was indebted not only for some of the best contributions, but for excellent counsel and advice in my literary affairs. He was a man of genius, gentle manners, and apostolic dignity of life and character.

To Mr. Pierpont I was indebted for encouragement and sympathy in my whole career, and for some of the best poems which appeared in the work I am noticing. I remember once to have met him, and to have asked him to give me a contribution for the Token. He stopped and said, reflectingly, "I had a dream not long ago, which I have thought to put into verse. I will try, and if I am successful you shall have it." A few days after he gave me the lines, now in all the gem-books, beginning,—

"Was it the chime of a tiny bell
That came so sweet to my dreaming ear
—
Like the silvery tones of a fairy's shell,
That he winds on the beach so mellow
and clear,
When the winds and the waves lie together
asleep,
And the moon and the fairy are watching
the deep—
She dispensing her silvery light,
And he his notes, as silvery quite,
While the boatman listens and ships his [228]
oar,
To catch the music that comes from the
shore?
Hark! the notes on my ear that play
Are set to words; as they float, they say,
'Passing away, passing away!'"

Next to Willis, Mrs. Sigourney was my most successful and liberal contributor: to her I am indebted for a large part of the success of my editorial labors in the matter now referred to. To Miss Sedgwick, also, the Token owes a large share of its credit with the public. To B. B. Thacher, also among the good and the departed; to Mrs. Osgood, to John Neale, A. H. Everett, Mr. Longfellow, H. T. Tuckerman, Epes and John Sargent, Miss Leslie, J. T. Fields, O. W. Holmes—to all these, and to many others, I owe the kind remembrance which belongs to good deeds, kindly and graciously bestowed.

It is not to be supposed that in a long career, both as bookseller and editor, I should have escaped altogether the annoyances and vexations which naturally attach to these vocations. The relation of author and publisher is generally regarded as that of the cat and the dog, both greedy of the bone, and inherently jealous of each other. The authors have hitherto written the accounts of the wrangles between these two parties, and the publishers have been traditionally gibbeted as a set of mean, mercenary wretches, coining the heart's blood of genius for their own selfish profits. Great minds, even in modern times, have not been above this historical prejudice. The poet Campbell is said to have been an admirer of Napoleon because he shot a bookseller.

Nevertheless, speaking from my own experience, I suspect, if the truth were told, that, even in cases where the world has been taught to bestow all its sympathy in behalf of the author, it [229]
would appear that while there were claws on one side there were teeth on the other. My belief is, that where there have been quarrels there have generally been mutual provocations. I know of nothing more vexatious, more wearisome, more calculated to beget impatience, than the egotisms, the exactions, the unreasonableness of authors, in cases I have witnessed. That there may be examples of meanness, stupidity, and selfishness in publishers, is indisputable. But, in general, I am satisfied that an author who will do justice to a publisher will have justice in return.

I could give some curious instances of this. A schoolmaster came to me once with a marvellously clever grammar; it was sure to overturn all others. He had figured out his views in a neat hand, like copper-plate. He estimated that there were always a million of children at school who would need his grammar; providing for books worn out, and a supply for new comers, half-a-million

would be wanted every year. At one cent a copy for the author—which he insisted was exceedingly moderate—this would produce to him five thousand dollars a year; but if I would publish the work, he would condescend to take half that sum annually, during the extent of the copyright—twenty-eight years! I declined, and he seriously believed me a heartless blockhead. He obtained a publisher at last, but the work never reached a second edition. Every publisher is laden with similar experiences.

I once employed a young man to block out some little books to be published under the nominal authorship of Solomon Bell: these I remodelled, and one or two volumes were issued. Some over-astute critic announced them as veritable *Peter Parleys*, and they had a sudden sale. The young [230] man who had assisted me, and who was under the most solemn obligations to keep the matter secret, thought he had an opportunity to make his fortune; so he publicly claimed the authorship, and accused me of duplicity! The result was that the books fell dead from that hour; the series was stopped; and his unprinted manuscripts, for which I had paid him, became utterly worthless. A portion I burnt, and a portion still remain amidst the rubbish of other days.

In other instances I was attacked in the papers, editorially and personally, by individuals who were living upon the employment I gave them. I was in daily intercourse with persons of this character, who, while flattering me to my face, I knew to be hawking at me in print. These I regarded and treated as trifles at the time; they are less than trifles now. One thing may be remarked, that, in general, such difficulties come from poor and unsuccessful writers. They have been taught that publishers and booksellers are vampires, and naturally feed upon the vitals of genius; assuming—honestly, no doubt—that they are of this latter class, they feel no great scruple in taking vengeance upon those whom they regard as their natural enemies.

My editorial experience also furnished me with some amusing anecdotes. An editor of a periodical once sent me an article for the Token, entitled La Longue-vue; the pith of the story consisted in a romantic youth's falling in love with a young lady, two miles off, through a telescope! I ventured to reject it; and the Token for that year was duly damned in the columns of the offended author.

In judging of publishers one thing should be considered, and that is, that two-thirds of the [231] original works issued by them are unprofitable. An eminent London publisher once told me, that he calculated that out of ten publications four involved a positive, and often a heavy, loss; three barely paid the cost of paper, print, and advertising; and three paid a profit. Nothing is more common than for a publisher to pay money to an author, every farthing of which is lost. Self-preservation, therefore, compels the publisher to look carefully to his operations. One thing is certain, he is generally the very best judge as to the value of a book, in a marketable point of view: if he rejects it, it is solely because he thinks it will not pay, not because he despises genius.

Happily, at the present day, the relations between these two parties—authors and publishers—are on a better footing than in former times. Indeed, a great change has taken place in the relative positions of the two classes. Nothing is now more marketable than good writing, whatever may be its form—poetry or prose, fact or fiction, reason or romance. Starving, neglected, abused genius, is a myth of bygone times. If an author is poorly paid, it is because he writes poorly. I do not think, indeed, that authors are adequately paid, for authorship does not stand on a level with other professions as to pecuniary recompense, but it is certain that a clever, industrious, and judicious writer may make his talent the means of living.

CHAPTER XXV. [232]

BECOME AN AUTHOR—HIS REAL NAME A PROFOUND SECRET—HOW IT WAS DIVULGED—GREAT SUCCESS—ILLNESS—THE DOCTORS DISAGREE—ENGLISH IMITATIONS—CONDUCT OF A LONDON BOOKSELLER—OBJECTIONS TO PARLEY'S TALES—MOTHER GOOSE.

Though I was busily engaged in publishing various works, I found time to make my long-meditated experiment in the writing of books for children. The first attempt was made in 1827, and bore the title of the Tales of Peter Parley about America. No persons but my wife and one of my sisters were admitted to the secret: for, in the first place, I hesitated to believe that I was qualified to appear before the public as an author; and, in the next place, nursery literature had not then acquired the respect in the eyes of the world it now enjoys. It is since that period that persons of acknowledged genius—Scott, Dickens, Lamartine, Mary Howitt, in Europe; and Todd, Gallaudet, Abbott, Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Child, and others, in America—have stooped to the composition of books for children and youth.

I published my little book, and let it make its way. It came before the world untrumpeted, and for some months seemed not to attract the slightest attention. Suddenly I began to see notices of it in the papers all over the country, and in a year from the date of its publication it had become a [233] favorite. In 1828 I published the Tales of Peter Parley about Europe; in 1829, Parley's Winter Evening Tales; in 1830, Parley's Juvenile Tales, and Parley's Asia, Africa, Sun, Moon, and Stars. About this time the public guessed my secret. Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, to whom I am indebted for many kind offices in my literary career, first discovered and divulged it; yet I could have wished she had not done me this questionable favor. Though the authorship of the Parley books has been

to me a source of some gratification, you will see, in the sequel, that it has also subjected me to endless vexations.

I shall not enter into the details of my proceedings at this busy and absorbed period of my life. I had now obtained a humble position in literature, and was successful in such unambitious works as I attempted. I gave myself up almost wholly for about four years—that is, from 1828 to 1832—to authorship, generally writing fourteen hours a-day.—A part of the time I was entirely unable to read, and could write but little, on account of the weakness of my eyes. In my larger publications I employed persons to block out work for me: this was read to me, and then I put it into style, generally writing by dictation, my wife being my amanuensis. Thus embarrassed, I still, by dint of incessant toil, produced five or six volumes a-year, most of them small, but some of larger compass.

In the midst of these labors—that is, in the spring of 1832—I was suddenly attacked with symptoms which seemed to indicate a disease of the heart, rapidly advancing to a fatal termination. In the course of a fortnight I was so reduced as not to be able to mount a pair of stairs without help, and a short walk produced palpitation of the heart, so violent, in several [234] instances, as almost to deprive me of consciousness. There seemed no hope but in turning my back upon my business, and seeking a total change of scene and climate. In May I embarked for England, and after a few weeks reached Paris. I here applied to Baron Larroque, who, assisted by L'Herminier—both eminent in the treatment of diseases of the heart—subjected me to various experiments, but without the slightest advantage. At this period I was obliged to be carried upstairs, and never ventured to walk or ride alone, being constantly subject to nervous spasms, which often brought me to the verge of suffocation.

Despairing of relief here, I proceeded to London, and was carefully examined by Sir Benjamin Brodie. He declared that I had no organic disease; that my difficulty was nervous irritability; and that whereas the French physicians had interdicted wine, and required me to live on a light vegetable diet, I must feed well upon good roast beef, and take two generous glasses of port with my dinner! Thus encouraged, I passed on to Edinburgh, where I consulted Abercrombie, then at the height of his fame. He confirmed the views of Dr. Brodie, in the main; and, regarding the irregularity of my vital organs as merely functional, still told me that, without shortening my life, it would probably never be wholly removed. He told me of an instance in which a patient of his, who, having been called upon to testify before the committee of the House of Commons, in the trial of Warren Hastings, from mere embarrassment had been seized with palpitation of the heart, which, however, continued till his death, many years after. Even this sombre view of my case was then a relief. Four-and-twenty years have passed since that period, and thus far my experience has verified Dr. Abercombie's prediction. These nervous attacks pursue me to this [235] day: yet I have become familiar with them; and, regarding them only as troublesome visitors, I receive them patiently and bow them out as gently as I can.

After an absence of six months I returned to Boston, and, by the advice of my physician, took up my residence in the country. I built a house at Jamaica Plain, four miles from the city, and here I continued for more than twenty years. My health was partially restored, and I resumed my literary labors, which I continued steadily, from 1833 to 1850, with a few episodes of lecturing and legislating, three voyages to Europe, and an extensive tour to the South. It would be tedious and unprofitable, were I even to enumerate my various works, produced from the beginning to the present time. I may sum up the whole in a single sentence: I am the author and editor of about one hundred and seventy volumes, and of these seven millions have been sold!

I have said, that however the authorship of Parley's Tales has made me many friends, it has also subjected me to many annoyances. When I was in London, in 1832, I learned that Mr. Tegg, a prominent publisher there, had commenced the republication of Parley's Tales. I called upon him, and found that he had one of them actually in the press. The result of our interview was a contract, in which I engaged to prepare several of these works, which he agreed to publish, allowing me a small consideration. Four of these works I prepared on the spot, and after my return to America prepared and forwarded ten others. Some time after, I learned that the books, or at least a portion of them, had been published in London, and were very successful. I wrote [236] several letters to Mr. Tegg on the subject, but could get no reply.

Ten years passed away, and being in pressing need of all that I might fairly claim as my due, I went to London, and asked him to render me an account of his proceedings under the contract. I had previously learned, on inquiry, that he had indeed published four or five of the works, as we had agreed, but, taking advantage of these, which passed readily into extensive circulation, he proceed to set aside the contract, and to get up a series of publications upon the model of those I had prepared for him, giving them in the title-pages the name of Parley, and passing them off, by every artifice in his power, as the genuine works of that author. He had thus published over a dozen volumes, which he was circulating as Peter Parley's Library. The speculation, as I was told, had succeeded admirably; and I was assured that many thousand pounds of profit had been realized thereby.

To my request for an account of his stewardship the publisher replied, in general terms, that I was misinformed as to the success of the works in question; that, in fact, they had been a very indifferent speculation; that he found the original works were not adapted to his purpose, and he had consequently got up others; that he had created, by advertising and other means, an interest in these works, and had thus greatly benefited the name and fame of Parley; and, all things considered, he thought he had done more for me than I had for him: therefore, in his view, if we considered the account balanced, we should not be very far from a fair adjustment.

To this answer I made a suitable reply, but without obtaining the slightest satisfaction. The contract I had made was a hasty memorandum, and judicially, perhaps, of no binding effect on [237] him. And besides, I had no money to expend in litigation. A little reflection satisfied me that I was totally at his mercy: a fact of which his calm and collected manner assured me he was even more conscious than myself. The discussion was not prolonged. At the second interview he cut the whole matter short, by saying,—"Sir, I do not owe you a farthing: neither justice nor law requires me to pay you anything. Still, I am an old man, and have seen a good deal of life, and have learned to consider the feelings of others as well as my own. I will pay you four hundred pounds, and we will be quits! If we cannot do this, we can do nothing." In view of the whole case, this was as much as I expected, and so I accepted the proposition. I earnestly remonstrated with him against the enormity of making me responsible for works I never wrote, but as to all actual claims on the ground of the contract I gave him a receipt in full, and we parted.

It is not to be supposed that the annoyances arising from the falsification of the name of Parley, which I have just pointed out, have been the only obstacles which have roughened the current of my literary life. Not only the faults and imperfections of execution in my juvenile works—and no one knows them so well as myself—have been urged against them, but the whole theory on which they are founded has been often and elaborately impugned.

It is quite true, that when I wrote the first half-dozen of Parley's Tales I had formed no philosophy upon the subject: I simply used my experience with children in addressing them. I followed no models, I put on no harness of the schools, I pored over no learned examples. I imagined myself [238] on the floor with a group of boys and girls, and I wrote to them as I would have spoken to them. At a later period I had reflected on the subject, and embodied in a few simple lines the leading principle of what seemed to me the true art of teaching children,—and that is, to consider that their first ideas are simple and single, and formed of images of things palpable to the senses; and hence that these images are to form the staple of lessons to be communicated to them.

THE TEACHER'S LESSON.

I saw a child, some four years old,
Along a meadow stray;
Alone she went, uncheck'd, untold,
Her home not far away.

She gazed around on earth and sky,
Now paused, and now proceeded;
Hill, valley, wood, she passed them by
Unmarked, perchance unheeded.

And now gay groups of roses bright
In circling thickets bound her—
Yet on she went with footsteps light,
Still gazing all around her.

And now she paused, and now she
stooped,
And plucked a little flower;
A simple daisy 'twas, that drooped
Within a rosy bower.

The child did kiss the little gem,
And to her bosom press'd it;
And there she placed the fragile stem,
And with soft words caressed it.

[239]

I love to read a lesson true
From nature's open book—
And oft I learn a lesson new
From childhood's careless look.

Children are simple, loving, true—
'Tis God that made them so;
And would you teach them?—be so, too,
And stoop to what they know.

Begin with simple lessons, things
On which they love to look;
Flowers, pebbles, insects, birds on wings—
These are God's spelling-book!

And children know His A B C,
As bees where flowers are set;
Wouldst thou a skilful teacher be?
Learn then this alphabet.

From leaf, from page to page,
Guide thou thy pupil's look;

And when he says, with aspect sage,
"Who made this wondrous book?"

Point thou with reverend gaze to heaven,
And kneel in earnest prayer
That lessons thou hast humbly given
May lead thy pupil there!

From this commencement I proceeded, and came to the conclusion that in feeding the mind of children with facts, we follow the evident philosophy of nature and Providence; inasmuch as these had created all children to be ardent lovers of things they could see and hear, and feel and know. Thus I sought to teach them history, and biography, and geography, and all in the way in which nature would teach them,—that is, by a large use of the senses, and especially by the eye. I [240] selected as subjects for my books things capable of sensible representation, such as familiar animals, birds, trees; and of these I gave pictures, as a starting-point. The first line I wrote was, "Here I am; my name is Peter Parley;" and before I went further, gave an engraving representing my hero, as I wished him to be conceived by my pupils. Before I began to talk of a lion, I gave a picture of a lion; my object being, as you will perceive, to have the child start with a distinct image of what I was about to give an account of. Thus I secured his interest in the subject, and thus I was able to lead his understanding forward in the path of knowledge.

These views, of course, led me in a direction exactly opposite to the old theories in respect to nursery-books, in two respects. In the first place, it was thought that education should, at the very threshold, seek to spiritualize the mind, and lift it above sensible ideas, and to teach it to live in the world of imagination. A cow was very well to give milk, but when she got into a book she must jump over the moon; a little girl going to see her grandmother was well enough as a matter of fact, but to be suited to the purposes of instruction she must end her career by being eaten up by a wolf. My plan was, in short, deemed too utilitarian, too materialistic, and hence it was condemned by many persons, and among them the larger portion of those who had formed their tastes upon the old classics, from Homer down to Mother Goose!

This was one objection; another, was that I aimed at making education easy—thus bringing up the child in habits of receiving knowledge only as made into pap, and of course putting it out of his power to relish and digest the stronger meat, even when his constitution demanded it.

On these grounds, and still others, my little books met with opposition, sometimes even in grave [241] Quarterlies, and often in those sanctified publications, entitled "Journals of Education." In England, at the period that the name of Parley was most current—both in the genuine as well as the false editions—the feeling against my juvenile works was so strong among the conservatives, that an attempt was made to put them down by reviving the old nursery-books. In order to do this, a publisher in London reproduced these works, employing the best artists to illustrate them, and bringing them out in all the captivating luxuries of modern typography. Nay, such was the reverence at the time for the old favorites of the nursery, that a gentleman of the name of Halliwell expended a vast amount of patient research and antiquarian lore in hunting up and setting before the world the history of these performances, from "Hey diddle diddle" to

"A farmer went trotting upon his grey
mare—
Bumpety, bumpety, bump!"

To all this I made no direct reply; I ventured, however, to suggest my views in the following article inserted in Merry's Museum for August, 1846.

Dialogue

Dialogue

BETWEEN TIMOTHY AND HIS MOTHER.

Timothy. Mother! mother! do stop a minute, and hear me say my poetry!

Mother. Your poetry, my son? Who told you how to make poetry?

T. Oh, I don't know; but hear what I have made up. [242]

M. Well, go on.

T. Now don't you laugh; it's all mine. I didn't get a bit of it out of a book. Here it is!

"Higglety, pigglety, pop!
The dog has eat the mop;
The pig's in a hurry,
The cat's in a flurry—
Higglety, pigglety—pop!"

M. Well, go on.

T. Why, that's all. Don't you think it pretty good?

M. Really, my son, I don't see much sense in it.

T. Sense? Who ever thought of *sense*, in poetry? Why, mother, you gave me a book the other day, and it was all poetry, and I don't think there was a bit of sense in the whole of it. Hear me read. [*Reads.*]

"Hub a dub!
Three men in a tub—
And how do you think they got there?
The butcher,
The baker,
The candlestick maker,
They all jumped out of a rotten potato:
'Twas enough to make a man stare."

And here's another.

"A cat came fiddling out of a barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm;
She could sing nothing but fiddle cum fee
—
The mouse has married the humblebee—
Pipe, cat—dance, mouse—
We'll have a wedding at our good house!"

And here's another. [243]

"Hey, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon—
The little dog laughed
To see the craft,
And the dish ran after the spoon."

Now, mother, the book is full of such things as these, and I don't see any meaning in them.

M. Well, my son, I think as you do; they are really very absurd.

T. Absurd? Why, then, do you give me such things to read?

M. Let me ask you a question. Do you not love to read these rhymes, even though they are silly?

T. Yes, dearly.

M. Well, you have just learned to read, and I thought these jingles, silly as they are, might induce you to study your book, and make you familiar with reading.

T. I don't understand you, mother; but no matter.

"Higglety, pigglety, pop!
The dog has eat the mop;
The pig's in a hurry—"

M. Stop, stop, my son. I choose you should understand me.

T. But, mother, what's the use of understanding you?

"Higglety, pigglety, pop!"

M. Timothy!

T. Ma'am?

M. Listen to me, or you will have cause to repent it. Listen to what I say? I gave you the book to amuse you, and improve you in reading, not to form your taste in poetry. [244]

T. Well, mother, pray forgive me. I did not mean to offend you. But I really do love poetry, because it is so silly!

"Higglety, pigglety, pop!"

M. Don't say that again, Timothy!

T. Well, I won't; but I'll say something out of this pretty book you gave me.

"Doodledy, doodledy, dan!
I'll have a piper to be my good man—
And if I get less meat, I shall get game—
Doodledy, doodledy, dan!"

M. That's enough, my son.

T. But, dear mother, do hear me read another.

"We're all in the dumps,
For diamonds are trumps—
The kittens are gone to St. Paul's—
The babies are bit,
The moon's in a fit—
And the houses are built without walls."

M. I do not wish to hear any more.

T. One more; one more, dear mother!

"Round about—round about—
Maggoty pie—
My father loves good ale,
And so do I."

Don't you like that, mother?

M. No; it is too coarse, and unfit to be read or spoken.

T. But it is here in this pretty book you gave me, and I like it very much, mother. And here is a poem, which I think very fine. [245]

"One-ery, two-ery,
Ziccary zan,
Hollow bone, crack a bone—
Ninery ten:
Spittery spat,
It must be done,
Twiddledum, twiddledum,
Twenty-one,
Hink, spink, the puddings—"

M. Stop, stop, my son. Are you not ashamed to say such things?

T. Ashamed? No, mother. Why should I be? It's all printed here as plain as day. Ought I to be ashamed to say any thing that I find in a pretty book you have given me? Just hear the rest of this.

"Hink, spink, the puddings—"

M. Give me the book, Timothy. I see that I have made a mistake; it is not a proper book for you.

T. Well, you may take the book; but I can say the rhymes, for I have learned them all by heart.

"Hink, spink, the puddings—"

M. Timothy, how dare you!

T. Well, mother, I won't say it, if you don't wish me to. But mayn't I say—

"Higglety, pigglety, pop!"

M. I had rather you would not.

T. And "Doodledy, doodledy, dan"—mayn't I say that? [246]

M. No.

T. Nor "Hey, diddle, diddle?"

M. I do not wish you to say any of those silly things.

T. Dear me, what shall I do?

M. I had rather you would learn some good, sensible things.

T. Such as what?

M. Watts's Hymns, and Original Hymns.

T. Do you call them sensible things? I hate 'em.

"Doodledy, doodledy, dan!"

M. [*Aside.*] Dear, dear, what shall I do? The boy has got his head turned with these silly rhymes. It was really a very unwise thing to put a book into his hands, so full of nonsense and vulgarity. These foolish rhymes stick like burs in his mind, and the coarsest and vilest seem to be best remembered. I must remedy this mistake; but I see it will take all my wit to do it. [*Aloud.*] Timothy, you must give me up this book, and I will get you another.

T. Well, mother, I am sorry to part with it; but I don't care so much about it, as I know all the best of it by heart.

"Hink, spink, the puddings stink"—

M. Timothy, you'll have a box on the ear, if you repeat that!

T. Well, I suppose I can say,

"Round about—round about—
Maggoty pie—"

M. You go to bed! [247]

T. Well, if I must, I must. Good-night, mother!

"Higglety, pigglety, pop!
The dog has eat the mop;
The cat's in a flurry,
The cow's in a hurry,
Higglety, pigglety, pop!"

Good-night, mother!

I trust, that no one will gather from this that I condemn rhymes for children. I know that there is a certain music in them that delights the ear of childhood. Nor am I insensible to the fact that in Mother Goose's Melodies, there is frequently a sort of humor in the odd jingle of sound and sense. There is, furthermore, in many of them, an historical significance, which may please the profound student who puzzles it out; but what I affirm is, that many of these pieces are coarse, vulgar, offensive, and it is precisely these portions that are apt to stick to the minds of children. And besides, if, as is common, such a book is the first that a child becomes acquainted with, it is likely to give him a low idea of the purpose and meaning of books, and to beget a taste for mere jingles.

With these views, I sought to prepare lessons which combined the various elements suited to children—a few of them even including frequent, repetitious rhymes—yet at the same time presenting rational ideas and gentle kindly sentiments. Will you excuse me for giving you one example—my design being to show you how this may be done, and how even a very unpromising subject is capable of being thus made attractive to children.

[248]

THE TOAD'S STORY.

Oh, gentle stranger, stop,
And hear poor little Hop
Just sing a simple song,
Which is not very long—
Hip, hip, hop.

I am an honest toad,
Living here by the road;
Beneath a stone I dwell,
In a snug little cell,
Hip, hip, hop.

It may seem a sad lot
To live in such a spot—
But what I say is true—
I have fun as well as you!
Hip, hip, hop.

Just listen to my song—
I sleep all winter long,
But in spring I peep out,
And then I jump about—
Hip, hip, hop.

When the rain patters down,
I let it wash my crown,
And now and then I sip
A drop with my lip:
Hip, hip, hop.

When the bright sun is set,
And the grass with dew is wet,
I sally from my cot,
To see what's to be got,
Hip, hip, hop.

And now I wink my eye,
And now I catch a fly,
And now I take a peep, [249]
And now and then I sleep:
Hip, hip, hop.

And this is all I do—
And yet they say it's true,
That the toady's face is sad,
And his bite is very bad!
Hip, hip, hop.

Oh, naughty folks they be,
That tell such tales of me,
For I'm an honest toad,
Just living by the road:
Hip, hip, hop!

These were my ideas in regard to first books—toy-books—those which are put into the hands of children to teach them the art of reading. As to books of amusement and instruction, to follow these, I gave them Parley's tales of travels, of history, of nature and art, together with works designed to cultivate a love of truth, charity, piety, and virtue, and I sought to make these so attractive as to displace the bad books to which I have already alluded—the old monstrosities, Puss in Boots, Jack the Giant-killer, and others of that class. A principal part of my machinery was the character of Peter Parley—a kind-hearted old man, who had seen much of the world, and, not presuming to undertake to instruct older people, loved to sit down and tell his stories to children. Beyond these juvenile works, I prepared a graduated series upon the same general plan, reaching up to books for the adult library.

It is true that occasionally I wrote and published a book aside from this, my true vocation: thus I edited the Token, and published two or three volumes of poetry. But, out of all my works, about a [250] hundred and twenty are professedly juvenile; and forty are for my early readers advanced to maturity. It is true that I have written openly, avowedly, to attract and to please children; yet it has been my design at the same time to enlarge the circle of knowledge, to invigorate the understanding, to strengthen the moral nerve, to purify and exalt the imagination. Such have been my aims: how far I have succeeded, I must leave to the judgment of others. One thing I may perhaps claim, and that is, my example and my success have led others, of higher gifts than my own, to enter the ample and noble field of juvenile instruction by means of books; many of them have no doubt surpassed me, and others will still follow surpassing them. I look upon the art of writing for children and youth, advanced as it has been of late years, still as but just begun.

CHAPTER XXVI. [251]

CHILDREN MY FIRST PATRONS—A VISIT TO NEW ORLEANS—FEELINGS OF HUMILIATION—THE MICE EAT MY PAPERS—A WRONG CALCULATION.

If thus I met with opposition, I had also my success, nay, I must say, my triumphs. My first patrons were the children themselves, then the mothers, and then, of course, the fathers. In the early part of the year 1846 I made a trip from Boston to the South, returning by the way of the Mississippi and the Ohio. I received many a kind welcome under the name of the fictitious hero whom I had made to tell my stories. Sometimes, it is true, I underwent rather sharp cross-questioning, and frequently was made to feel that I held my honors by a rather questionable title. I, who had undertaken to teach truth, was forced to confess that fiction lay at the foundation of my scheme! My innocent young readers, however, did not suspect me: they had taken all I had said as positively true, and I was, of course, Peter Parley himself.

"Did you really write that book about Africa?" said a black-eyed, dark-haired girl of some eight years old, at Mobile.

I replied in the affirmative.

"And did you really get into prison there!"

"No; I was never in Africa."

"Never in Africa?"

"Never." [252]

"Well, then, why did you say you had been there?"

On another occasion—I think at Savannah—a gentleman called upon me, introducing his two grandchildren, who were anxious to see Peter Parley. The girl rushed up to me, and kissed me at once. We were immediately the best friends in the world. The boy, on the contrary, held himself aloof, and ran his eye over me, up and down, from top to toe. He then walked round, surveying me with the most scrutinizing gaze. After this he sat down, and during the interview took no

further notice of me. At parting he gave me a keen look, but said nothing. The next day the gentleman called and told me that his grandson, as they were on their way home, said to him,—

"Grandfather, I wouldn't have anything to do with that man; he ain't Peter Parley."

"How do you know that?" said the grandfather.

"Because," said the boy, "he hasn't got his foot bound up, and he don't walk with a crutch!"

On my arrival at New Orleans I was kindly received, and had the honors of a public welcome. The proceedings were gratifying to me; and, even if they stood alone, would make amends for much misunderstanding and opposition.

Hitherto I have spoken chiefly of the books I have written for children, the design of which was as much to amuse as to instruct them. These comprise the entire series called Parley's Tales, with many others, bearing Parley's name. As to works for education—school-books, including readers, histories, geographies, &c., books for popular reading, and a wilderness of prose and poetry admitting of no classification—it is unnecessary to recount them. This is the closing chapter of my [253]
literary history, and I have little indeed to say, and that is a confession.

In looking at the long list of my publications, in reflecting upon the large numbers that have been sold, I feel far more of humiliation than of triumph. If I have sometimes taken to heart the soothing flatteries of the public, it has ever been speedily succeeded by the conviction that my life has been, on the whole, a series of mistakes, and especially in that portion of it which has been devoted to authorship. I have written too much, and have done nothing really well. I know, better than any one can tell me, that there is nothing in this long catalogue that will give me a permanent place in literature. A few things may struggle upon the surface for a time, but—like the last leaves of a tree in autumn, forced at length to quit their hold and drop into the stream—even these will disappear, and my name and all I have done will be forgotten.

A recent event, half-ludicrous and half-melancholy, has led me into this train of reflection. On going to Europe in 1851 I sent my books and papers to a friend, to be kept till my return. Among them was a large box of business documents—letters, accounts, receipts, bills paid, notes liquidated—comprising the transactions of several years, long since passed away. Shortly after my return to New York, in preparing to establish myself and family, I caused these things to be sent to me. On opening the particular box just mentioned, I found it a complete mass of shavings, shreds, fragments. My friend had put it carefully away in the upper loft of his barn, and there it became converted into a universal mouse-nest! The history of whole generations of the mischievous little rogues was still visible; beds, galleries, play-grounds, birth-places, and even [254]
graves, were in a state of excellent preservation. Several wasted and shrivelled forms of various sizes—the limbs curled up, the eyes extinct, the teeth disclosed, the long, slender tails straight and stiffened—testified to the joys and sorrows of the races that had flourished there.

On exploring this mass of ruins, I discovered here and there a file of letters eaten through, the hollow cavity evidently having been the happy and innocent cradle of childhood to these destroyers. Sometimes I found a bed lined with paid bills, and sometimes the pathway of a gallery paved with liquidated accounts. What a mass of thoughts, of feelings, cares, anxieties, were thus made the plunder of these thoughtless creatures! In examining the papers I found, for instance, letters from N. P. Willis, written five-and-twenty years ago, with only "Dear Sir" at the beginning, and "Yours truly" at the end. I found epistles of nearly equal antiquity from many other friends—sometimes only the heart eaten out, and sometimes the whole body gone.

For all purposes of record, these papers were destroyed. I was alone, for my family had not yet returned from Europe: it was the beginning of November, and I began to light my fire with these relics. For two whole days I pored over them, buried in the reflections which the reading of the fragments suggested. Absorbed in this dreary occupation, I forgot the world without, and was only conscious of bygone scenes which came up in review before me. It was as if I had been in the tomb, and was reckoning with the past. How little was there in all that I was thus called to remember, save of care, and struggle, and anxiety; and how were all the thoughts, and feelings, [255]
and experiences, which seemed mountains in their day, levelled down to the merest grains of dust! A note of hand—perchance of a thousand dollars—what a history rose up in recollection as I looked over its scarcely legible fragments!—what clouds of anxiety had its approaching day of maturity cast over my mind! How had I been, with a trembling heart, to some bank-president—he a god, and I a craven worshipper—making my offering of some other note for a discount, which might deliver me from the wrath to come! With what anxiety have I watched the lips of the oracle, for my fate was in his hands! A simple monosyllable—yes or no—might save or ruin me. What a history was in that bit of paper!—and yet it was destined only to serve as stuffing for the beds of vermin.

I ought, no doubt, to have smiled at all this; but I confess it made me serious. Nor was it the most humiliating part of my reflections. I have been too familiar with care, conflict, disappointment, to mourn over them very deeply, now that they were passed. The seeming fatuity of such a mass of labors as these papers indicated, compared with their poor results, however it might humble, could not distress me. But there were many things suggested by these letters, all in rags as they were, that caused positive humiliation. They revived in my mind the vexations, misunderstandings, controversies of other days; and now, reviewed in the calm light of time, I could discover the mistakes of judgment, of temper, of policy, that I had made. I turned back to my letter-book; I reviewed my correspondence; and I came to the conclusion that in almost every difficulty which had arisen in my path, even if others were wrong, I was not altogether right: in most cases, prudence, conciliation, condescension, might have averted these evils. Thus the [256]

thorns which had wounded me and others too, as it seemed, had generally sprung up from the seeds I had sown, or had thriven upon the culture my own hands had unwisely bestowed.

At first I felt disturbed at the ruin which had been wrought in these files of papers. Hesitating and doubtful, I consigned them one by one to the flames. At last the work was complete; all had perished, and the feathery ashes had leaped up in the strong draught of the chimney and disappeared for ever. I felt a relief at last; I smiled at what had happened; I warmed my chill fingers over the embers; I felt that a load was off my shoulders. "At least," said I in my heart, "these things are now passed; my reckoning is completed, the account is balanced, the responsibilities of those bygone days are liquidated; let me burden my bosom with them no more!" Alas, how fallacious my calculation! A few months only had passed, when I was called to contend with a formidable claim which came up from the midst of transactions to which these extinct papers referred, and against which they constituted my defence. As it chanced, I was able to meet and repel it by documents which survived; but the event caused me deep reflection. I could not but remark that, however we may seek to cover our lives with forgetfulness, their records still exist, and these may come up against us when we have no vouchers to meet the charges which are thus presented. Who, then, will be our helper?

CHAPTER XXVII.

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MAKE A SPEECH—LECTURE ON IRELAND—POLITICS—PERSONAL ATTACKS—BECOME A SENATOR—THE "FIFTEEN-GALLON LAW"—A PAMPHLET IN ITS FAVOR—"MY NEIGHBOR SMITH"—A POLITICAL CAREER UNPROFITABLE.

The first public speech I ever made was at St. Albans, in England, in the year 1832, at a grand celebration of the passing of the Reform Bill; having accompanied thither Sir Francis Vincent, the representative in Parliament of that ancient borough. More than three thousand people, men, women, and children, gathered from the town and the vicinity, were feasted at a long table, set out in the principal street of the place. After this feast there were various sports, such as donkey-races, climbing a greased pole, and the like. At six o'clock, about one hundred and fifty of the gentry and leading tradesmen and mechanics sat down to a dinner, Sir Francis presiding. The President of the United States was toasted, and I was called upon to respond. Entirely taken by surprise, for not a word had been said to me upon the subject, I made a speech. I could never recall what I said: all I remember is a whirl of thoughts and emotions as I rose, occasional cries of "Hear, hear!" as I went on, and a generous clapping of hands as I concluded. Whether this last [258] was because I really made a good hit, or from another principle—

"The best of Graham's speeches was *his last*"—

I am totally unable to say.

My next public appearance was in a lecture at the Tremont Temple, in Boston; my subject being "Ireland and the Irish." Although my discourse was written, and pretty well committed to memory, yet for several days before the time appointed for its delivery arrived, when I thought of my engagement, my heart failed me. When the hour came I went to the door of the room, but on seeing the throng of persons collected I felt that my senses were deserting me: turning on my heel, I went out, and going to an apothecary's, fortified myself with some peppermint lozenges. When I got back, the house was waiting with impatience. I was immediately introduced to the audience by Dr. Walter Channing, and stepping upon the platform, began. After the first sentence, I was perfectly at my ease. I afterwards delivered this lecture more than forty times.

In the autumn of 1836 there was a large evening party at Jamaica Plain, at the house of Mrs. G——, the lady-patroness of the village. Among the notable men present was Daniel Webster, whom I had frequently seen, but to whom I was now introduced for the first time. He spoke to me of many things, and at last of politics, suggesting that the impending presidential election involved most important questions, and he deemed it the duty of every man to reflect upon the subject, and to exert his influence as his conscience might dictate.

Since my residence in Massachusetts, a period of nearly eight years, I had been engrossed in my business, and had never even voted. Just at this time I was appointed, without any suggestion of [259] my own, one of the delegates to the Whig Convention to nominate a person to represent us, the Ninth Congressional District, in Congress. This was to take place at Medway, at the upper end of the district. I went accordingly, and on the first ballot was the highest candidate, save one—Mr. Hastings, of Mendon. I declined, of course, and he was unanimously nominated.

The canvass that ensued was a very animated one, Mr. Van Buren being the democratic candidate for the presidency. He was considered as the heir-apparent of the policy of Gen. Jackson, and had, indeed, promised, if elected, to walk in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor. Without the personal popularity of that remarkable man, he became the target for all the hostility which his measures had excited. He was, however, elected, but to be overwhelmed with a whirlwind of discontent and opposition four years after.

The candidate for Congress in our district, in opposition to Mr. Hastings, was Alexander H. Everett, who had been hitherto a conspicuous Whig, and who had signalized himself by the ability and bitterness of his attacks on General Jackson and his administration. He had singled out Mr.

Van Buren, for especial vehemence of reproach, because, being Secretary of State at the time, Mr. Everett was superseded as Minister to Spain without the customary courtesy of an official note advising him of the appointment of his successor. To the amazement of the public in general, and his friends in particular, on the 8th of January, 1836, Mr. Everett delivered an oration before the democracy of Salem, in which—ignoring the most prominent portion of his political life—he came out with the warmest eulogies upon General Jackson and his administration! About the first [260]
of May, the precise period when it was necessary, in order to render him eligible to Congress in the Ninth District, he took up his residence within its precincts, and, as was easily foreseen, was the democratic candidate for Congress.

The Whig District Committee, of which I was one, and Charles Bowen (Mr. Everett's publisher), another, issued a pamphlet, collating and contrasting Mr. Everett's two opinions of General Jackson's policy, and especially of Mr. Van Buren—the one flatly contradicting the other, and, in point of date, being but two or three years apart. This was circulated over the towns of the district. It was a terrible document, and Mr. Everett felt its force. One of them was left at his own door in the general distribution. This he took as a personal insult, and meeting Bowen, knocked him over the head with his umbrella. Bowen clutched him by the throat, and would have strangled him but for the timely interference of a bystander.

I had been among Mr. Everett's personal friends, but he now made me the object of special attack. In a paper, which then circulated a good deal in the district, I was severely lashed under the name of Peter Parley, not because I was a candidate for office, but because I was chairman of the Whig District Committee. I recollect that one day some rather scandalous thing came out against me in the editorial columns of this journal, and feeling very indignant, I went to see the editor. I did not know him personally, but from occasionally reading his paper I had got the idea that he was a very monster of violence. He was not at the office, but such was my irritation and impatience that I went to his house. I rang, and a beautiful black-eyed girl, some eight years old, [261]
came to the door. I asked if Mr. H—— was in? "Mother," said the child, in a voice of silver, "is father at home?" At this moment another child, and still younger, its bullet-pate head all over curls, came to the door. Then a mild and handsome woman came, and to my inquiry she said that her husband was out, but would return in a few moments.

My rage was quelled in an instant. "So," said I to myself, "these children call that man father, and this woman calls him husband. After all, he cannot be such a monster as I have fancied him, with such a home." I turned on my heel and went away, my ill-humor having totally subsided. Some two years after I told him this anecdote, and we had a good-humored laugh over it. Both of us had learned to discriminate between political controversy and personal animosity.

The attacks made upon me during this canvass had an effect different from what was intended. I was compelled to take an active part in the election, and deeming the success of my party essential to my own defence, I naturally made more vigorous efforts for that object. Mr. Everett was defeated by a large majority, and the Whig candidate triumphed. At the same time I was chosen a member of the legislature for Roxbury-Jamaica Plain, where I resided, being a parish of that town. The next year I was a candidate for the Senate, in competition with Mr. Everett, and was elected. In this manner I was forced into politics, and was indebted mainly to opposition for my success.

During the ensuing session of the legislature, the winter of 1837-8, the famous "Fifteen-Gallon Law" was passed—that is, a law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in less quantities than [262]
fifteen gallons. The county I represented was largely in favor of the measure, and I voted for it, though I was by no means insensible to the agitation it was certain to produce. I had determined not to be a candidate for re-election, and therefore considered myself free to engage in the discussion which preceded the next election, and which, of course, mainly turned upon this law. Among other things, I wrote a little pamphlet, entitled Five Letters to my Neighbor Smith, touching the Fifteen-Gallon Jug, the main design of which was to persuade the people of Massachusetts to make the experiment, and see whether such a restraint upon the sale of intoxicating drinks would not be beneficial. This was published anonymously, and my intention was to have the authorship remain unknown. It, however, had an enormous sale—a hundred thousand copies—in the course of a few months, and curiosity soon found me out.

Now in the village of Jamaica Plain I had a neighbor, though not by the name of Smith—a rich liquor-dealer, who did his business in Boston—a very respectable man, but a vehement opposer of the "Fifteen-Gallon Law." As the election approached, the citizens of the state were drawn out in two parties—those in favor of prohibition on the one side, and the men in favor of free liquor on the other. My neighbor was the wealthiest, the most respectable, and the most influential of the latter. He insisted, that by "My Neighbor Smith" I meant him; and though I had said nothing disagreeable of that personage, but on the contrary, had drawn his portrait in very amiable colors, he held that it was a malicious personal attack. In vain did I deny the charge, and point to the fact that the residence, character, and qualities of my fictitious hero were inapplicable to [263]
him. Anxious to be persecuted, he insisted upon it that he was persecuted.

At the county convention, which took place some two months prior to this election, I declined being a candidate. The members present, however, clearly discerning the gathering storm, refused to release me, and I was forced to accept the nomination. The election was to take place on Monday, in November. On the Saturday previous there was issued in Boston a pamphlet, entitled the Cracked Jug, a personal and political attack upon me, written with great malice and some ability. It was scattered, like snow-flakes, all over the country; and was, I suspect, the Sunday reading of all the tipplers and taverners of the country. The bar-room critics esteemed it superior to anything which had appeared since the Letters of Junius, and, of course, considered

me annihilated.

On Monday, election-day, my family were insulted in the streets of Jamaica Plain, and as I went into the Town Hall to cast my vote I heard abundance of gibes cast at me from beneath lowering beavers. The result was, that there was no choice of senators in the county. The election, when the people had thus failed to fill their places, fell upon the legislature, and I was chosen. The storm gradually passed away. The "Fifteen-Gallon Law" was repealed, but it nearly overturned the Whig party in the state, which, being in the majority, was made responsible for it. I deemed it necessary to reply to my Neighbor Smith's Cracked Jug, and he rejoined. What seemed at the time a deadly personal struggle, was, ere long, forgotten; neither party, I believe, carrying, in his character or his feelings, any of the scars inflicted during the battle. Both had, in some sort, [264] triumphed; both, in some sort, been beaten; both could, therefore, afford to return to the amicable relations of village neighborhood.

In the autumn of 1840 the Whigs nominated William Henry Harrison as the candidate for the presidency, in opposition to Mr. Van Buren. He had held various civil and military trusts, in which he had displayed courage, wisdom, and patriotism. His personal character was eminently winning to the people, being marked with benevolence and simplicity. He had long retired from public life, and for several years had lived as a farmer on the "North Bend" of the Ohio, near Cincinnati. The Democrats ridiculed him as drinking hard cider and living in a log cabin. The masses, resenting this as coming from those who, having the Government spoils, were rioting in the White House on champagne, took these gibes, and displayed them as their mottoes and symbols upon their banners. They gathered in barns, as was meet for the friends of the farmer of North Bend, using songs and speeches as flails, threshing his enemies with a will. The spirit spread over mountain and valley, and in every part of the country men were seen leaving their customary employments to assemble in multitudinous conventions. Many of these gatherings numbered twenty thousand persons.

During this animated canvass I was not a candidate for office, yet I took part in the great movement, and made about a hundred speeches in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Everybody, then, could make a speech, and everybody could sing a song. Orators sprang up like mushrooms, and the gift of tongues was not more universal than the gift of music.

From this period I have taken no active part in politics. In reviewing the past, while duly [265] appreciating the honor conferred by the confidence bestowed upon me by the citizens who gave me their suffrages, I still regard my political career as an unprofitable, nay, an unhappy episode, alien to my literary position and pursuits, and every way injurious to my interests and my peace of mind. It gave me painful glimpses into the littleness, the selfishness, the utter quackery of a large portion of those politicians who lead, or seem to lead, the van of parties; and who, pretending to be guided by patriotism, are usually only using principles and platforms as means to carry them into office. As some compensation for this, it has also led me to a conviction that the great mass of the people are governed by patriotic motives, though even with these I have often noted curious instances in which the public interests were forgotten in a desire to achieve some selfish end.

CHAPTER XXVIII. [266]

AN APPOINTED U.S. CONSUL TO PARIS—LOUIS XVIII.—A FEW JOTTINGS UPON FRENCH NOTABILITIES—CURE FOR HYDROCEPHALUS—UNSETTLED STATE OF THINGS IN PARIS.

In the autumn of 1846, I went with my family to Paris, partly for literary purposes, and partly also to give my children advantages of education, which, in consequence of my absorbing cares for a series of years, they had been denied. Here they remained for nearly two years, while I returned home to attend to my affairs, spending the winters, however, with them.

Toward the close of 1849 I removed to New York, to execute certain literary engagements. These completed, I went, in December 1850, to Washington, taking my family with me. Here we remained for three months, when, having received the appointment of United States Consul to Paris, I returned to New York, and, after due preparation, sailed on the 5th of April, 1851, to enter upon the official duties which thus devolved upon me.

About the middle of April, 1851, I arrived in Paris, and soon after took charge of the Consulate there. I have frequently been in this gay city, and I now propose to gather up my recollections of it, and select therefrom a few items which may fill up the blank that yet remains in my story.

I first visited Paris in January, 1824, as I have told you. At the time I first arrived here, this city [267] was very different from what it now is. Louis XVIII. was upon the throne, and had occupied it for nine years. During this period he had done almost nothing to repair the state of waste and dilapidation in which the Allies had left it. These had taken down the statue of Napoleon on the column of the Place Vendôme, and left its pedestal vacant; the king had followed up the reform and erased the offensive name of the exiled Emperor from the public monuments, and put his own, Louis XVIII., in their place; he had caused a few churches to be repaired, and some pictures of the Virgin to be painted and placed in their niches. But ghastly mounds of rubbish, the wrecks of demolished edifices; scattered heaps of stones at the foot of half-built walls of buildings,—

destined never to be completed,—these and other unsightly objects were visible on every hand, marking the recent history of Napoleon, overthrown in the midst of his mighty projects, and leaving his name and his works to be desecrated alike by a foreign foe and a more bitter domestic adversary.

The king, Louis XVIII., was a man of good sense and liberal mind, for one of his race; but he was wholly unfit to administer the government. He was a sort of monster of obesity, and, at the time I speak of, having lost the use of his lower limbs, he could not walk, and was trundled about the palace of the Tuileries in a wheelchair. I have often seen him let down in this, through the arch in the south-eastern angle of the palace, into his coach; and on returning from his ride, again taken up; and all this more like a helpless barrel of beef than a sovereign. Had the Allies intended to make Legitimacy at once odious and ridiculous, they could not better have contrived it than by [268] squatting down this obese imbecile extinguisher upon the throne of France, as the successor of Napoleon!

The Parisians are, however, a philosophic race: as they could not help themselves, they did not spend their lives like children, in profitless poutings. They had their jokes, and among these, they were accustomed to call Louis Dix-huit, "*Louis des huîtres*"—a tolerable pun, which was equivalent to giving him the familiar title of "Oyster Louis." Deeming it their birthright to have three or four hours of pleasure every day, whoever may be in power, they still frequented the promenades, the boulevards, and the theatres.

I cannot, perhaps, do better than transcribe a few passages from the hasty jottings I made at the time:—

"February 14.—Went to a meeting of the Société Philomatique, composed of members of the Institute; saw Fourier, the famous geometrician and physician: Thénard, a famous chemist, associated with Gay-Lussac: Poisson, one of the first mathematicians in Europe; and Géoffroy St. Hilaire, a zoologist, second only to Cuvier.

"The proceedings were conducted with order and simplicity, forming a striking contrast to the pompous declamation I heard in London, at the Society of Arts, upon hatching eggs.

"February 16.—Went to a meeting of the Institute, held in the Hôtel Mazarin: one hundred and fifty members present; Arago president. He is tall, broad-shouldered, and imposing in appearance, with a dark, swarthy complexion, and a black, piercing eye. Lamarck, the famous writer on natural history—old, infirm, blind—was led in by another member, a distinguished entomologist, whose name I have forgotten: Fontaine, the architect; tall, homely, and aged: Gay- [269] Lussac, a renowned chemist, under forty, active, fiery in debate: Cuvier, rather a large man, red face, eyes small, very near-sighted; eyes near together and oddly appearing and disappearing; features acute, hair grey, long, and careless: he spoke several times, and with great pertinency and effect; Lacroix, the mathematician: Laplace, the most famous living astronomer; tall, thin, and sharp-featured—reminded me of the portraits of Voltaire; he is about seventy-five, feeble, yet has all his mental faculties.

"The principal discussion related to gasometers, the police of Paris having asked the opinion of the Institute as to the safety of certain new kinds, lately introduced. The subject excited great interest, and the debate was quite animated. Thénard, Gay-Lussac, Girard, Laplace, Cuvier, and others, engaged in the debate. Nearly all expressed themselves with great ease and even volubility. They were occasionally vehement, and when excited several spoke at once, and the president was obliged often to ring his bell to preserve order.

"It was strange and striking to see so many old men, just on the borders of the grave, still retaining such ardor for science as to appear at a club like this, and enter with passion into all the questions that came up. Such a spectacle is not to be seen elsewhere on the earth. The charms of science generally fade to the eye of threescore and ten: few passions except piety and avarice survive threescore. It is evident, in studying this Association, that the highest and most ardent exercises of the mind are here stimulated by the desire of glory, which is the reward of success. One thing struck me forcibly in this assembly, and that was, the utter absence of all French foppery in dress among the members. Their attire was plain black, and generally as [270] simple as that of so many New England clergymen.

"In the evening went to the Théâtre Français, to see Talma in the celebrated tragedy of 'Sylla,' by Jouy. Do not well understand the French, but could see that the acting is very masterly. In the passionate parts there was a display of vigor, but at other times the performance was quiet and natural, without any of the stage exaggeration I am accustomed to. Most of the scenes were such as might actually take place under the circumstances indicated in the play. Talma is said to resemble Napoleon in person: he certainly looked very much like his portraits. His hair was evidently arranged to favor the idea of resemblance to the Emperor. He is a very handsome man, and comes up to my idea of a great actor.

"February 20.—Went to see a new comedy by Casimir Delavigne, 'L'Ecole des Vieillards.' Talma and Mademoiselle Mars played the two principal parts. The piece consisted of a succession of rather long dialogues, without any change of scenery. Talma is inimitable in the character of a refined but somewhat imbecile man, who has passed the prime of life; and Mademoiselle Mars is, beyond comparison, the most graceful and pleasing of actresses. I am struck with the strict propriety, the refinement even, of the manners of the audience.

"February 21st.—Went to the Hospital of La Charité. Saw Laennec, with his pupils, visiting the patients. He makes great use of the stethoscope, which is a wooden tube applied to the body, and put to the ear; by the sound, the state of the lungs and the vital organs is ascertained. It is like a

telescope, by which the interior of the body is perceived, only that the ear is used instead of the eye. It is deemed a great improvement. Laennec is the inventor, and has high reputation in the treatment of diseases of the chest. He has learned to ascertain the condition of the lungs by thumping on the breast and back of the patient, and putting the ear to the body at the same time. [271]

"The whole hospital was neat and clean; bedsteads of iron. French medical practice very light; few medicines given; nursing is a great part of the treatment.

"Same day, went to Hôtel Dieu, a medical and surgical hospital. Saw Dupuytren and his pupils visiting the patients. He holds the very first rank as a surgeon. His operations are surprisingly bold and skilful. Edward C——, of Philadelphia, who is here studying medicine, told me a good anecdote of him. He has a notion that he can instantly detect hydrocephalus in a patient from the manner in which he carries his head. One day, while he was in the midst of his scholars at the hospital, he saw a common sort of man standing at a distance, among several persons who had come for medical advice. Dupuytren's eye fell upon him, and he said to his pupils,—'Do you see yonder that fellow that has his hand to his face, and carries his head almost on his shoulder? Now, take notice: that man has hydrocephalus. Come here, my good fellow!'

"The man thus called came up. 'Well,' said Dupuytren, 'I know what ails you; but come, tell us about it yourself. What is the matter with you?'

"'I've got the toothache!' was the reply.

"'Take that,' said Dupuytren, giving him a box on the ear; 'and go to the proper department and have it pulled out!'"

I was again in Paris in the summer of 1832. Great changes had taken place since 1824. Louis XVIII. was dead; Charles X. had succeeded; and, after a brief reign, had been driven away by the revolution of the "Three Glorious Days." Louis Philippe was now on the throne. On the 29th of July, and the two following days, we saw the celebration of the event which had thus changed the dynasty of France. It consisted of a grand fête, in the Champs Elysées, closed by a most imposing military spectacle, in which eighty thousand troops, extending from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place Vendôme, marched before the admiring throng. Louis Philippe was himself on horseback as commander-in-chief, and such was his popularity among the masses, that, in many instances, I saw men in blouses rush up and grasp his hand, and insist upon shaking it. Sixteen years after I saw him hustled into a cab, and flying from the mob for his life—his family scattered, and he but too happy to get safe to England in the disguise of a sailor! [272]

As I have said, I established my family in Paris in 1846; that winter and the following I was also there. I remember that on a certain Monday in February, 1848, I went up to see our countrywoman, the Marchioness Lavalette, to arrange with her about an introduction she had promised me to Guizot. She was not at home, but as I was coming down the hill from the Place St. George, I met her in her carriage. She asked me to walk back to her house, and I did so. I observed that she was much agitated, and asked her the cause. "We are going to have trouble!" said she. "I have just been to the Chambers: the ministry have determined to stop the meeting of the Liberals to-morrow; the proclamation is already being printed."

"Well, and what then?" said I.

"Another 'Three Glorious Days!'" [273]

To this I replied that I conceived her fears groundless, that Louis Philippe appeared to me strong in the confidence of the people; that he was noted for his prudence and sagacity; that Guizot, his prime minister, was a man of great ability; that the whole cabinet, indeed, were distinguished for their judgment and capacity. The lady shook her head and rejoined,—

"I know Paris better than you do. We are on the eve of an earthquake!"

Soon after this I took my leave. What speedily ensued may best be told in another chapter, by a few extracts from a letter I addressed to a friend in Boston at the time.

CHAPTER XXIX. [274]

LOUIS PHILIPPE AND THE REVOLUTION—LIST OF GRIEVANCES—THE MOB AT THE MADELEINE—BARRICADES—"DOWN WITH GUIZOT!"—THE FIGHT COMMENCED—FLIGHT OF THE KING AND QUEEN—SCENE IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES—SACK OF THE TUILERIES.

PARIS, March 14th, 1848.

It may be well to state a few particulars as to the political condition of France at the moment of the revolt.

Louis Philippe commenced his career under fair auspices, and for a time everything promised a happy fulfilment of what seemed his duty and his destiny. But by degrees a great change came over the monarch; the possession of power seduced his heart, and turned his head; and forgetting his pledges, and blind to his true interest, he set himself to building up a dynasty that should hand down his name and fame to posterity.

It seemed, at a superficial glance, that he might realize his dream. He had acquired the reputation of being the most sagacious monarch of his time. He had improved and embellished the capital; on all sides his "image and superscription" were seen in connection with works of beauty and utility. France was happier than the adjacent countries. The famine and the pestilence, that had recently desolated neighboring states, had trod more lightly here. The king was blessed with a large family. These had all reached maturity, and were allied to kings and [275] queens, princes and princesses. The upholders of the Crown in the parliament were men whose names alone were a tower of strength. Peace reigned at home, and the army abroad had just succeeded in achieving a signal triumph over an enemy that had baffled them for years.

Such was the outward seeming of affairs: but there were threatening fires within which might at any moment produce a conflagration. Many thinking people were profoundly disgusted with the retrograde tendency of the Government. Although the march of despotism had been cautious and stealthy, the people generally began to feel the tyranny to which they had become subjected.

Among these grievances were the constant increase of the national debt, and consequent increase of taxation, with the restraints put upon the liberty of the press and of speech. By a law of some years' standing the people were prohibited from holding stated meetings of more than twenty persons without license; and *reform banquets*, or meetings for the discussion of public affairs—of which about seventy had been held in different parts of the kingdom within the last year—were now pronounced illegal by the ministry. Finally, a determination to suppress one of them, about to be held in the twelfth ward of Paris, was solemnly announced by the Ministry in the Chamber of Deputies.

It is material to bear in mind, that there are always in this metropolis at least one hundred thousand workmen who live from day to day upon their labor, and who, upon the slightest check to trade, are plunged into poverty, if not starvation. At the moment of which we are speaking, this immense body of men, with their families, were suffering sorely from the stagnation of business [276] in the capital. There were not less than two hundred thousand persons who, for the space of three months, had hardly been able to obtain sufficient food to appease the cravings of hunger. How easy to stir up these people to rebellion!—how natural for them to turn their indignation against the king and his government! The "Opposition" members seized the occasion now afforded them to excite these discontented masses against the ministry; and the latter, by their rashness, did more than their enemies to prepare the mind and set the match to the train.

The crisis was now at hand. The "Opposition" deputies declared their intention to attend the proposed meeting; and in spite of the threats of the ministry, the preparations for the banquet went vigorously on. A place was selected in the Champs Elysées, and a building was in progress of erection for the celebration. The programme of the same was announced; the toast for the occasion was published; the orator, O. Barrot, selected. The day was fixed: an ominous day for tyranny, an auspicious one for human freedom. It was the 22d of February, the birthday of Washington! Whether it has received a new title to its place in the calendar of liberty, must be left for the decision of time.

The evening of the 21st came, and then proclamations were issued, by the co-operation of the ministry and the police prohibiting the banquet. This act, though it had been threatened, still fell like a thunderbolt upon the people. It was known that an immense military force had been quietly assembled in Paris and the vicinity—eighty thousand troops, with artillery and ample munitions—and that the garrisons around the Tuileries had been victualled as if for a siege. But it had not [277] been believed that an attempt to stifle the voice of the people, so bold as this, would really be made. Yet such was the fact. The leaders of the "Opposition" receded from their ground; and it was announced, in the papers of the 22d, that the banquet, being forbidden by the Government, would not take place.

The morning of this day was dark and drizzly. I had anticipated some manifestation of uneasiness, and at half-past nine o'clock went forth. Groups of people were reading the proclamations posted up at the corners of the streets, but all was tranquil. I walked along the Boulevards for a mile yet saw no symptoms of the coming storm.

The designated place of meeting for the banquet was the square of the Madeleine. This is at the western extremity of the Boulevards, and near the great central square called the Place de la Concorde, a point communicating directly with the Chamber of Deputies, the Champs Elysées, the gardens of the Tuileries, &c. At eleven o'clock, A.M., a dark mass was seen moving along the Boulevards towards the proposed place of meeting. This consisted of thousands of workmen from the faubourgs. In a few moments the entire square of the Madeleine was filled with these persons, dressed almost exclusively in their characteristic costume, which consists of a blue tunic, called *blouse*—a garment which is made very much in the fashion of our farmers' frocks.

The opening scene of the drama had now begun. The mass rushed and eddied around the Madeleine, which, by the way, is the finest church and the finest edifice in Paris. Such was the threatening aspect of the scene, that the shops were all suddenly shut, and the people around [278] began to supply themselves, with bread and other food, for "three days." In a few moments the avalanche took its course down the Rue Royale, swept across the Place de la Concorde, traversed the bridge over the Seine, and collected, in swelling and heaving masses, in the place, or square, before the Chamber of Deputies. This building is defended in front by a high iron railing. The gate of this was soon forced, and some hundreds of the people rushed up the long flight of steps, and, pausing beneath the portico, struck up the song of the "Marseillaise"—a song, by the way, interdicted by law on account of its exciting character. The crowd here rapidly increased: shouts, songs, cries filled the air. East and west, along the quays, and through the streets behind the

Chamber, came long lines of students from the various schools. Standing upon one of the pillars of the bridge, I commanded a view of the whole scene. It was one to fill the heart with the liveliest emotions. A hundred thousand people were now collected, seeming like an agitated sea, and sending forth a murmur resembling the voice of many waters. From the southern gate of the Tuileries now issued two bodies of troops—one, on horseback, coming along the northern quay. These were the Municipal Guard, a magnificent corps, richly caparisoned, and nobly mounted. Being picked men, and well paid, they were the chief reliance of the Government, and for that very reason were hated by the people. The other body of troops were infantry of the line, and, crossing the Pont Royal, came along the southern bank of the river. Both detachments approached the multitude, and crowding upon them with a slow advance, succeeded at last in clearing the space before the Chamber.

The greater part of the throng recrossed the bridge, and spread themselves over the Place de la [279] Concorde. This square, perhaps the most beautiful in the world, is about five acres in extent. This vast area was now crowded with an excited populace, mainly of the working classes. Their number constantly augmented, and bodies of troops, foot and horse, arrived from various quarters, till the square was literally covered. The number of persons here collected in one mass was over one hundred thousand.

At the commencement, the mob amused themselves with songs and shouts; but in clearing the space before the Chamber, and driving the people across the bridge, the guards had displayed great rudeness. They pressed upon the masses, and one woman was crushed to death beneath the hoofs of the horses. Pebbles now began to be hurled at the troops from the square. Dashing in among the people, sword in hand, the cavalry drove them away; but as they cleared one spot, another was immediately filled. The effect of this was to chafe and irritate the mob, who now began to seize sticks and stones, and hurl them in good earnest at their assailants.

While this petty war was going on, some thousands of the rioters dispersed themselves through the Champs Elysées, and began to build barricades across the main avenue. The chairs, amounting to many hundreds, were immediately disposed in three lines across the street. Benches, trellises, boxes, fences—every movable thing within reach—were soon added to the barricades. An omnibus passing by was captured, detached from the horses, and tumbled into one of the lines. The flag was taken from the Panorama near by, and a vast procession paraded through the grounds, singing the "Marseillaise," the "Parisienne," and other patriotic airs.

Meanwhile, a small detachment of foot guards advanced to the scene of action; but they were [280] pelted with stones, and took shelter in their guard-house. This was assailed with a shower of missiles, which rattled like hail upon its roof. The windows were dashed in, and a heap of brush near by was laid to the wall, and set on fire. A body of horse guards soon arrived, and dispersed the rioters; but the latter crossed to the northern side of the Champs Elysées, attacked another guard-house, and set it on fire. A company of the line came to the spot, but the mob cheered them, and they remained inactive. The revel proceeded, and, in the face of the soldiers, the people fed the fire with fuel from the surrounding trees and fences, sang their songs, cracked their jokes, and cried "Down with Guizot!" "Vive la Réforme!" &c. In these scenes the boys took the lead, performing the most desperate feats, and inspiring the rest by their intrepidity. A remarkable air of fun and frolic characterized the mob—jokes flew as freely on all sides as stones and sticks.

Such was the course of events the first day, so far as they fell under my own observation. It appears from the papers that similar proceedings, though in some cases of a more serious character, took place elsewhere. Great masses of people gathered at various points. They made hostile demonstrations before the Office of Foreign Affairs, crying out, "Down with Guizot!" Some person called for the minister. "He is not here," said one; "he is with the Countess Lieven,"—a remark which the *habitués* of Paris will understand as conveying a keen satire. At other points a spirit of insubordination was manifested. Bakers' shops were broken open, armories forced, and barricades begun. Everywhere the hymn of the "Marseillaise" and "Mourir pour la Patrie" were [281] sung—often by hundreds of voices, and with thrilling effect. The rappel for calling out the National Guard was beaten in several quarters. As night closed in, heavy masses of soldiery, horse and foot, with trains of artillery, were seen at various points. The Place du Carrousel was full of troops, and at evening they were reviewed by the King and the Dukes of Nemours and Montpensier. Six thousand soldiers were disposed along the boulevards from the Madeleine to the Porte St. Martin. Patrols were seen in different quarters during the whole night. About twelve tranquillity reigned over the city, disturbed only in a few remote and obscure places by the building of barricades, the arrest of rioters, and one or two combats, in which several persons were killed. Such was the first day's work—the prelude to the drama about to follow.

Wednesday, the 23d, was fair, with dashes of rain at intervals, as in our April. I was early abroad, and soon noticed that companies of National Guards were on duty. Only regular troops had been called out the day before—a fact which showed the distrust of the National Guards entertained by the king. This was remarked by the latter, and was doubtless one of the causes which hastened the destruction of the Government.

At nine o'clock I passed up the Boulevards. Most of the shops were shut, and an air of uneasiness prevailed among the people. At the Porte St. Denis there was a great throng, and a considerable mass of troops. Barricades were soon after erected in the streets of St. Denis, Cléry, St. Eustache, Cadran, &c. Several fusilades took place between the people at these points and the soldiers, and a number of persons were killed.

Some contests occurred in other quarters during the morning. At two o'clock the Boulevards, the [282]

Rues St. Denis, St. Martin, Montmartre, St. Honoré—in short, all the great thoroughfares—were literally crammed with people. Bodies of horse and foot, either stationary or patrolling, were everywhere to be seen. It was about this time that some officers of the National Guard ordered their men to fire, but they refused. In one instance four hundred National Guards were seen marching, in uniform, but without arms. It became evident that the soldiers generally were taking part with the people. This news was carried to the palace, and Count Molé was called in to form a new ministry. He undertook the task, and orders were immediately given to spread the intelligence of this through the city.

Meanwhile the riot and revel went on in various quarters. The police were active, and hundreds of persons were arrested and lodged in prison. Skirmishes took place, here and there, between the soldiers and the people; long processions were seen, attended by persons who sang choruses, and shouted "Down with Guizot!" "Vive la Réforme!"

About four o'clock the news of the downfall of the Guizot ministry was spread along the Boulevards. The joyful intelligence ran over the city with the speed of light. It was everywhere received with acclamations. The people and the troops, a short time before looking at each other in deadly hostility, were seen shaking hands, and expressing congratulations. An immense population—men, women, and children—poured into the Boulevards, to share in the jubilation. Large parties of the National Guard paraded the streets, the officers and men shouting "Vive la Réforme!" and the crowd cheering loudly. Bands of five hundred to fifteen hundred men and boys [283] went about making noisy demonstrations of joy. On being met by the troops, they divided to let them pass, and immediately resumed their cries and their songs.

Toward half-past six o'clock in the evening an illumination was spoken of, and many persons lighted up spontaneously. The illumination soon became more general, and the populace, in large numbers, went through the streets, calling, "Light up!" Numerous bands, alone or following detachments of the National Guards, went about, shouting "Vive le Roi!" "Vive la Réforme!" and singing the "Marseillaise." At many points, where barricades had been erected, and the people were resisting the troops, they ceased when they heard the news of the resignations, and the troops retired. "It is all over!" was the general cry; and a feeling of relief seemed to pervade every bosom.

There can be no doubt that, but for a fatal occurrence which soon after took place, the further progress of the revolt might have been stayed. Many wise people now say, indeed, that the revolution was all planned beforehand; they had foreseen and predicted it: and from the beginning of the outbreak everything tended to this point. The fact is unquestionably otherwise. The "Opposition," with their various clubs and societies distributed through all classes in Paris, and holding constant communication with the workmen or blousemen, no doubt stood ready to take advantage of any violence on the part of the Government which might justify resistance; but they had not anticipated such a contingency on the present occasion. It is not probable that the Molé ministry, had it been consummated, would have satisfied the people; but the king had yielded; Guizot, the special object of hatred, had fallen, and it was supposed that further [284] concessions would be made, as concession had begun. But accident, which often rules the fate of empires and dynasties, now stepped in to govern the course of events, and give them a character which should astonish the world.

In the course of the evening a large mass of people had collected on the Boulevard, in the region of Guizot's office—the Hôtel des Affaires Etrangères. The troops here had unfortunately threatened the people, by rushing at them with fixed bayonets, after the announcement of the resignation of the ministry, and when a good feeling prevailed among all classes. This irritated the mob, and was partly, no doubt, the occasion of the large gathering in this quarter. For some reason, not well explained, a great many troops had also assembled here and in the vicinity. At ten o'clock, the street from the Madeleine to the Rue de la Paix was thronged with soldiers and people. There was, however, no riot and no symptom of disorder.

At this moment a collection of persons, mostly young men, about sixty in number, came along the Boulevard, on the side opposite to the soldiers and the Foreign Office. It is said that the colonel anticipated some attack, though nothing of the kind was threatened. It appears that the soldiers stood ready to fire, when one of their muskets went off, and wounded the commander's horse in the leg. He mistook this for a shot from the crowd, and gave instant orders to fire. A fusilade immediately followed. Twenty persons fell dead, and forty were wounded. The scene which ensued baffles description. The immense masses dispersed in terror, and carried panic in all directions. The groans of the dying and the screams of the wounded filled the air. Shops and [285] houses around were turned into hospitals. "We are betrayed! we are betrayed!"—"Revenge! revenge!" was the cry of the masses.

From this moment the doom of the monarchy was sealed. The leaders of the clubs, no doubt, took their measures for revolution. An immense waggon was soon brought to the scene of the massacre; the dead bodies were laid on it, and flaring torches were lighted over it. The ghastly spectacle was paraded through the streets, and the mute lips of the corpses doubtless spoke more effectively than those of the living. Large masses of people, pale with excitement and uttering execrations upon the murderers, followed in the train of the waggon, as it passed through the more populous streets of the city, and especially in those quarters inhabited by the lower classes. The effect was such as might have been anticipated. At midnight the barricades were begun, and at sunrise the streets of Paris displayed a network of fortifications from the Place St. George to the church of Notre Dame, which set the troops at defiance. More than a thousand barricades, some of them ten feet in height, were thrown up during that memorable night; yet such were the suddenness and silence of the operations, that most of the inhabitants of

the city slept in security, fondly dreaming that the tempest had passed, and that the morning would greet them in peace.

On Thursday, the decisive day, the weather was still mild and without rain, though the sky was dimmed with clouds. At eleven in the morning I sallied forth. I cannot express my astonishment at the scene. The whole Boulevard was a spectacle of desolation. From the Rue de la Paix to the Rue Montmartre—the finest part of Paris, the glory of the city—every tree was cut down, all the [286] public monuments reduced to heaps of ruins, the pavements torn up, and the entire wreck tumbled into a succession of barricades. Every street leading into this portion of the Boulevard was strongly barricaded. Such giant operations seemed like the work of enchantment.

But my wonder had only begun. At the point where the Rue Montmartre crosses the Boulevard, the entire pavement was torn up, and something like a square breastwork was formed, in which a cannon was planted. The whole space around was crowded with the populace. As I stood for a moment surveying the scene, a young man, about twenty, passed through the crowd, and stepping upon the carriage of the cannon, cried out, "Down with Louis Philippe!" The energy with which this was spoken sent a thrill through every bosom; and the remarkable appearance of the youth gave additional effect to his words. He was short, broad-shouldered, and full-chested. His face was pale, his cheek spotted with blood, and his head, without hat or cap, was bound with a handkerchief. His features were keen, and his deep-set eye was lit with a spark that seemed borrowed from a tiger. As he left the throng he came near me, and I said, inquiringly, "Down with Louis Philippe?" "Yes!" was his reply. "And what then?" said I. "A republic!" was his answer; and he passed on, giving the watchword of "Down with Louis Philippe!" to the masses he encountered. This was the first instance in which I heard the overthrow of the king and the adoption of a republic proposed.

In pursuing my walk, I noticed that the population were now abundantly supplied with weapons. On the two first days they were unarmed; but after the slaughter at the Foreign Office they went [287] to all the houses and demanded weapons. These were given, for refusal would have been vain. An evidence of the consideration of the populace, even in their hour of wrath, is furnished by the fact, that in all cases where the arms had been surrendered, they wrote on the doors in chalk, "*Armes données*"—Arms given up; so as to prevent the annoyance of a second call.

It might seem a fearful thing to behold a mob, such as that of Paris, brandishing guns, fowling-pieces, swords, cutlasses, hatchets, and axes; but I must say that I felt not the slightest fear in passing among their thickest masses. Some of them, who had doubtless never handled arms before, seemed a little jaunty and jubilant. The *gamins*—the leaders in riots, rows, and rebellions—were swarming on all sides, and seemed to feel a head taller in the possession of their weapons. I saw several of these unwashed imps strutting about with red sashes around the waist, supporting pistols, dirks, cutlasses, &c.; yet I must state that over the whole scene there was an air of good-breeding, which seemed a guarantee against insult or violence. I may also remark here, that during the whole three days I did not observe a scuffle or wrangle among the people; I did not hear an insulting word, nor did I see a menace offered, save in conflicts between the soldiers and the populace. I can add, that I did not see a drunken person during the whole period, with the single exception which I shall hereafter mention.

I took a wide circuit in the region of the Rue Montmartre, the Bourse, the Rue Vivienne, St. Honoré, and the Palais Royal. Everywhere there were enormous barricades and crowds of armed people. Soon after—that is, about twelve o'clock—I passed the southern quadrangle of the Palais [288] Royal, which, lately the residence of the brother of the King of Naples, was now attacked and taken by the populace. The beautiful suite of rooms was richly furnished, and decorated with costly pictures, statues, bronzes, and other specimens of art. These were unsparingly tumbled into the square and the street, and consigned to the flames. At the distance of one hundred and fifty feet from the front of the Palais Royal was the Château d'Eau, a massive stone building occupied as a barrack, and at this moment garrisoned by one hundred and eighty municipal guards. In most parts of the city, seeing that the troops fraternized with the people, the Government had given them orders not to fire. These guards, however, attacked the insurgents in and about the Palais Royal. Their fire was returned, and a desperate conflict ensued. The battle lasted for more than an hour, the people rushing in the very face of the muskets, of the guard, as they blazed from the grated windows. At last the barrack was set on fire, and the guard yielded, though not till many of their number had fallen, and the rest were nearly dead with suffocation. The Château d'Eau is now a mere ruin, its mottled walls giving evidence of the shower of bullets that had been poured upon it.

No sooner had the Château d'Eau surrendered, than the flushed victors took their course towards the Tuileries, which was near at hand; shouting, singing, roaring, they came like a surge, bearing all before them. The Place du Carrousel was filled with troops; but not a sword was unsheathed—not a bayonet pointed—not a musket or a cannon fired. There stood, idle and motionless, the mighty armament which the king had appointed for his defence. How vain had his calculations proved! for, alas! they were founded in a radical error. The soldiers would not massacre their [289] brethren, to sustain a throne which they now despised.

But we must now enter the Tuileries. For several days previous to the events we have described, some anxiety had been entertained by persons in and about the palace. The king, however, had no fears. He appeared in unusual spirits; and, if any intimation of danger was given, he turned it aside with a sneer or a joke. Even so late as Wednesday, after he had called upon Count Molé to form a new ministry, he remarked that he was so "firmly seated in the saddle, that nothing could throw him off."

Molé soon found it impossible, with the materials at hand, to construct a ministry. Thiers was then called in; and, after a long course of higgling and chaffering on the part of the king, it was agreed that he and Barrot should undertake to carry on the Government. This was announced by them in person, as they rode through the streets on Thursday morning. These concessions, however, came too late. The cry for a republic was bursting from the lips of the million. The abdication of the king was decreed, and a raging multitude were demanding this at the very gates of the palace. Overborne by the crisis, the king agreed to abdicate in favor of the Duke de Nemours. Some better tidings were brought him, and he retracted what he had just done. A moment after it became certain that the insurgents would shortly burst into the palace. In great trepidation, the king agreed to resign the crown in favor of his grandson, the young Count de Paris; yet, still clinging to the hope, he shuffled and hesitated before he would put his name to the act of abdication. This, however, was at last done, and the king and queen, dressed in black, and accompanied by a few individuals who remained faithful in this trying moment, passed from [290] the Tuileries to the Place de la Concorde, through the subterranean passage constructed many years previously for the walks of the infant King of Rome. They here entered a small, one-horse vehicle, and, after a rapid and successful flight, landed safely at Dover, in England.

Meanwhile, the mob had seized the royal carriages, fourteen in number, and made a bonfire of them, near the celebrated arch in the Place du Carrousel. Soon after, they forced the railing at several points, and came rushing across the square toward the palace. Scarcely had the various members of the royal family time to escape on one side of the building, when the mob broke in at the other.

I have not time to follow the adventures of these several individuals. We cannot but sympathize with them in their misfortunes; but we may remark, that the fall of the Orleans dynasty was not broken by a single act of courage or dignity on the part of any one of the family. Their flight seemed a vulgar scramble for mere life. Even the king was reduced to the most common place disguises—the shaving of his whiskers, the change of his dress, the adopting an "alias!" I may add here, that they have all escaped; and while everybody seems glad of this, there is no one behind who mourns their loss. None are more loud in denouncing the besotted confidence of the king than his two hundred and twenty-five purchased deputies, who were so loyal in the days of prosperity.

A short time after the king and queen had passed the Place de la Concorde I chanced to be there. In a few moments Odillon Barrot appeared from the gate of the Tuileries, and, followed by a long train of persons, proceeded to the Chamber of Deputies. It was now understood that the king had [291] abdicated, and that Thiers and Barrot were to propose the Count de Paris as king, under the regency of his mother, the Duchess of Orleans. The most profound emotion seemed to occupy the immense multitude. All were hushed into silence by the rapid succession of astonishing events. After a short space the Duchess of Orleans, with her two sons, the Count de Paris and the Duke de Chartres, were seen on foot coming toward the Chamber, encircled by a strong escort. She was dressed in deep mourning, her face bent to the ground. She moved across the bridge, and passing to the rear of the building, entered it through the gardens. Shortly after this the Duke de Nemours, attended by several gentlemen on horseback, rode up, and also entered the building.

The scene that ensued within is said to have presented an extraordinary mixture of the solemn and the ludicrous. The duchess being present, Barrot proceeded to state the abdication of the king, and to propose the regency. It was then that Lamartine seemed to shake off the poet and philosopher, and suddenly to become a man of action. Seizing the critical moment, he declared his conviction that the days of monarchy were numbered; that the proposed regency was not suited to the crisis; and that a republic alone would meet the emergency and the wishes of France. These opinions, happily expressed and strenuously enforced, became decisive in their effect.

Several other speeches were made, and a scene of great confusion followed. A considerable number of the mob had broken into the room, and occupied the galleries and the floor. One of them brought his firelock to his shoulder, and took aim at M. Sauzet, the president. Entirely [292] losing his self-possession, he abdicated with great speed, and disappeared. In the midst of the hubbub a Provisional Government was announced, and the leading members were named. Some of the more obnoxious deputies were aimed at by the muskets of the mob, and skulking behind benches and pillars, they oozed out at back-doors and windows. A blouseman came up to the Duke de Nemours, who drew his sword. The man took it from him, broke it over his knee, and counselled his highness to depart. This he did forthwith, having borrowed a coat and hat for the purpose of disguise. A call was made for the members of the Provisional Government to proceed to the Hôtel de Ville. The assembly broke up, and the curtain fell upon the last sitting of the Chamber of Deputies—the closing scene of Louis Philippe's government.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon that I retraced my steps toward the Tuileries. The Place de la Concorde was crowded with soldiers, and fifty cannon were ranged in front of the gardens. Yet this mighty force seemed struck with paralysis. Long lines of infantry stood mute and motionless, and heavy masses of cavalry seemed converted into so many statues. Immediately before the eyes of those soldiers was the palace of the Tuileries in full possession of the mob, but not a muscle moved for their expulsion!

Passing into the gardens, I noticed that thousands of persons were spread over their surface, and a rattling discharge of fire-arms was heard on all sides. Looking about for the cause of this, I perceived that hundreds of men and boys were amusing themselves with shooting sparrows and pigeons, which had hitherto found a secure resting-place in this favorite resort of leisure and luxury. Others were discharging their muskets for the mere fun of making a noise. Proceeding [293]

through the gardens, I came at last to the palace. It had now been, for more than an hour, in full possession of the insurgents. All description fails to depict a scene like this. The whole front of the Tuileries, one-eighth of a mile in length, seemed gushing at doors, windows, balconies, and galleries, with living multitudes—a mighty beehive of men, in the very act of swarming. A confused hubbub filled the air, and bewildered the senses with its chaotic sounds.

At the moment I arrived the throne of the king was borne away by a jubilant band of revellers; and, after being paraded through the streets, was burned at the Place de la Bastille.

I entered the palace, and passed through the long suites of apartments devoted to occasions of ceremony. A year before I had seen these gorgeous halls filled with the flush and the fair—kings, princes, and nobles—gathered to this focal point of luxury, refinement, and taste from every quarter of the world. How little did Louis Philippe, at that moment, dream of "coming events!" How little did the stately queen—a proud obelisk of silk, and lace, and diamonds—foresee the change that was at hand! I recollected well the effect of this scene upon my own mind, and felt the full force of the contrast which the present moment offered. In the very room where I had seen the pensive and pensile Princess de Joinville and the Duchess de Montpensier—the latter then fresh from the hymeneal altar, her raven hair studded with diamonds like evening stars—whirling in the mazy dance, I now beheld a band of creatures like Calibans, gambolling to the song of the "Marseillaise!"

On every side my eye fell upon scenes of destruction. Passing to the other end of the palace, I [294] beheld a mob in the chambers of the princesses. Some rolled themselves in the downy beds, others anointed their shaggy heads with choice pomatum, exclaiming, "Dieu! how sweet it smells!" One of the *gamins*, grimed with gunpowder, blood, and dirt, seized a tooth-brush, and placing himself before a mirror, seemed delighted at the manifest improvement which he produced upon his ivory.

On leaving the palace, I saw numbers of the men drinking wine from bottles taken from the well-stocked cellars. None of them were positively drunk. To use the words of "Tam O'Shanter," "They were na fou, but just had plenty"—perhaps a little more. They flourished their guns and pistols, brandished their swords, and performed various antics, but they offered no insult to any one. They seemed in excellent humor, and made more than an ordinary display of French *politesse*. They complimented the women, of whom there was no lack; and one of them, resembling a figure of Pan, seized a maiden by the waist, and both rigadooned merrily over the floor.

Leaving this scene of wreck, confusion, and uproar, I proceeded toward the gate of the gardens leading into the Rue de Rivoli. I was surprised to find here a couple of ruthless-looking blousemen, armed with pistols, keeping guard. On inquiry, I found that the mob themselves had instituted a sort of government. One fellow, in the midst of the devastation in the palace, seeing a man put something into his pocket, wrote on the wall, "Death to thieves!" The Draconian code was immediately adopted by the people, and became the law of Paris. Five persons, taken in acts of robbery, were shot down by the people, and their bodies exposed in the streets, with the label [295] of "Thief" on their breast. Thus order and law seemed to spring up from the instincts of society, in the midst of uproar and confusion, as crystals are seen shooting from the chaos of the elements.

Three days had now passed, and the revolution was accomplished. The people soon returned to their wonted habits; the Provisional Government proceeded in its duties; the barricades disappeared; and in a single week the more obtrusive traces of the storm that had passed had vanished from the streets and squares of Paris.

CHAPTER XXX. [296]

AFTER THE REVOLUTION—"FUNERAL OF THE VICTIMS"—THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY—PARIS IN A STATE OF SIEGE—CAVAIGNAC—LOUIS NAPOLEON CHOSEN PRESIDENT.

It is not my design to enter into the history of the revolution in detail, but I may sketch a few of the prominent events which followed. For this purpose, I make an extract from an account I have elsewhere given:—

For several weeks and months Paris was a scene of extraordinary excitement. The Provisional Government had announced that they would provide the people with labor. Consequently, deputations of tailors, hatters, engravers, musicians, paviors, cabinet-makers, seamstresses, and a multitude of other trades and vocations, flocked in long lines to the Hôtel de Ville to solicit the favor of the Government. Vast crowds of people perpetually haunted this place, and, in one instance, a raging multitude came thundering at the doors, demanding that the blood-red flag of the former revolution should be the banner of the new republic! It was on this occasion that Lamartine addressed the people, and with such eloquence as to allay the storm which threatened again to deluge France in blood. The members of the Government were so besieged and pressed by business, that for several weeks they slept in the Hôtel de Ville. They proceeded with a bold hand to announce and establish the republic. In order to make a favorable impression upon the [297] people, they decreed a gorgeous ceremony at the foot of the column of July, on Sunday, February 27th, by which they solemnly inaugurated the new republic. All the members of the Provisional Government were present on horseback; there were sixty thousand troops and two hundred

thousand people to witness the spectacle.

Another still more imposing celebration took place on the 4th of March. This was called the "Funeral of the Victims." After religious ceremonies at the Madeleine, the members of the Government, with a long train of public officers and an immense *cortège* of military, proceeded to the July column, conducting a superb funeral-car, drawn by eight cream-colored horses. This contained most of the bodies of those slain in the revolution—about two hundred and fifty. These were deposited in the vault of the column, with the victims of the revolution of 1830.

Nothing can adequately portray this spectacle. A tri-colored flag was stretched on each side of the Boulevards, from the Madeleine to the July column—a distance of three miles. As this consisted of three strips of cloth, the length of the whole was eighteen miles! The solemn movement of the funeral procession, the dirge-like music, the march of nearly a hundred thousand soldiers, and the sympathizing presence of three hundred thousand souls, rendered it a scene never surpassed and rarely equalled, either by the magnificence of the panorama or the solemn and touching sentiments excited.

Still other spectacles succeeded; and in the summer four hundred thousand people assembled in the Champs Elysées to witness the Presentation of Flags to the assembled National Guards, [298] eighty thousand being present. Such scenes can only be witnessed in Paris.

Events proceeded with strange rapidity. A Constituent Assembly was called by the Provisional Government to form a constitution. The members were elected by ballot, the suffrage being universal—that is, open to all Frenchmen over twenty-one. The election took place in April, and on the 4th of May the first session was held, being officially announced to the assembled people from the steps of the Chamber of Deputies. On the 15th of May a conspiracy was disclosed, the leaders of which were Raspail, Barbès, Sobrier, Caussidière, Blanqui, Flotte, Albert, and Louis Blanc—the two last having been members of the Provisional Government. Caussidière was prefect of police.

The Assembly proceeded in the work of framing a constitution, administering the government in the mean time. On the 24th of June a terrific insurrection broke out, promoted by the leaders of various factions, all desiring the overthrow of the republic which had been inaugurated. Cavaignac, who was minister of war, was appointed dictator, and Paris was declared in a state of siege. The insurgents confined their operations chiefly to the faubourgs of St. Jacques and St. Antoine. They got possession of these, and formed skilful and able plans of operation, which had for their ultimate object the surrounding of the city and getting possession of certain important points, including the Chamber—thus securing the government in their own hands.

Cavaignac proceeded to attack the barricades, thus clearing the streets one by one. The fighting was terrible. For four days the battle continued, the sound of cannon frequently filling the ears of the people all over the city. Night and day the inhabitants were shut up in their houses, ignorant [299] of all, save that the conflict was raging. The women found employment in scraping lint for the wounded. All Paris was a camp. The windows were closed; the soldiers and sentinels passed their watchwords; litters, carrying the dead and wounded, were borne along the streets; the tramp of marching columns and the thunder of rushing cavalry broke upon the ear!

At last the conflict was over; the insurgents were beaten—Cavaignac triumphed. But the victory was dearly purchased. Between two and three thousand persons were killed, and among them no less than seven general officers had fallen. The insurgents fought like tigers. Many women were in the ranks, using the musket, carrying the banners, rearing barricades, and cheering the fight. Boys and girls mingled in the conflict. The National Guards who combated them had equal courage and superior discipline. One of the Garde Mobile—Hyacinthe Martin, a youth of fourteen —took four standards from the tops of the barricades. His gallantry excited great interest, and Cavaignac decorated him with the cross of the Legion of Honor. He became a hero of the day; but —sad to relate!—being invited to fêtes, banquets, and repasts, his head was turned, and he was soon a ruined profligate.

The leaders in this terrific insurrection were never detected. It is certain that the movement was headed by able men, and directed by skilful engineers. The masses who fought were roused to fury by poverty and distress—by disappointment at finding the national workshops discontinued, and by stimulating excitements furnished by Socialist clubs and newspapers. It is computed that forty thousand insurgents were in arms, and eighty thousand government soldiers were brought [300] against them. It may be considered that this struggle was the remote but inevitable result of the course of the Provisional Government in adopting the doctrine of obligation, on the part of the State, to supply work and wages to the people, and in establishing national workshops in pursuance of this idea. Still, it may be said, on the other hand, that nothing but such a step could have enabled the Provisional Government to maintain itself during three months, and give being to an organized Assembly from which a legitimate government could proceed.

The Constitution was finished in the autumn, and promulgated on the 19th of November, 1848. On the 10th of December following, the election of President took place, and it appeared that Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had five million out of seven million votes. He was duly inaugurated about a week after the election, and entered upon the high duties which thus devolved upon him.

CHAPTER XXXI. [301]

THE AUTHOR'S DUTIES AS CONSUL—ASPECT OF THINGS IN PARIS—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S DESIGNS—THE 2ND OF DECEMBER, 1852—THE NEW REIGN OF TERROR COMPLETE—LOUIS NAPOLEON AS EMPEROR—OUT OF OFFICE—RETURN TO NEW YORK—CONCLUSION.

I now come to the period of 1851, when I entered upon the consulate. Of the space during which I was permitted to hold this office I have no very remarkable personal incidents to relate. The certifying of invoices, and the legalizing of deeds and powers of attorney, are the chief technical duties of the American Consul at Paris. If he desires to enlarge the circle of his operations, however, he can find various ways of doing it. As, for instance, in supplying the wants of distressed Poles, Hungarians, Italians, and others, who are martyrs to liberty, and suppose the American heart and purse always open to those who are thus afflicted; in answering questions from notaries, merchants, lawyers, as to the laws of the different American States upon marriage, inheritance, and the like; in advising emigrants whether to settle in Iowa, or Illinois, or Missouri, or Texas; in listening to inquiries made by deserted wives as to where their errant husbands may be found, who left France ten, or twenty, or thirty years ago, and went to America, by which is generally understood St. Domingo or Martinique. A considerable business may be done in lending [302] money to foreigners, who pretend to have been naturalized in the United States, and are, therefore, entitled to consideration and sympathy: it being, of course, well understood that money lent to such persons will never be repaid. Some time and cash may also be invested in listening to the stories and contributing to the wants of promising young American artists, who are striving to get to Italy to pursue their studies—such persons usually being graduates of the London school of artful dodgers. Some waste leisure and a good deal of postage may be disposed of in correspondence with ingenious Americans, inventors and discoverers: as, for instance, with a man in Arkansas or Minnesota, who informs you that he has contrived a new and infallible method of heating and ventilating European cities, and wishes it brought to the notice of the authorities there, it being deemed the duty of the American Consul to give attention to such matters. These monotonies are occasionally diversified by a letter from some unfortunate fellow-countryman who is detained at Mazas or Clichy, and begs to be extricated; or some couple who wish to be put under the bonds of wedlock; or some enterprising wife, all the way from Tennessee, in chase of a runaway husband; or some inexperienced but indignant youth who has been fleeced by his landlord.

Such are the duties which devolve upon the American Consul at Paris, the incidents alluded to having come under my notice while I was there in that capacity. I must now speak of certain public events which transpired at that period, and which will ever be regarded as among the most remarkable in modern history.

I have told you how Louis Napoleon, in consequence of the Revolution of 1848, became President of the Republic. When I arrived in Paris, in April, 1851, he was officiating in that capacity, his [303] residence being the little palace of the Elysée Bourbon, situated between the Faubourg St. Honoré and the Champs Elysées. The National Assembly, consisting of seven hundred and fifty members, held their sessions at the building called the Chamber of Deputies. The Government had been in operation somewhat over two years.

To the casual observer, the external aspect of things was not very different from what it had been under the monarchy of Louis Philippe. It is true that the palace of the Tuileries was vacant; no royal coaches were seen dashing through the avenues; the public monuments everywhere proclaimed "liberty, equality, fraternity." But still, the streets were filled with soldiers as before. Armed sentinels were stationed at the entrances of all the public buildings. The barracks were, as usual, swarming with soldiers, and large masses of horse and foot were training at the Champ de Mars and at Satory. Martial reviews and exercises were, indeed, the chief amusement of the metropolis. The President's house was a palace, and all around it was bristling with bayonets. It was obvious that, whatever name the Government might bear, military force lay at the bottom of it; and if to-day this might be its defence, to-morrow it might also be its overthrow.

It is now ascertained that Louis Napoleon, from the beginning, had his mind fixed upon the restoration of the Empire. In accepting the presidency of the Republic, and even in swearing fidelity to the Constitution, he considered himself only as mounting the steps of the Imperial throne.

In order to prepare the nation for the revolution which he meditated, Louis Napoleon caused [304] agitating and alarming rumors to be circulated of a terrible plot, planned by the Democrats, Republicans, and Socialists of France, the object of which was to overturn the whole fabric of society, to destroy religion, to sweep away the obligations of marriage, to strip the rich of their property, and make a general distribution of it among the masses. Other conspiracies, having similar designs, were said to exist in all the surrounding countries of Europe, and the time was now near at hand when the fearful explosion would take place. The police of France, subject to the control and direction of the President, were instructed to discover evidences of this infernal plot, and they were so successful, that the public mind was filled with a vague but anxious apprehension that society was reposing upon a volcano, which might soon burst forth and overwhelm the whole country in chaos.

The National Assembly acted in a manner to favor these schemes of the Presidents. They were divided into four or five factions, and spent their time chiefly in angry disputes and selfish intrigues. A portion of them were monarchists; and, though they had acquired their seats by pledges of devotion to the republic, they were now plotting its overthrow; a part being for the

restoration of the Orleanists, and a part for the Bourbons. Another faction was for Louis Napoleon, and actively promoted his schemes. By the Constitution he was ineligible for a second term, and his friends were seeking the means of overcoming the difficulty, and giving him a re-election, by fair means or foul. The Liberals were divided into several shades of opinion—some being Republicans, after the model of General Cavaignac; some being Democrats, like Victor Hugo; and some Socialists, after the fashion of Pierre Leroux. In such a state of things there was [305] a vast deal of idle debate, while the substantial interests of the country seemed, if not totally forgotten, at least secondary to the interests of parties, and the passions and prejudices of individuals.

I remember that on a certain Monday evening, the 1st of December, 1852, I was present at the Elysée, and was then first introduced to Louis Napoleon. I found him to be an ordinary-looking person, rather under size, but well formed, and with a dull expression of countenance. The room was tolerably full, the company consisting, as is usual in such cases, of diplomats, military officers, and court officials, with a sprinkling of citizens, in black coats. I was forcibly struck by the preponderance of soldiers in the assembly, and I said several times to my companions that it seemed more like a camp than a palace. The whole scene was dull; the President himself appeared preoccupied, and was not master of his usual urbanity; General Magnan walked from room to room with a ruminating air, occasionally sending his keen glances around, as if searching for something which he could not find. There was no music—no dancing. That gayety which almost always pervades a festive party in Paris was wholly wanting. There was no ringing laughter—no merry hum of conversation. I noticed all this, but I did not suspect the cause. At eleven o'clock the assembly broke up, and the guests departed. At twelve, the conspirators, gathered for their several tasks, commenced their operations.

About four in the morning the leading members of the Assembly were seized in their beds, and hurried to prison. Troops were distributed at various points, so as to secure the city. When the light of day came, proclamations were posted at the corners of the streets, announcing to the [306] citizens that the National Assembly was dissolved; that universal suffrage was decreed; that the Republic was established! Such was the general unpopularity of the Assembly, that the first impression of the people was that of delight at its overthrow. Throughout the first day the streets of Paris were like a swarming hive, filled with masses of people, yet, for the most part, in good-humor. The second day they had reflected, and began to frown, but yet there was no general spirit of revolt. A few barricades were attempted, but the operators were easily dispersed. The third day came; and although there was some agitation among the masses, there was evidently no preparation, no combination for general resistance. As late as ten o'clock in the forenoon I met one of the Republicans whom I knew, and asked him what was to be done. His reply was,—

"We can do nothing; our leaders are in prison; we are bound hand and foot. I am ready to give my life at the barricades, if with the chance of benefit; but I do not like to throw it away. We can do nothing!"

Soon after this I perceived heavy columns of troops—some four thousand men—marching through the Rue de la Paix, and then proceeding along the Boulevards towards the Port St. Denis. These were soon followed by a body of about a thousand horse. I was told that similar bodies were moving to the same point through other avenues of the city. In a short time the whole Boulevard, from the Rue de la Paix to the Place de la Bastille, an extent of two miles, was filled with troops. My office was on the Boulevard des Italiens, and was now fronted by a dense body of lancers, each man with his cocked pistol in his hand. Except the murmur of the horses' hoofs, [307] there was a general stillness over the city. The side-walks were filled with people; and though there was no visible cause for alarm, yet there was still a vague apprehension which cast pallor and gloom upon the faces of all.

Suddenly a few shots were heard in the direction of the Boulevard Montmartre, and then a confused hum, and soon a furious clatter of hoofs. A moment after, the whole body of horse started into a gallop, and rushed by as if in flight; presently they halted, however, wheeled slowly, and gradually moved back, taking up their former position. The men looked keenly at the houses on either side, and pointed their pistols threateningly at all whom they saw at the windows. It afterward appeared, that when the troops had been drawn out in line and stationed along the Boulevard, some half-dozen shots were fired into them from the tops of buildings and from windows: this created a sudden panic; the troops ran, and, crowding upon others, caused the sudden movement I have described. In a few moments the heavy, sickening sound of muskets came from the Porte St. Denis. Volley succeeded volley, and after some time the people were seen rushing madly along the pavements of the Boulevard, as if to escape. The gate of our hôtel was now closed, and, at the earnest request of the throng that had gathered for shelter in the court of the hôtel, I put out the "Stars and Stripes"—the first and last time that I ever deemed it necessary. The dull roar of muskets, with the occasional boom of cannon, continued at intervals for nearly half-an-hour. Silence at last succeeded, and the people ventured into the streets.

About four in the afternoon I walked for a mile along the Boulevard. The pavements were strewn with the fragments of shattered windows, broken cornices, and shivered doorways. Many of the [308] buildings, especially those on the southern side of the street, were thickly spattered with bullet-marks, especially around the windows. One edifice was riddled through and through with cannon-shot. Frequent spots of blood stained the sidewalk, and along the Boulevard Montmartre, particularly around the doorways, there were pools like those of the shambles; it being evident that the reckless soldiers had shot down in heaps the fugitives who, taken by surprise, strove to obtain shelter at the entrances of the hôtels upon the street.

The morning came, and the triumph of the Reign of Terror was complete. What was enacted in

Paris was imitated all over France. Nearly every department was declared in a state of siege; revolt was punished with death, and doubt or hesitation with imprisonment. Forty thousand persons were hurried to the dungeons, without even the form or pretence of trial. All over the country the press was silenced, as it had been in Paris; save only a few obsequious prints, which published what was dictated to them. These declared that all this bloodshed and violence were the necessary result of the Socialist conspiracy, which threatened to overturn society; happily, as they contended, Louis Napoleon, like a beneficent Providence, had crushed the monster, and he now asked the people to ratify what he had done, by making him President for ten years. In the midst of agitation, delusion, and panic, the vote was taken, and Louis Napoleon was elected by a vote of eight millions of suffrages! The nominal Republic thus established soon gave way to the Empire; the President reached the Imperial throne, and now stands before the world as Napoleon III.!

Since his acquisition of a throne Louis Napoleon has conducted the government with ability, and [309]
he has certainly been seconded by fortune. He married a lady who has shed lustre upon her high position by her gentle virtues and gracious manners. He engaged in the Eastern War, and triumphed. He has greatly improved and embellished the capital, and made Paris the most charming city in the world: nowhere else does life seem to flow on so cheerfully and so tranquilly as here. He has gradually softened the rigors of his government; and though some noble spirits still pine in exile, he has taken frequent advantage of opportunity to diminish the number. The people of France, at the present time, appear to be satisfied with the government, and, no doubt, a large majority, could the question be proposed to them, would vote for its continuance.

In the summer of 1853, I was politely advised from the State Department that President Pierce had appointed my successor in the consulate. Thus, having held the place a little over two years, on the 1st of August, 1853, I was restored to the privileges of private-citizen life. As I had various engagements which forbade me immediately to leave France, I hired a small house at Courbevoie, which I made my residence till my departure for America.

In the autumn of 1854 I set out with my family for a short tour in Italy. In all my wanderings I had never visited this famous country; and as I was not likely ever to have another opportunity, I felt it to be a kind of duty to avail myself of a few unappropriated weeks to accomplish this object. After visiting Florence, Rome, and Naples, we returned to Paris. Tarrying there for a short time, for the purpose of seeing the International Exhibition of 1855, we finally left Europe in October, [310]
and in the next month found a new home in New York.

I have now come to my farewell. Leave-takings are in general somewhat melancholy, and it is best to make them as brief as possible. Mine shall consist of a single train of thought, and that suggestive of cheerful rather than mournful feelings. Like a traveller approaching the end of his journey, I naturally cast a look backward, and surveying the monuments which rise up in the distance, seek to estimate the nature and tendency of the march of events which I have witnessed, and in which I have participated.

One general remark appears to me applicable to the half century over which my observation has extended; which is, that everywhere there has been improvement. I know of no department of human knowledge, no sphere of human inquiry, no race of men, no region of the earth, where there has been retrogression. On the whole, the age has been alike fruitful in discovery, and in the practical, beneficial results of discovery. Science has advanced with giant strides; and it is the distinguishing characteristic of modern science that it is not the mere toy of the philosopher, nor the hidden mystery of the laboratory, but the hard-working servant of the manufactory, the workshop, and the kitchen.

On every hand are the evidences of improvement. What advances have been made in agriculture; in the analysis of soils, the preparation of manures, the improvement of implements, from the spade to the steam-reaper; in the manufacture of textile fabrics by the inventions of Jacquard and others in weaving, and innumerable devices in spinning; in the working of iron—cutting, melting, [311]
moulding, rolling, shaping it like dough, whereby it is applied to a thousand new uses; in commerce and navigation, by improved models of ships, improved chronometers, barometers, and quadrants—in chain-pumps and wheel-rudders; in printing, by the use of the steam-press, throwing off a hundred thousand impressions instead of two thousand in a day; in microscopes, which have revealed new worlds in the infinity of littleness, as well as in telescopes, which have unfolded immeasurable depths of space before hidden from the view. How has travelling been changed, from jolting along at the rate of six miles an hour over rough roads in a stage-coach, to putting one's self comfortably to bed in a steamboat and going fifteen miles an hour; or sitting down in a railway-carriage to read a novel, and before you have finished it to find yourself two hundred miles away!

And in the moral world, the last fifty years appear to me to have shown an improvement, if not as marked, yet as certain and positive, as in the material world. Everywhere, as I believe, the standard of humanity is more elevated than before. If in some things, with the increase of wealth and luxury, we have degenerated, on the whole there has been an immense advance, as well in technical morals as in those large humanities which aim at the good of all mankind.

In looking at the political condition of our country, there are no doubt threatening clouds in the sky and mutterings of ominous thunders in the distance. I have, however, known such things before; I have seen the country shaken to its centre by the fierce collision of parties, and the open assaults of the spirit of disunion. But these dangers passed away. Within my memory, the states [312] of the Union have been doubled in number, and the territory of the Union has been trebled in extent. This I have seen; and as such has been the fact, so may be, and so I trust will be, the future. Farewell!

CHAPTER XXXII. [313]

THE DEATH OF PETER PARLEY.

From the London Welcome Guest.

Friend of my youth! Delightful instructor of my early days! Thou kindly soul, who labored so patiently to expand my unopened mind, and inspire it with a becoming interest in the world in which it had but lately awakened! Benevolent traveller, who led my innocence gently by the hand through all the countries of the earth, and chatted intelligibly with me of their strangely varying customs, their wonderful histories, their diverse climates, and productions, and capacities! Thou that, in the first budding of my young ideas, pointed out to me the glories of the starry night, and the marvels of the vasty deep; that couldst sympathize with my untaught childhood, and adapt thy immeasurable learning to its little wants, and powers, and likings, and intertwine thy omniscient narrative with absorbing adventures that enthralled its whole soul, and thrilled its wondering bosom, and upraised the hairs that as yet but thinly covered its tender pate! May my right hand forget its cunning, thou large-hearted benefactor, if I permit thee to pass away into Hades all unheralded! That stingy paragraph in a print that is read to-day and handed into oblivion to-morrow, is no meed worthy of thee, Peter Parley. Thou meritest a more bounteous [314] memorial. Thy name is known far and wide; and countless eyes, as they read in these pages that thou hast entered the Land of Shadows, shall be dimmed with grateful recollection.

If it may be allowed a copy of the Welcome Guest to journey beyond the postal arrangements of this world, and to meet the disembodied eyes of the other one, I wish that the concession may be made to this current number, and that it may be placed in Peter Parley's hands, as he sits in honor amid his new fellows. Then shall his gentle shade rejoice to know that we, his children, who used to gather around his knees, so to say, when he was still in the flesh, many long years since, are not ungrateful for his care of us, but cherish a most fond remembrance of it!

It was but last May the hand that had written so pleasantly and so usefully grew chill, and the pen fell from its unnerved grasp. No fresh travels of Peter Parley shall we have reported to us. Whatever his journeyings may not be—however weirdly novel, and thrilling, and strange—we cannot hope for any record of them. No sojourner in that land has ever yet returned to give us his account of it. No pencillings by the way, no fine descriptions of landscape or people, no notes of its ways and manners, ever reach us from the other side of the dividing river. So Peter Parley will observe and record for us never again.

Which of Peter Parley's numerous writings did you give the preference to, my reader? There was a capital story about a sailor boy in the *Tales of the Sea*, if you remember. To me that young Crusoe endeared the whole volume. I confess the facts with which every page was stored have [315] escaped me somewhat; but oh! how well I recollect the sailor boy!

Do you remember that picture which served as the frontispiece of the *Tales of the Stars*? There was old Peter himself, with a crowd of us—his curly-headed darlings—all round him. The stars, if my memory serves me, are shining with unwonted brightness upon the interesting group, and upon a celestial globe which occupies the left side of the scene. If my memory serves me, I say; but ay me! the lapse of many years has much impaired it, I fear, and the vision I call before me of that primeval period, is somewhat a broken and fragmentary one.

I cannot stay to mention all the members of the library with which Peter Parley and our governess, acting with a sweet consent, supplied us. There were some pleasant passages in the *Tales of Animals*. I still vividly remember the panther and the lion, which appeared upon that stage. I cannot say why I remember them above all others, any more than I can say why many things connected with my early youth have remained in my memory, whilst a thousand other incidents of equal importance have vanished utterly from it. All I know is, that I especially remember the panther and the lion in Mr. Parley's famous zoological work.

But, in my opinion, Peter Parley's most triumphant effusion—his *chef d'œuvre*—the work on which his fame will undoubtedly rest in the judgment of an admiring posterity of infants—the *ne plus ultra* of his great powers, in which the astonishing grace of his style reaches its highest perfection, and his knowledge is surpassed only by the facility and the kindliness with which he imparts it—his crowning effort is—need I name it? Shall I not be accused of penning truisms? Of [316] course I mean his *Travels through Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*.

Let that be a red-lettered day in my calendar when I entered upon those travels. Blessed be the dear maternal hand that gave them to me! Once more, standing by *her* side—the kind hand the while, I doubt not, smoothing my roughened locks, the gentle tongue patiently helping my tardy utterance—I spell out the opening chapters. Gather round me now, O pleasant company, into

which I was then introduced. Be seated again at thy round table, O Parley! with those delightful guests around thee, and let me listen to thy wonderful stories. Be present with me, ye shades. If, O Pluto! thou hast them in thy keeping, I pray thee to grant them a brief furlough, that I may know them once more.

Come, O Jenkins! bravest of men; come in that pea-green jacket, in which thou presentest thyself to the astonished Parley at the end of the travels in Europe. 'Tis a bleak night, and Parley, resting by his blazing fire from all his Continental labors, thinks, good soul! of his absent friends, and of course of thee, Jenkins. Presently a knock is heard at the door, and Parley, answering it—he kept no lounging John Thomases in his unostentatious establishment—beholds a pea-green jacket. Enters the jacket, and shakes itself. Wonders the simple Parley, not having the remotest idea, you know, who this intruding garment is. Can it be?—yes of course, it is—Jenkins. Is not that a grand *denouement*? I say the recognition of Orestes by Electra, in the Greek play, so much bragged about by the Scholiasts and that lot, is not fit to hold a candle to it, to speak metaphorically. Is it not Jenkins that I see in Asia, defending himself stoutly, in the midst of an arid plain, against a [317] mounted Arab? The child of the desert is urging his barb straight upon the brave fellow. Hard by may be seen a small fire of sticks, which our hungry but injudicious friend has kindled, with a view to cooking him a mutton chop, or some such dainty. My wishes are for thy welfare, Jenkins! My blessings on thy valor, incomparable man!

That is Leo, I think, that I see in such a heartrending condition on board, or rather on the boards of yonder wreck, while the omnipresent genius of Peter Parley is being tossed in wave-blankets some little way off. Yes, I know him; that *is* Leo. Parley, the chivalrous Parley, saves his life upon that occasion, and earns his lasting gratitude. I doubt whether Leo's character will bear investigation; he comes to great grief in the end. But I like him for his grateful services to his deliverer; and I like him for the mysterious air there is about him, and for his thrilling adventures. He wanders all over the world in a black mantle, nobody knows why; at least I do not, and have no desire to know. I suppose he found a secret satisfaction in roaming everywhere inside that cloak, and that is enough for me. There are three pictures in the whole work that I feel an intense interest in; and one has to do with Leo. It is when he escapes from that prison built into the lake; just as the prisoner of Chillon would have been overjoyed to escape, had he had the knack and vigor of our hero. The particular scene of the act which the delightful artist (what was *his* name? which are his pictures in the National Gallery?) has been good enough to delineate, is our Jack Shepherd holding on to his prison-window by the only remaining bar. Of course he is accompanied by the cloak, which the breezes of the night are swelling into a globular form. Some dozen feet below the cloak, sparkles in the moonlight the water, into which [318] the fugitive proposes to drop, as soon as the artist has done with him. 'Tis a dismal prospect for thee, Leo. May the daughters of the lake bear up thy chin! I have a fond belief that he is not to be drowned at present. We are only in Asia now, and we shall want him many a time yet in the other two quarters.

Who is that sailor I see crouching on that bank? Above his head is a most truculent-looking tiger; below him is an infuriated crocodile. Do you talk to me of dramatic effect, Aristarchus, in those tomes you are always maudling over? I defy you and your tribe, sirrah, to produce me a situation so breath-stopping, so blood-chilling, so every way effective, as the opening scene of Asia. That is a good hit in the Winter's Tale, by a play-wright called Shakspeare, when "exit Antigonus, pursued by a bear." But can it be compared—I appeal to all unprejudiced infants—with that first chapter of our Second Expedition? Was ever a mortal in so dire an extremity? Scylla and Charybdis, to my mind, are a joke to it. But Parley rescues him, and without any of your *Dei ex machina*; though, if there ever was a knot that seemed to require a Deity's fingers for its unravelling, this surely was it. Of course, he rescues him; for it is not Parley's way, whatever other people may do, to hurl his valiant souls prematurely into Hades, and make them a prey to dogs and vultures.

I have said that there were three pictures in the Travels that especially entranced me, and I have mentioned one of them. Now for the other two. The first represents the famous Parley himself, the English Herodotus, playing with a spider in that unwholesome dungeon at Tripoli. Poor [319] Parley! He had his little troubles now and then. There can be no doubt that he is in a tremendous scrape at this time. But his genial temper is unruffled; he makes friends at once with his tiny fellow-tenant, and I dare say is, even now, meditating some Tales of Insects for your and my benefit. He reminds me rather of Goldsmith, making observations for his History of the Earth and Animated Nature. There is the same innocence, the same benignity, the same childish look of innocence about him. I have no doubt the spider is become much attached to him. I lisp out my good wishes for thee, thou even-minded captive. I place my small palm upon thy unkempt head, and bless thee. We are not kept long in suspense about him. A night soon arrives when Leo's cloak insinuates itself into his cell, and a voice is heard in its folds saying, "Follow me," and Parley follows, even as St. Peter followed the angel, and they reach a wharf, and fire a pistol, and a boat pulls in to the shore, and they embark in it, and Parley is once more a free man, and addresses himself afresh to his travels.

My last wood-cut portrays this indefatigable wanderer a second time oppressed by the hard fates. He is in America this time, and by some misfortune (a great good fortune to me and to you, my young brethren and sisters of the nursery) has been made the prey of an Indian tribe. *Me miserum!* The savages have tied him to a tree. There are those hands that have guided that immortal pen through Europe, Asia, and Africa, corded stringently to a *triste lignum* in America! There he stands, denuded of his raiment, and with a writhing expression all over him; for the sportive innocents of the tribe are amusing their leisure hours by shooting their youthful arrows

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at him. Yes; they are making a target of poor P. P. O! my fellow-students, think what this great heart suffers for us! During all that agony he is gathering information for our benefit, is writing for us another incomparable chapter, is taking stock of yonder wigwams.

But the page is growing indistinct before me, and I hear voices saluting me from the nursery, not as a child, but as a veteran. Can it be? No; impossible! And Peter Parley and his brave company recede mournfully to their land, wherever it is, and my hair is a trifle grey, or that mirror lies.

Farewell, my good Peter. Fare ye well, my stout Jenkins, my mysterious Leo, and all ye other fine fellows. I rejoice to have met you once more, and to have spent a pleasant hour with you, and talked over our old companionship.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] I recollect, as an after-thought, one exception. There was a hatter who supplied the town; but he generally made hats to order, and usually in exchange for the skins of foxes, rabbits, muskrats, and other chance peltry. I frequently purchased my powder and shot from the proceeds of skins which I sold him.

[2] The American quail is a species of partridge, in size between the European quail and partridge. The *partridge* of New England is the *pheasant* of the South, and the *ruffed grouse* of the naturalists.

Transcriber's Note

Obvious typographical errors have been repaired.

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