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Title: Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art, No. 727, December 1, 1877

Author: Various

Editor: Robert Chambers

Editor: William Chambers

Release date: April 18, 2016 [EBook #51784]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Susan Skinner and the Online Distributed  
Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR  
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART, NO. 727, DECEMBER 1, 1877 \*\*\*

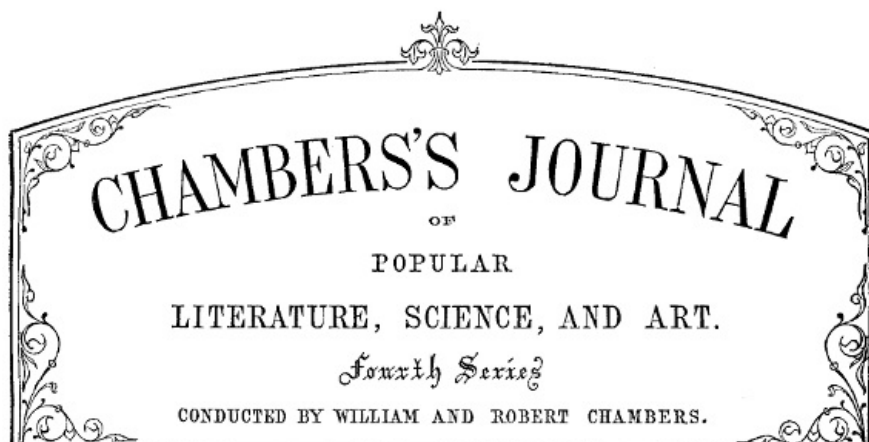
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**CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL  
OF  
POPULAR  
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No. 727.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1877.

PRICE 1½d.

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## COSTERS AND THEIR DONKEYS.

IN walking through any part of the metropolis—be it in the City, the West End, or any part of the suburbs north or south—you will, especially if early in the day, see men with wheeled trucks drawn by donkeys, and laden with fish, vegetables, or other articles for sale to the inhabitants. Rough as they are in appearance, and poor as may be their commercial outset, these are a useful class of persons; and looking to the vastness of the population crowded within a wide but yet limited space, one has a difficulty in knowing how the ordinary life of many individuals could get on without them. A small town could manage pretty well with a few shops. But in the metropolis, in which there are now from three to four millions of people, the shop-system does not fulfil the general wants; and supernumeraries with trucks to hawk their wares among customers, have sprung up as a convenience and necessity. The name given to these humble street-traders is Costers or Costermongers. Their professional designation is of old date, and is traced to Costard, a large variety of apple. Costermongers were therefore originally street-sellers of apples. The apple might be termed their cognisance.

Henry Mayhew, in that laboriously constructed and vastly amusing work of his, *London Labour and London Poor*, issued some six-and-twenty years ago, describes the costermongers as numbering upwards of thirty thousand. It might be inferred that in the progress of time, the number would have increased; but such, we believe, is not the case. Social arrangements have considerably altered. Owing to police regulations, there is a greater difficulty in finding standing-room in the street for barrows. By improved market arrangements and means of transport, small shopkeepers in humble neighbourhoods have become rivals to the costers. As regards means of transport for traders of all sorts, there has been immense progress within the last few years, on account of the abolition of taxes on spring-carts, and latterly the abolition of taxes on horses. We might say that for these reasons alone there are in all large towns ten times more spring-carts and vans for distribution of goods from shops than there were a very few years ago. Of course, all this has limited the traffic of itinerant vendors, and prevented any great increase in their number. Under such drawbacks, however, there are probably still as many as thirty thousand costermongers in and about the metropolis. The young and more rudimental of the class do not get the length of possessing donkeys. They begin with hand-trucks, which they industriously tug away at, until by an improvement in circumstances they can purchase, and start a donkey. Having attained the distinction of driving instead of personally hauling, they have enviedly reached the aristocracy of the profession. They are full-blown costers, and can set up their face in all popular assemblages of the fraternity. A costermonger driving his donkey and habitually taking orders for carrots or turnips as he passes the doors of anticipated customers, is in his way a great man. At all events he presents a spectacle of honest labour, and is immensely more to be respected than the pompous 'swell' who sponges on relations, who is somewhat of a torturation, and who never from the day of his birth did a good hand's turn.

Mayhew, who deserves to be called the historian of London street-dealers of all descriptions, gives a far from pleasing picture of the social condition and habits of the costermongers. With all their industry, they are spoken of as for the most part leading a dismally reckless kind of life—spending their spare hours at 'penny gaffs,' a low species of dancing saloons, and so on. What he mentions is just what might be expected in a loose, uneducated, and generally neglected population of a great city. If you allow people to grow up very much like the lower animals, what are you to expect in the way of delicacy? You may be thankful that with the innumerable disadvantages of their condition, and the temptations that surround them, they have the rough good sense to work for their livelihood, however vagabondising may be their enterprise.

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The lapse of thirty years has made a considerable change for the better in the social economics of the costermongers. They have participated in, and been benefited by, those elevating influences which have been assiduously cultivated by city missionaries, by the press, and other agencies. Penny gaffs have almost disappeared. The licenses compulsorily required for singing, music, dancing, and dramatic rooms may be said to have killed them. The costers with advanced tastes and intelligence seek for more rational recreations than were customary in the past generation. Attached to home life, marriages amongst them are more numerous; they pay greater attention to their children; they read more and drink less; notably they are better dressed and kinder to their donkeys. On this last particular we would specially dwell. A consideration for the comforts of the animals dependent on our bounty marks an advance in civilisation. The character of a man may indeed be known from the manner in which he treats his horse, his dog, his ass, or any other creature of which he is the owner. Rude treatment to any of these dumb and defenceless beings who willingly minister to our profit or pleasure, indicates a low type of humanity. The London coster used to be careless about his donkey. As concerns its food, its style of harness, its stabling, and its hours of work, there was no particular attention. Such, generally speaking, is no longer the case. We might say that the rights and feelings of the animal are respected. So to speak, it is better dressed, and is more lively in its aspect. In its face there seems to be a spirit of contentment. The coster, its master, pats it, and addresses it in a far more encouraging and kindly way than was customary in our early days, or even so lately as twenty years ago.

All this is as it should be. Has it ever occurred to any one to inquire why the donkey should have so long been held in contempt and been cruelly tyrannised over? In the East, and in the south of Europe, the ass is esteemed as a useful beast of burden. Alpine regions inaccessible to wheel-carriages, would not be habitable without the services of this sure-footed and easily-kept animal. It is the only carrier, and may be seen patiently toiling with laden panniers on narrow pathways far up in the mountains. In our own country, as an aid in various laborious occupations, the

donkey has never been properly appreciated, but on the contrary, it has met with such shameful usage as to stunt it in its growth and sorely to try its naturally gentle temper. Reasons could perhaps be assigned for this undeserved contumely. The poor donkey has no great claim to elegance of form. Its long ears are a reproach; no one being apparently aware that Nature has bountifully granted these long trumpet-shaped ears to enable it to hear at a great distance, and if necessary to escape from its enemies. Another reason is, that the donkey is too patient and meek to resent affronts. Its submissiveness is imputed to stupidity. If it could stand up for its rights, it would be more thought of. The lion, which is of no use whatever, and is nothing else than a ferocious wild beast, with a proud overbearing look, is highly honoured as an emblem of power and dignity. The ass is heraldically valueless. It could be adopted only as an emblem of untiring and uncomplaining labour, which would suit no coat armorial. In the improved treatment of the costermonger's donkey we begin to see brighter days for this hitherto down-trodden creature. The costers themselves being improved through different agencies, their animals feel the benefit of the general advance.

In the vast obscurities of London there is a neighbourhood known as Golden Lane and Whitecross Street, intimately associated with the progressive improvement of costers and their donkeys. A kind of oasis in the desert, this neighbourhood, which is now considerably improved in appearance, shines forth as an important central mission, to the merits of which we can but feebly do justice. We have often had occasion to remark how much good is unostentatiously done by one man, through mere force of character and persevering vigilance. The one man in this case has been Mr W. J. Orsman, who for a series of years has earnestly devoted himself to the amelioration of the condition, moral and social, of the poor street-dealers clustered in and around Golden Lane and Whitecross Street. He acts as honorary secretary to the Costermongers' Society; he edits a little periodical, known as the *Golden Lane Mission Magazine*; and he fosters and helps to maintain many small sub-societies, if we may so term them. Among these are a 'Share Barrow Club,' for lending barrows to men who possess neither donkey-carts nor hand-barrows; a Sick and Burial Club, to which the men pay fourpence a week each; a 'Coster's Friends' of Labour Club, through the aid of which the men can put out small sums at interest, or borrow small sums for limited periods; an 'Emily Loan Club' (named, we believe, after a daughter of the Earl of Shaftesbury), for the benefit of respectable female street-dealers; a Penny Savings-bank; a Maternity Fund; a Soup Kitchen; a Coal Fund; a Clothing Club; a Donkey Club (for purchasing donkeys by means of small instalments), besides others for educational, moral, and religious improvement.

The accounts given of the annual meetings of the costers and their friends are among the curiosities of current literature. Coming prominently forward at these assemblages we perceive the Earl of Shaftesbury, a nobleman who, animated by the kindest motives, deems it no sacrifice to his high position to encourage by his presence and by his speeches the humble efforts made by the costers in the progress of well-doing. A few years since, at one of the annual meetings, which are held in May, the Earl of Shaftesbury took the chair. First, there was tea given to three hundred of the men; then was held a donkey-show, in which the excellent condition of the animals was fully evinced; and then came the event of the evening. The costermongers had bought a donkey of unusual size, strength, and beauty; they decked him profusely with ribbons, and brought him into the Hall. In the names of all the men, Mr Carter, a vestryman of St Luke's parish, who kindly interests himself in their welfare, presented the donkey to the Earl of Shaftesbury. The Earl, as is said, had already become, in a whimsical and pleasant sense, a costermonger, and now in virtue of his donkey was an accepted full member of the corps. Whether the Earl's Neddy appreciated the honour conferred on him, we do not know; but we may be quite sure that no hard usage was in store for him.

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As may be generally known, attempts to encourage the improvement of donkeys have taken place through public shows and the offering of prizes. A Donkey and Mule show, held at the Crystal Palace in May 1874, was the means of giving to many persons their first idea of the real value of an exhibition which some had beforehand laughed at, as an absurdity. It was amply proved that the donkey can become a really beautiful animal when well treated; and it was equally made manifest that rough street-dealers can be as kind as their betters when encouraged to be so. An archbishop carried off a prize; several costermongers did the same; and a truly cosmopolitan feeling was exhibited when the prizes were distributed. The Earl of Shaftesbury, who presided on the occasion, humorously claimed to be a costermonger himself; for (to encourage others in a good work) he had enrolled his name in the Golden Lane branch of the Costermongers' Society. Many of the donkeys exhibited at the Crystal Palace had been employed in drawing carts and trucks laden with vegetables, fruit, fish, salt, sand, firewood, crockery-ware, and other commodities; and the excellent condition of some of them won prizes for their owners. Even a few of the donkey-drivers of Blackheath and Hampstead Heath shewed that the fraternity are not always so rough and unkind as they usually appear. It was asserted that donkeys which do not work on Sunday are generally more active and ready on Monday; so that the trader is but little a loser by this course in the long-run. The Earl of Shaftesbury remarked that: 'It would be seen from the show that these animals are designed by Providence to be of the greatest service to mankind; and that kindly treatment and respect—respect for the wants and feelings of the animals—will bring their own reward in willing service.' Several donkey-shows have since been held in and near the metropolis, conveying the same useful lesson.

In August of the present year, a Pony and Donkey show was held in London, in connection with the Golden Lane Mission and Society. The Earl of Shaftesbury and Lady Edith Ashley kindly and patiently examined the hard-working dumb companions of the costermongers, and exchanged pleasant words with the men. There was a tea for four hundred going on nearly at the same time.

After this came a general 'march past,' and a distribution of money and books as prizes. The donkeys were all in admirable condition; while many of the ponies were plump and sleek. His lordship now called for Wilkins, a shrewd prosperous coster of Golden Lane, and bedecked with the insignia of authority as an officer of the Benefit Society. This coster and another made brief speeches; after which Colonel Henderson, Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, declared that the costers are generally deserving of high praise, and that the police have very little trouble with them—when once the laws relating to the public streets are well understood. After a few more speeches and addresses, the noble chairman said in pleasant humour that he had received a poem entitled *The Earl and the Ass*; that the donkey he had received a few years before at the hands of the costermongers was under the doctor's care; and that this fact alone prevented the animal from being present. Every donkey at the show was known by some name or other; and hence there were many such designations as Tommy, Old Tommy, Black Tommy, Jack, Prince, Paddy, Old Jack, Old Sam, Boko, Charlie, Mike, Ugly Tom, Quick; while the other sex in the race was represented by such feminine names as Jenny, Pretty Polly, Kitty, Pretty Jane, Maggie, and Betsy.

We do not know what was the poem to which the Earl of Shaftesbury alluded, but conclude that it was a poem which appeared in *Punch* relative to the presentation of the donkey to his Lordship. To shew how a facetious periodical can rise above mere jesting, we transcribe the following verses:

Could there be a better gift? The patient beast  
Who bears the stick, and will on thistles feast,  
Yet in hard duty struggles to the end,  
Is always grateful to a human friend,  
But seldom finds such friends; is roughly fostered  
By costermongers, sellers of the costard,  
Sellers of other things from door to door,  
And very useful traders for the poor—

He bears a cross, we know; and legends say  
Has borne, in memory of a wondrous day,  
When love wrought miracles, in stress and strife,  
And sick were healed, and dead men raised to life.  
Since when, 'twixt hard knocks, hard words, and hard fare,  
He and his owners both their cross must bear.

The Earl, who loves his race, loves other races;  
He has sought evil out in darksome places,  
And bravely grappled with its many arms,  
And tamed its strength, and paralysed its harms;  
Brought aid to weakness, moved dead weights away,  
That crushed the soul down, deep in mire and clay.  
The greatest, by descending, may ascend:  
The peer who is the costermongers' friend,  
Dares on the platform stroke an ass's ears,  
Rises above the level of his peers.

As an evidence that the endeavours to improve the London costermongers morally as well as physically, have not been thrown away, we may add the following anecdotes.

In 1872 a costermonger named Darby, plying his itinerant trade in the densely packed and comfortless region immediately eastward of the City of London, was one day driving his donkey-cart, laden with cheap fish from Billingsgate. The poor donkey accidentally put his foot into a plug-hole, fell, and broke his leg between the knee and the fetlock—pitching his master out of the cart, and seriously bruising him. His brother-costers advised Darby to kill the animal at once, as no one had ever heard of a donkey's broken leg being healed. But Darby would not listen to this. He took the donkey home, and made a temporary bed for him in the only sitting-room. The man and his wife tended the poor animal, which often groaned with pain. The wife was a washerwoman at the East London Hospital, but she did not grudge to the poor donkey a little of that time which was so valuable to her. A kind lady then undertook to take charge of the donkey until cured, at a place twelve or fourteen miles from London. With bandaging and careful treatment, aided by the benefit of pure fresh air, the leg became sound in eighteen months; and Darby had a good reply to make to those companions who had said to him: 'Kill it, old fellow; it will never be able to get up again. First loss is the best; nobody can set a donkey's leg. Kill it, old fellow, at once!' The kind-hearted costermonger became known as 'Darby, the donkey's friend.' A testimonial was presented to him by the Ladies' Committee of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and he is justly proud of it.

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As we write, a paragraph appears in *The Times*, communicated by an observer. 'Having occasion to pass through Whitecross Street on Thursday evening, my attention was attracted to some fine turnips on a coster's barrow. Retaining my boyish fondness for a raw turnip, I at once selected one, and putting my hand into my pocket, paid, as I thought, two halfpence, the price charged. I had scarcely advanced a hundred yards, when a tap on my shoulder caused me to halt; and lo! the woman from whom I had made my last purchase accosted me. "What did you give me?" she said. I told her as above, when she opened her hand and displayed two bright shillings, which I had given her by mistake, and which she now returned. Thanking the woman for her honesty, I

rectified the matter, reflecting on my way home that the labours of Lord Shaftesbury and his worthy coadjutors among the costermongers could not have been spent in vain; for the cleanliness, civility, and "honour bright" of these small traders are very evident to those who knew the locality ten years ago.'

Our task is ended. We have told all we know about the costermongers, and no doubt much that we have said is not new to many of our readers; but in the way we put it, good may be effected, as shewing the degree of social progress in an industrious and useful class in the metropolis. Donkeys can of course never attain to the beauty, the strength, and the value of the horse. We may admit their inferiority to ponies; but as docile, kept at little expense, and useful in various departments of labour, they have their appointed place in creation. They offer themselves as the poor man's friend and servant. In what numberless cases, as is exemplified by the London costers, might they be employed to meliorate a lot sometimes very hard to bear! We do not bespeak for them more consideration than they deserve. All we expect is that they shall not be treated as abject and worthless. Let us appreciate their unobtrusive willingness to serve to the best of their ability. They ask little, and let that little be conceded. We do not look for elegant turn-outs of donkeys, though we believe the example of a donkey-phaeton has been set by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who is never wanting where the welfare of the lower animals is concerned. From our own personal experience, we may tell of employing Donald, our pet donkey, to draw a light four-wheeled phaeton, holding two persons. In bright harness, enlivened with jingling bells, he proceeds on a drive of eight to ten miles with the speed of a quick-trotting pony, and with a cheerfulness which it does one good to look at.

W. C.

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## A CAST OF THE NET.

### THE STORY OF A DETECTIVE OFFICER.

#### IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

ANY one who feels the slightest curiosity as to the date of my story, can tell pretty nearly when its events occurred, by various incidents mentioned in it, and which the public know quite as much about as I do; but I do not feel inclined, for certain reasons of my own, to identify the precise date or to name the exact spot at which I was employed in the business.

It was a case for the police—for the detective police—and I was the detective employed. Now you must understand that I was not at this time regarded as a regular detective; I was a sergeant in what we will call the 'A' division, and I did ordinary duty; but though I was not yet on the regular detective staff, somehow or another I was very often taken from my usual work and put on all sorts of jobs, sometimes fifty or a hundred miles in the country; and I was once paid a very high compliment by the chief magistrate—of course I mean at Bow Street. He said: 'Nickham, you're not a regular detective, are you?'

'No, your Worship,' I said; 'I am not.'

'Well, Nickham, you're worth a dozen of them; and I have made a special note of your conduct, and shall send it on to the Commissioner.'

The Commissioner was old Sir Richard Mayne then. And that's how I got to be a sergeant; but it was only because I was lucky in two or three cases which the chief magistrate happened to notice.

Well, I was one night at the section-house, for I wasn't on duty (I don't mean the station-house; the section-house is a place where our men lodge, perhaps fifteen or twenty together, or more); and I was sitting in the large room by myself; for it was a fine evening, and none of the men cared much about chess or draughts or things of that kind. I was reading the paper by myself, when the door opened and one of our people looked in. It was Inspector Maffery; and I was very much surprised to see him there, as our place was quite out of his district. Seeing I was by myself, he said: 'Oh!' in a tone which shewed he was pleased at it, and turning to some one outside, he said: 'Come in, sir; the party is here by himself.' With this, a tall, stout, gray-whiskered gentleman came in.

Inspector Maffery closed the door after him, and not only did that, but shot the bolt, and then coming to me at the table, says: 'Nickham, this is Mr Byrle, the celebrated engineer that you have heard of.'

Of course I had heard of him; in fact I once had a cousin who worked in his factory. So I bowed and made a civil remark.

Then Inspector Maffery went on to say: 'This, Mr Byrle, is Sergeant Nickham, one of our most active men, as I have told you, and who, I think, is just the man for you. This place is very safe; and as I have bolted the door, and the men below know I am here, there will be no interruption; and you can say anything you wish to Nickham as well here as anywhere.'

So they sat down; and with a very polite speech, for he was really a gentleman, Mr Byrle told me what he wanted.

He made a long story of it; I shall not; but the public have really no idea of putting facts well together, and presenting them without any excrescences, if I may say so. However, I listened patiently, and found out what was required. It seemed that his factory had been robbed on several nights, in spite of an extra watchman being put on; and only the completely finished and most expensive engine-fittings were taken; shewing that the thief, whoever he was, knew what things to take, where to find them, and where to dispose of them. The robberies were mortifying, because they proved, as all such things do, that the firm were employing a thief, and trusting some one who was deceiving them. The loss of these fittings often delayed other work seriously; and above all, it was considered that it demoralised all the factory (where best part of a thousand hands were employed), by shewing that the firm *could* be robbed with impunity. So, although it was hardly the sort of business which a first-rate man was required to work; and though I say it myself, and though spite and envy in certain quarters kept me off the regular staff, there was not a better man in London than I was, and our people knew it; yet I listened very patiently, and asked such questions as occurred to me. For a civilian, Mr Byrle seemed pretty sharp at catching my drift; while as an old hand, and knowing what was best with the public, Inspector Maffery sat without saying a word, or one now and again at the most, leaving Mr Byrle to settle things for himself. I then roughly sketched out a scheme, which in a few words I laid before the gentleman.

'I understand your plan entirely, Mr Nickham,' said the old gentleman; 'and the sooner you begin, the better, for I feel we shall be successful. Mr Maffery assures me you can be relieved from your duty here at any time; so I trust there will be no delay. I have said money is not to stop you, and you will take this on account of expenses—when exhausted, let me know.' With that he handed me a bank-note, and I thanked him, and of course promised to do my best.

Then Inspector Maffery said: 'I will see to all the essentials, Nickham, so make your preparations as soon as you can.'

Now I liked Maffery very well, and he was certainly one of our best inspectors; but all this civility, taking trouble off my hands and so forth, merely told me that Mr Byrle was a most liberal party, and that Maffery believed he had got hold of a good thing. Mr Byrle shook hands with me, and they went away together, leaving me to think over the business.

I must confess I was a little disappointed—although I could see I was likely to be well paid for my work—in being set at such a very commonplace job as this. After I had traced Lady Brightley's jewels (the reader does not remember this, I daresay, as it was kept very quiet, but I got praised for my management of the case), I thought I should have been selected for the most important work; and when Inspector Maffery brought Mr Byrle in, I really hoped it was about the great Bank-paper robbery.

The reader is quite aware, I have no doubt, that Bank of England notes are printed on paper specially made for the purpose, and that no other paper has three rough edges, the only clean-cut edge being where the two notes have been separated—and this is one of the great tests of a genuine note. It will be recollected too, how a great quantity of this paper was stolen from the mills at Alverstoke, and the Bank was in a terrible state about it, because as for engraving and all that handicraft sort of work—why, bless me! there's men by the dozen in England and on the continent too—I know some of them—who could print off a note with all the little touches on which the examiners rely, as perfectly imitated as if they had worked for the Bank for years. So when the gang got hold of the genuine *paper*, it was a serious matter. They took the principal thief, however, and got the paper back. A desperate service it was too, as B—, the chief man in the affair, was one of the most resolute and desperate roughs in London; and the officers that took him ran great risk, and deserved great praise.

Of course the public rejoicing was very great, because nobody had known when the bad notes might come into circulation; but we knew, some of us, that it was all a sham, that a lot of the paper was still missing, and that if the right man got hold of it, there would soon be thousands of forged notes—all fives probably—flying about. It was pretended that all the paper was got back, or that the Bank people thought so, on purpose to make the holders of the remainder think that the hunt was given up; but it was no such thing. Two or three of the best men in the force were to continue the search, and I had hoped I should be selected; but I was told I would not do, because I could not speak any foreign language, and it was thought the men might have to go abroad after the paper. For all that, when I saw Inspector Maffery come in with Mr Byrle, I thought, as I just said, that I was to be chosen. However, I had found out my mistake; and I was thinking over my instructions, when the door opened again. I did not look up at first, supposing it was one of our men; but a cough attracting my attention, I turned round. I saw a slight-built, rather under-sized young fellow, with something of a foreign cut about him, very good-looking though, and a most uncommonly piercing eye; and he at once said: 'I am Mr Byrle's clerk, and have been waiting for him, and he wishes to know where he is to see you?'

'To see *me*?' I said. 'Why—does he want to see me?'

'I think what Mr Byrle means is, that in case he wants to speak to you, where shall he find you?' replied the young fellow. 'You see I don't know much of the business myself; I only know he has engaged you as a detective.'

'And that's more than you ought to have known,' I said; 'however, Mr Byrle knows his own business best. Tell him that of course he can always hear of me under the name agreed upon, at the *Yarmouth Smack*, where I shall lodge.'

'Under what name, did you say?' asks the clerk.

'I didn't say any name, and I don't mean to say any name,' was my answer. 'If Mr Byrle wants any

more information, he had better write.'

'Oh, very well,' says he, quite short and sharp, for I supposed he did not like my manner, and away he goes.

I sat and thought, or tried to think, but I could not get on so well as before; the visit of that young fellow had unaccountably upset me, and I could not settle down again. Then in came first one, then another, then two or three of our men, and so I got up and went out. I had hardly turned the corner, when I met Inspector Maffery, and it was pretty easy to see by his rosy cheeks and unsteady eye what *he* had been up to.

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'Off for a meditative stroll, I suppose, Mr Nickham?' he says. 'You are the boy for my money.'

'I'm glad to hear it, Inspector,' I said. 'But I don't think much of Mr Byrle's clerk, nor of Mr Byrle himself for his judgment in sending him to me.'

'Mr Byrle's clerk!' he says; and then repeats it: 'Mr Byrle's clerk!'

'Ah!' I said, 'Mr Byrle's clerk. He came with a message from Mr Byrle to know where he should meet me if he wanted to see me. I had already settled with him how I would call at his manager's private house with my report, whenever I had anything to say; and he ought to have been satisfied with that.'

'You are making some mistake here, Sergeant Nickham,' says Inspector Maffery. 'Mr Byrle had no clerk with him; and moreover than that, I've been with him myself till the last five minutes; till he got into the train in fact, and can swear he never spoke to anybody but myself from the time I left you.'

'Then there's a screw loose!' I said; 'there's a something wrong here, Inspector, and we have got to deal with some uncommonly deep files. They have scored the first notch in the game, that's clear; but perhaps we can turn the tables on them all the better for it.'

'If there's a man in the force as can do it, Sergeant Nickham, you are that man,' says Inspector Maffery; 'I'll trust it to you; for my head just now isn't up to the polishing off of such a business. But do what you like.'

'Can I have Peter Tilley for a week, Inspector?' I said.

'Have half a dozen for a month, if you like,' he answered: 'Mr Byrle is that much in earnest, Sergeant Nickham, and he is that rich and liberal, that he would buy up half a division rather than be beaten. So pick who you like, and keep them as long as you like. I will see you all right.'

'Very good, Inspector,' I said. 'Then I will have Peter to-morrow; and don't make any report of this little adventure, not even to Mr Byrle. I think I see the little game, and I will try to spoil it.'

If I had had any doubt as to the Inspector having had quite enough brandy-and-water with Mr Byrle (it was sure to be brandy-and-water, for Inspector Maffery never touched anything else; he said it was ordered for his liver)—I say if I had felt any doubt before, I should have had none after the way he wrung my hand and said: 'If there's a man in the force as can do credit to the force and bring 'em through in triumph, that man is Sergeant Nickham.' And so, with another squeeze of my hand, he walked away with a step so excessively solemn and stately, that it was only a little better—a very little—than staggering across the pavement, in the way of telling what was the matter with him; but Inspector Maffery was not a bad fellow, and never carried favour with those above him by worrying and spying on those below him, and so we liked the old boy.

Now this was a very awkward incident—I mean of course about the clerk—and shewed me that my work had already begun, and was likely to be a little more intricate than I had expected. How the stranger came to know so much as he evidently did, I did not trouble myself just then to consider: he *did* know it; that was the fact I was concerned with. Why it was worth his while to take so much trouble about a small affair, I did not much care either, though this was more important, as it was evident some one had employed him, for I would swear he was no smith or fitter; and so it was clear there was a good many in the swim. I don't mean to use any slang if I can help it, but 'swim' is a regular word, you know, and we can't do without it.

My mind was at once made up; I was always very quick in making up my mind, and prided myself upon it. I am bound to admit I often got wrong through it, but perhaps no oftener than people who were slower; and I took care to make a good deal of the times when I *was* right, and so that covered everything. Now, Peter Tilley, the officer I had asked for, was a man as much about my size and build and colour of hair and eyes, as if he had been my twin-brother; and indeed he was not much unlike me in his features. Any one who knew us would not mistake us for each other, but a casual acquaintance might do so. I was wearing then rather extensive moustaches and whiskers; they gave me quite a military cut; and they were not common in the force then, though any man wears them now that chooses. I at once determined to shave them off—for I never allowed personal considerations to interfere with business—and make Tilley wear a set of false articles as much like my own as possible; and this I knew would immensely increase his resemblance to me as I appeared that day, while I should of course look very unlike myself. Then I would send Tilley to the *Yarmouth Smack*—which was a public-house at which, under some disguise, I had agreed to lodge while on my search—and he could keep his eyes open for anything going on; but he was not to trouble himself much. It was uncommonly likely, I thought, that the spies—for I didn't doubt there was more than one—would make sure that Smith or Brown or Jones, or whatever Tilley called himself, the lodger at the *Yarmouth Smack*, was Sergeant Nickham, and so, as long as they kept him in sight, they had the trump-card, if I may be bold enough to say so, in their hands. And if I had not met Inspector Maffery when I did, when the

clerk's visit was fresh upon me, and I was rather out of temper about it, I should probably never have thought of mentioning the matter, and the detective work would have begun on the wrong side.

Byrle & Co.'s factory was close to the Thames, and had a wharf in connection with it, and one waterside public-house would do as well for me as another. In fact, as the receiver was as likely to live on the opposite bank as on their own, I might actually gain by living at some place with the river between me and the factory, for a boat could easier cross the river in the dark than a cart could drive through the narrow streets and lanes without being noticed.

I told Tilley as much of my plan as was necessary; he was delighted to help me, for he fancied I was a rising man, and it was something of an honour to work with me. He was willing enough to wear the moustache too; indeed this was such a common and natural sort of disguise, that it was adopted quite as a matter of course. I did *not* tell him that I wished him to be mistaken for me; I took care to choose the moustache and whisker; but it never occurred to him why that particular style was chosen; nor did I tell him, or Inspector Maffery or Mr Byrle, that I was going to shave. There's nothing like keeping your own counsel in these cases; and I resolved that if I had occasion to report anything to the inspector (for he was supposed to have the case in hand), I would actually wear a false moustache myself; but it was specially arranged that I should not go near any of the authorities until I thought it desirable, for Mr Byrle was of opinion that if the least suspicion got afloat with regard to myself, the men who were robbing him were quite fly to watching where I went. (I am afraid I have dropped into slang again; to be 'fly' to a thing, means that you are up to it, or down to it, as some prefer to say.) Well, this was Mr Byrle's opinion, and I am bound to say, after the visit of the sham clerk, it was mine too.

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## OUR IRON-CLADS.

IN our ballad literature not a little is heard of 'the wooden walls of Old England.' History is so full of exploits by three-deckers and frigates, that one feels as if the general disuse of these engines of naval warfare would lead to national disaster. England, however, does not stand alone in exchanging wooden walls for iron-clads of an entirely new type. All the navies of the world have been thus transformed in the twenty years which have elapsed since our last great war. There are ships of war now afloat which could single-handed meet and defeat the whole fleet that followed Nelson and Collingwood at Trafalgar. These great changes have been brought about by the use of armour-plating, the growth of the guns, the improvement of marine engines, and the adoption of machinery to aid in the working and the fighting of the ship. We remember a few months ago hearing one of our admirals, a man of the old school, talking of naval war. 'In past times,' he said, 'war was all courage and chivalry. What is it now? Cunning and machinery!' And to some extent he was right. Cunning and machinery will play a great part in the naval battles of the future; but of course there must be courage, and iron courage too, behind them, or iron plates and monster guns will avail but little. In the new class of war-vessels, the massive plates are bolted on to iron frames; the only wood is the 'backing' of Indian teak behind and sometimes between them. Oak, so far as beams and planks are concerned, has disappeared from the navy. The 'hearts of oak' are left, however, it is to be hoped, in the brave fellows who happily still man our new navy.

Our Navy List tells us that we have something like eight hundred ships of war, including in round numbers sixty iron-clads. These figures given in this way of course require some explanation. In the list are included gun-boats, tenders, store-ships, tug-boats, old wooden ships which are really waiting to be broken up, training-ships, and wooden guard-ships stationed at various ports. Our fighting navy really consists of the iron-clads and the unarmoured cruisers built for high speed; to these we may add gun-boats of a recent type built to carry one very heavy gun. And with regard to the iron-clads it must be noted that even they are not all fitted to take a place in line of battle. Many of them are ships built from 1861 to 1864, having very thin armour, comparatively light guns, and we fear in many cases worn-out boilers. The *Warrior*, our first real iron-clad man-of-war (for we can hardly count as such the floating batteries), was launched in 1861. She was built on the lines of a fast sailing-ship, and has none of the heaviness of form which was unavoidably given to most of her successors. When she was launched, armour was still in the region of doubtful projects, and it was considered a remarkable success to give her four-and-a-half-inch plates on her central portion only, for the ends were wholly unprotected. The *Warrior* too was an enormously long ship—no less than three hundred and eighty feet from stem to stern; but even this length was exceeded in the sister ships *Northumberland* and *Minotaur*. These ships are neither strong in armour nor handy in manœuvring; they have of course their uses, but they cannot be compared with the later ships constructed when we had acquired some practical knowledge of what an iron-clad should be.

As soon as it was recognised that rapidity in manœuvring—in other words, power of turning easily and certainly—was a necessary quality of a good iron-clad, ships were built much broader in proportion to their length; and this facility of manœuvring was further increased by the general introduction of the twin-screw; that is, the placing of two screw propellers one on each side of the stern-post, each being independent of the other; so that one or both can be used to drive the ship; or one can be reversed while the other continues driving ahead; thus enabling the ship to turn as easily as a boat when the oarsman backs water with one hand and continues pulling with the other.



While the increase of armour kept pace with the growth of the guns, and rose gradually from four inches on the *Warrior* to two feet on the *Inflexible*, a species of internal defence was gradually developed by the division of the ship into numerous compartments; so that if she were pierced below the water-line by the explosion of a torpedo or the blow of an enemy's ram, the water would only partially fill her, and she would still be able to keep afloat. All the later iron-clads have a double bottom, the space between the inner and outer bottom being divided into numerous cells. The body of the ship is divided by the water-tight bulkheads extending from side to side, and from the bottom to the upper deck. To these transverse bulkheads Mr Barnaby, the present chief constructor, has added in all the iron-clads which he has designed a longitudinal bulkhead extending from stem to stern, and dividing the ship into two halves in the direction of her length. Further, there are minor compartments formed by strong bulkheads, designed for the protection of the engines and boilers. In a large ship these compartments of various kinds are very numerous; the *Inflexible* contains upwards of one hundred and twenty; great care, therefore, has to be taken in planning them, in order to insure that this isolation of the various parts of the ship may not interfere with the working of her guns, engines, and steering apparatus while she is in action.

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Side by side with this development of defensive power, there went on an equally rapid development of machinery and mechanical appliances for the working of the ship. The first necessity of an iron-clad is powerful engines, to drive her at a speed of thirteen or fourteen knots an hour on an emergency, though of course in ordinary times a much lower rate of speed is considered sufficient, and the engines work at half their power, or are stopped entirely, while the ship proceeds on her way under sail. But the propulsion of the ship is only one of the numerous duties to be discharged by this new adoption of steam, a power which was only just really establishing itself in our navy when we went to war with Russia in 1854. An iron-clad does not carry anything like the crew that used to be put on board of an old three-decker. Eleven hundred men used to be the complement of a ship of one hundred and thirty-one guns; one-third of the number is more than the crew of some of our most formidable vessels of to-day. In former days guns could be handled and worked by men and even by boys, provided the number of hands were sufficient; and nowadays it is very different work running in and out guns weighing thirty-five, thirty-eight, and eighty-one tons, and dragging along and ramming down shot and shell weighing from six hundred pounds up to three-quarters of a ton, and cartridges each of which contains perhaps more than two barrels of gunpowder. This kind of fighting is work for giants, and so the giant Steam lends his strong hand to do it. Steam turns the turrets of the monitor, steam exerts its force through the medium of hydraulic machinery, checks the recoil of the heavy gun as it runs in, forces the mechanical sponge into its bore, works the shot-lift that brings up the ammunition, works the rammer that drives it home into the gun; finally runs the gun out and points it, the huge gun raising or lowering its muzzle, or turning to right or left, as the captain of its crew touches a valve-handle or presses down a little lever.

But steam is not applied to the guns only; it works the windlasses, winches, and capstans that raise the anchors, braces up the yards, and lifts stores and heavy weights in and out of the ship, or moves them from place to place. It furnishes power to the steering apparatus, works the pumps, keeps the ventilating fans going; and in ships that shew the electric light at night it drives the electrical apparatus. Engines are made to start engines in some of the newer iron-clads. Instead of moving heavy levers when he wishes to set the engines going, the engineer just touches a miniature engine, which moves the levers of the larger engines for him. And all these more important engines are multiplied and made to act either together or separately, so that in the event of one being disabled, others are left to do its work. We hear of ships of war being fitted with twenty or thirty engines, without counting sundry smaller ones. Those of the turret-ship *Temeraire* are thus divided—two main engines for propelling the ship, with two starting engines; four feed engines, two circulating engines, two bilge engines, four fan engines, one capstan engine, one steering engine, two pumping engines connected with the hydraulic loading-gear, two turning engines for rotating the turn-tables or turrets, two engines to pump water in case of fire, four engines for hoisting out ashes, one engine for condensing air in working the Whitehead torpedo, and an engine for the electric light apparatus. Admiral Fellowes had such ships as these in his mind when, speaking before a committee of the Admiralty, he said: 'Men-of-war now are nothing more nor less than floating machines; there are the steam capstans, the steam steering-gear; every portion of your guns, slides, and carriages worked by steam; there are the double bottom and the inner bottom, and everything connected with the machinery; in fact the whole ship is now a floating machine, and is more or less under the control of the chief engineer.'

In all our great naval wars, our ships had only a single weapon, the gun, and this not a very heavy one, for the highest limit of naval ordnance was the sixty-eight pounder, which indeed was looked upon as a very terrible weapon. To the guns of nowadays, the old thirty-two and sixty-eight pounders are mere pop-guns. There is the huge eighty-one-ton gun, twenty-four feet long, and six feet thick at the breech, its huge shot of fifteen hundred pounds being capable of penetrating thirty inches of armour. There is the thirty-eight-ton gun, whose shot of six or seven hundred pounds weight has smashed a thirteen-inch plate at a thousand yards. Then there are guns of six-and-a-half, nine, twelve, eighteen, and twenty-five tons, with projectiles weighing from one to six hundred pounds, all of them capable of piercing armour, against which the old naval guns would be as useless as a schoolboy's squirt. But the gun does not stand alone. There are two other weapons, either of which is more terrible, and in certain cases more effective than the heaviest gun afloat. These are the ram and the torpedo, the latter of which has recently been described in these columns. Let us, however, have a look at the ram. In the old days, the ship herself had no

attacking power. She fought with her guns; or else she was laid alongside of her enemy, and the crew with axe, pike, and cutlass clambered over the bulwarks and on to the hostile decks, which they cleared by hand-to-hand fighting. Probably no iron-clad will ever be laid alongside of another to board her. Were an iron-clad to go into action, all the openings in the deck would be closed, and every one, even the steersman, under cover. Many modern ships could continue a fight successfully with a hundred or a hundred and fifty boarders in possession of the upper deck; and their own turret guns, or the fire of friendly ships, would clear away the intruders if necessary. Thus, in the recent war between Paraguay and Brazil, during one of the river engagements, a Paraguayan ship ran alongside of a Brazilian turret-ship and sent a crowd of boarders on to her iron decks. They met with no opposition; the round turret in front of them continued its fire against a Paraguayan monitor; while another Brazilian monitor sent volley after volley of grape-shot sweeping across the decks of her consort. In a few minutes they were clear. The Paraguayan boarders had been killed, had jumped into the water, or had escaped to one of their own ships. This, we believe, is the only attempt on record at boarding an iron-clad; its failure shews how hopeless such an enterprise is against a ship the possession of whose deck does not give any control over her movements or those of her crew. It is therefore probable that it will be only in the most exceptional cases that iron-clads will approach each other with the object of boarding. If they do come to close quarters, it will be only to use the ram.

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This idea of fighting with the ram is a very old one. The *beak* was the weapon of the ancient navies of the Mediterranean, and the beak was what we now call the ram. It is quite evident that to make the ship herself, weighing from nine to twelve thousand tons, take the place of the projectile, by driving her at a high speed against a hostile vessel, is to use a weapon more powerful than the heaviest gun. A ship like the *Inflexible* or the *Sultan*, with a speed of ten or twelve knots an hour, will strike a heavier blow than a shot from even the eighty-one-ton gun would give at a range of a few hundred yards; and while the injury done by the shot will probably be above the water-line, the ram will cut the hostile vessel down from above the water-line perhaps almost to the keel. Every one remembers how the *Iron Duke* sank the *Vanguard* by an accidental collision at a low rate of speed. But in this case the injury was such that the *Vanguard* did not sink for nearly an hour. Much more terrible was the sinking of the iron-clad *Re d'Italia* in the battle of Lissa in 1866. The Austrian admiral found himself inferior in gun-power to the Italian ships; he therefore decided on using the ram as much as possible. 'I rammed away at everything I saw painted gray,' he said himself in describing the action. One of these gray ships was the splendid iron-clad *Re d'Italia*, which struck fair amidships by Tegethoff's bow, went to the bottom of the Adriatic with all her crew in less than a minute. We believe that this use of the ram will play a great part in any future English naval engagement.

Such are the means of defence and attack possessed by our fleet. There has never yet been anything like a grand engagement between two great iron-clad navies; when that takes place, we shall see what the new naval warfare really is; meanwhile one thing is quite certain—that iron-clads are neither as handy nor as comfortable as the grand old ships of say forty years ago. Sailors in the royal navy have had to exchange the well-lighted, airy lower-decks of the line-of-battle ship for the hot dark 'compartments' of the iron-clad; for oil-lamps, hot rooms, and artificial ventilation, and perhaps the prospect of being battered with monster guns or blown up with torpedoes. This change of conditions may have serious consequences, not contemplated by designers of iron-clads. At present the crews of these vessels have been nearly all engaged as boys, put on board training-ships. They turn out a fine set of young men, but they do not remain in the service. Before they are thirty, most of them have gone, and are engaged in employment on shore, or in yachts, or in ocean steam lines. We believe there will be also a growing difficulty in procuring a good set of officers, including surgeons, for the iron-clads. Young men of good education, with numerous openings for them in civil life, do not like to be immured in dark floating hulks, with the risk at any moment of being helplessly sent to the bottom of the sea. We at anyrate know the fact of two young men trained as surgeons for the royal navy who on these grounds have shrunk from following their intended profession. In short, science may invent ships of overpowering destructive grandeur, but it cannot invent men who will agree to live under conditions of dismal discomfort in these floating dungeons. Such, we imagine, will be found to be weak points in a navy of iron-clads. Nor can we look with indifference on the many instances of disaster in the mere working of these new-fashioned vessels. Explosions and other fatalities follow in pretty quick succession. Furnaces and steam-machinery are constantly going wrong. Shafts and bearers are going wrong. There seems to be such a complication in all departments, that one can have little confidence in matters going quite right in case of that kind of active service involved in absolute warfare. A contemplation of these several contingencies, it must be owned, is far from pleasant.

Since this article was written, news has come of a successful naval engagement which shews that our sailors are as brave and as skilful as ever they were. One day last May a rebel Peruvian iron-clad, the *Huascar*, having committed piratical acts in the Pacific, was attacked by two of our fine wooden cruisers, the *Shah* and the *Amethyst*. The two English wooden ships fairly beat the iron-clad turret-ship, which was so damaged that the rebel crew were only too glad to go into harbour and surrender to the Peruvian authorities. This is the first English action with an iron-clad; and slight as it is in itself, the fact that our ships were only wooden cruisers meant for no such severe work, gives it some importance, and makes the victory a legitimate cause for well-founded satisfaction.

# THE 'SOFTIE'S' DREAM.

## IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

IN the fertile valley of the river Suck, just where some years ago such consternation was created by a portion of the Bog of Allen shewing an inclination to settle for good, there stood many years since a farm-house of rather a better class than any of those in the immediate neighbourhood, or indeed in any of the adjacent villages. The house stood a little off the high-road from Castlerea to Loughlinn, and few people who passed failed to observe its well-to-do, comfortable appearance and 'smug' haggard (steading). Its occupier, Owen Kearney, was a very hard-working sober man, who not only minded his own business, but let his neighbours' affairs alone. He was never in arrears with his rent, had his turf cut a year in advance, and got his crops down first and in earliest; so that it was not without some reason that people said he was the most comfortable farmer in the village of Glenmadda. Added to being the most industrious, Owen Kearney was (what few tenant farmers in the west of Ireland were thirty years ago) something of a speculator. He did not tie his savings up in an old stocking and hide it in the thatch of the barn or cow-house, as the majority of his neighbours who had any savings usually did; but despite the repeated warnings of Shaun More Morris, the philosopher and wiseacre of the village, invested in new and improved farming implements and in horses, of which he was not unjustly considered the best judge in the County Roscommon. As he did all his business when he was perfectly sober, he seldom had any cause to complain of his bargain; and the 'luck-penny,' instead of spending in the public-house, he made a rule of giving to the priest for the poor of the parish.

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Not being in the habit of gossiping either about his own or his neighbours' affairs, no one could form any correct idea of how rich Owen Kearney really was; but it was generally known that he kept his money at the bank, as on fair and market days he went into that building with his pockets well filled and came out with them empty, and mounting his cob, rode home quietly, long before the fun or the faction fights commenced.

Not so, however, the younger of his two sons, Larry, a wild restless lad of seventeen, on whom neither the precept nor example of his father and brother seemed to have the least influence. Martin, the eldest, was steady and thoughtful like his father; but Larry, with his boisterous laugh and ready joke, dancing blue eyes and flaxen hair, never spent a minute in thinking during his life. While he worked, which was not often, he was as good as two, his father used to say; and 'when he took his diversion he was the divil at it,' Martin used to add good-naturedly. Innumerable were the scrapes Larry got into, and miraculous were the methods by which he managed to extricate himself. There was not a wake, wedding, or christening for miles round that he was not to be found at. No merry-gathering or fair was complete without him; and it was almost a proverb that Larry Kearney was the last to sit down wherever there was a dance, and the first to shake a shillelah wherever there was a shindy. Of course he was his mother's favourite; such boys invariably are. She shut her eyes to his faults, supplied him with money without any questions, and being a very religious woman, or what in that part of Ireland is termed a voteen, she atoned for all his shortcomings.

There was another member of Owen Kearney's family as full of fun and mischief in her way as Larry; this was Dora Costello, the farmer's orphan niece. Little Dora, everybody called her, because, when she lost her own father and mother, and went to live with her uncle and aunt, she was a little toddling thing of three years old. At the time this story tells of she was a fine girl of seventeen, tall, finely formed, and as graceful as a willow. A fine specimen of an Irish peasant girl was Dora Costello, with her red-and-white complexion, merry changeable hazel eyes, and rich, reddish auburn hair. There was not a farmer's daughter within many a mile who could *scutch* or spin as much flax of an evening, nor one who could better milk a cow or make a roll of butter. Bright, intelligent, and good-tempered, with a tongue as ready as her fingers, and a sense of humour as rich as her brogue, Dora was a general favourite, and as a natural consequence had numerous admirers. Being by nature somewhat of a coquette, she managed to play them off one against another with an ease and grace which a London belle might have envied, keeping good friends with all, and giving none the slightest preference. But when it came to a question of marriage, it was a different thing altogether. Dora declared she was very happy with her uncle and aunt, and unceremoniously refused all the eligible young men in her own and the next village, declaring of each in turn that she would 'as soon marry Barney Athleague.'

Long ago, in almost every Irish village there was to be found hanging about the farm-houses some poor half-witted creature, called in one place an *onsha*, in others an *omadthau*n, and in the County Roscommon a *softie*. They were boys without any knowledge of who their parents had been, cast as children on the charity of some village, from which they usually took their names, as Johnnie *Loughlinn*, and Barney *Athleague*. How Barney came to make his way to Glenmadda no one knew, but one day when about ten years old he was seen following a hunt. Stumbling over a loose stone, he sprained his ankle, and so was thrown on the protection of the villagers. A glance at the lad's motley appearance and vacant face was sufficient to shew what he was; and as in most parts of Ireland, as in Germany, there exists amongst the peasantry a sort of superstitious regard for silly people, poor Barney found food and shelter, now from one, now from another, as indeed the softies invariably did; in return for which they ran on errands and looked after the pigs and poultry, and were always at hand in an emergency.

As a rule, the softie looked a great deal bigger fool than he really was. He contrived to live and be fed, clothed and lodged without working. He made himself at home everywhere, was generally treated very well, and never by any chance treated badly. He knew everybody's business (for

curiosity was one of his virtues or vices), and with the special advantage that people thought he knew nothing at all. All sorts of matters were discussed freely round the hearth in his presence, he meantime staring into the fire, sucking his fingers, or rolling on the floor with the dog, no more heeded than that animal; yet all the while drinking in the conversation, and with a sort of crooked wisdom treasuring it up. Animal tastes and instincts were generally the most marked in the softie; as a rule, he was greedy, selfish, and uncleanly in his habits, violent in his antipathies, yet with a capacity for attaching himself with a strong dog-like fidelity and affection to a friend.

Such was Barney Athleague—perhaps a trifle better and more intelligent than the generality of his class; and there was no place in the village where he spent so much of his time, or was so well treated, as at Owen Kearney's; first, because they were naturally kindly people; and next, Mrs Kearney's religious feelings made her especially good to the poor and friendless; and there was no person in the whole world whom the softie cared so much about as Dora. Wherever she went, Barney was not far behind. He was always ready to do anything in the world she asked him, no matter how wearisome or hazardous. When she was a child, he climbed the highest trees to get her birds' nests, tumbled like a spaniel into the river to get her lilies, and walked miles and miles to recover a pet kid of hers which had gone astray. As she grew older, he carried her cans when she went milking, fed her poultry, and in short waited on her and followed her about like a lapdog. It was great fun to the 'boys' who used to assemble in the farmer's kitchen of a winter's evening to tell stories and gossip, to see Barney fly into a furious passion if any one he did not like touched Dora, or even put his hand upon her dress.

One of the persons the poor softie most cordially detested was Larry Kearney; perhaps because the young man was too fond of teasing him, or else too much given to sitting beside Dora. How or whatever the cause, the poor fool hated him; but with a prudence which one would hardly have expected in a softie, he kept his opinions to himself, and watched his enemy like a lynx. Not once or twice he saw the young man descend from the loft where he slept with Luke the 'help,' after the family were sound asleep, and opening the door, steal noiselessly from the house; and after much consideration, Barney at last made up his mind to follow him and learn his destination, nothing doubting but it was the village public-house or *shebeen*, or the forge, which was often a haunt for the idlers to play cards and get tipsy in. But Larry took the very opposite direction from what the softie imagined. Crossing two or three fields, he skirted a plantation of ash, on the other side of which was a *rath* or *forth*, said to be haunted, and the resort of 'the good people.' The place was very generally avoided after nightfall; and Barney's courage was beginning to fail him, when Larry was joined by three or four other young men, which revived his spirits, and nerved him to follow silently and cautiously as a cat.

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On rounding the hill he saw there were between thirty and forty persons assembled in a field, and after a few minutes one of them advanced to meet Larry. The softie, on seeing the man approach, concealed himself behind the ferns and brambles, all his curiosity aroused, and strained his ears to catch the conversation; but the men spoke so indistinctly that he could not distinguish a word till after a little while they drew nearer to his cover.

'Look here, Larry,' one said, drawing something which gleamed in the moonlight from a cave or hollow in the hill-side, within arm's length of Barney's crouching form. 'Look, me boy, there's twoscore pike-heads lying snug enough in there.'

'Good captain,' Larry replied, with his merry laugh, 'an' there's two-score "boys" ready to handle them.'

'Yes; but we want more,' the captain said, as he replaced the weapon in the cave, and carefully drew the thick grass, ferns, and blackberry bushes over it. 'Did you speak e'er a word to Martin?'

Larry laughed again. 'Sorra a word, captain; an' if "Molly" herself was to go an' ax *him*, he wouldn't join us,' he said; 'an' bedad, maybe he might inform!' he added merrily—and the men moved away.

'Ha, ha!' Barney said to himself as he crept from his hiding-place, and made his way back to the farm-house; 'that's where Larry goes. An' who's Molly, who's Molly? I'll ask Miss Dora to-morrow who's Molly;' and with this reflection he crept into his bed and fell asleep.

## CHAPTER II.

'Father, I think I'd like to join the Volunteers,' said Martin Kearney one day, about a month after the above event; 'the country is in a bad way, an' it's time for them that love peace and quietness to spake up.'

'True for you, Martin; an' if I was younger I'd do the same thing,' Owen Kearney said, looking up from the newspaper, in which he was reading an account of the arrest of several of the rebels known in 184- as the *Molly Maguires*, from their having first met in the house of a woman of that name. 'It's bad for the poor boys that went with the "Mollies."'

'Will you join with me, Larry?' Martin asked.

But he shook his head, as he replied somewhat hastily: 'Not I, faith; the "boys" never did anything to me.'

'An' I'm not going to do anything to them,' answered Martin quietly. 'Only, I think it's right for us to shew that we're honest Roscommon boys, an' have nothing to do with villains who go round the country at night frightening women an' children, an' murdering poor innocent cattle, not to mention shooting their next-door neighbour from behind a hedge, without any reason. I know *I'd*

liever be a sheep-stealer than a Molly Maguire; an' to shew I have no dealings with them, I'll go to-morrow to Boyle an' list in the Volunteers.'

Larry used every argument to prevent his brother going to Boyle as he said, but without any avail; and early the next morning Martin started to do what numbers of the better class of farmers' sons in the vicinity of the small towns had already done.

About twelve o'clock on the night that Martin left his home, Owen Kearney and his wife were startled out of their sleep by the softie rushing into their room screaming wildly that he had a dream.

'An' what was it, Barney?' asked Mrs Kearney kindly. 'Don't be frightened now; but tell me.'

'Arrah, ma'am,' he sobbed, 'I dreamed I saw Martin; an' two men with their faces blackened rode up to him on the plains of Boyle an' shot him. Oh, *wirra, wirra*, one of them was Larry!'

Poor Mrs Kearney fell to wringing her hands, and sobbing wildly at the extraordinary dream of the poor fool; while her husband rushed to his son's room in the hope of finding Larry; but his bed was empty, as was that of Luke the servant. Full of terrible forebodings, the farmer began to question Barney more particularly as to his dream; but he could only repeat again and again that two men fired at Martin on the plains of Boyle; one of them was Larry, the other was Luke: this he maintained with a persistency which it was almost impossible to doubt. No one thought of returning to bed; and while they were consulting as to what was best to be done, the softie again uttered a wild shriek, and rolled over on the floor, as a bullet entered the kitchen window and lodged in the opposite wall, followed by another, which whizzed past Owen Kearney's head.

'The Lord have mercy upon us!' he exclaimed, crossing himself devoutly. 'Where will it end?' And he held his wife, who was almost insensible from the fright, close in his arms. At that instant a bright light illuminated the whole kitchen; and in a moment the truth flashed across his brain—his steading was in flames. Not daring to open his door to look out, he tried to think what was best to be done; for perhaps the house over his head was blazing too, or would be in a few minutes. Casting a hasty glance round, he lifted his wife in his arms, meaning to carry her to the front of the house and out of sight of the flames; when a violent knocking at the door startled him, and he recognised his niece's voice demanding admittance. Hastily unbarring it, he saw her accompanied by a party of soldiers, who, when they found no lives had been taken, set to work bravely to protect the property which was yet untouched by the fire. But there was little left for them to do. The cattle had been hamstrung, the horses stolen, and a lighted brand placed in every stack of oats and the thatch of every outhouse. The work of devastation had been done only too well. {764}

'They're taken, uncle—they that set the haggard a-fire,' said Dora as soon as she was able to speak. 'I brought the soldiers to the house; and,' she added, 'one of the villains said he had finished off Owen Kearney. Thank God, it is not true!' and she threw herself into his arms.

'Yes; I heard him,' said one of the soldiers; 'and we've sent him to safer lodgings than we took him from. It seems, Mr Kearney, that your niece was returning home from a visit to a neighbour's, when she heard two men whispering in the lane at the end of the meadow. As they were in front, and she didn't like their looks, she kept behind, and heard them say that there were two gone to Boyle to look out for *the Volunteer*, and that they were going to do for old Kearney and his wife, "string" the cattle and fire the haggard. Like a sensible girl, she turned round quietly and ran as quick as she could towards Castlerea. By good luck she met us half-way; and though we were going on another errand, we turned back at once with her, and netted the rascals who did this pretty piece of business.—I sent six men on towards Boyle, to see if they could learn anything of the villains that followed your son,' added the sergeant.

'Where's Larry, uncle?' asked Dora, after she had tried ineffectually to console her aunt. 'Why isn't he here?'

'You're all I have now, *alanna*,' Kearney said, pressing her to his breast. 'Martin is gone, and Larry is gone. Well, well, God is good.'

'Miss Dora, Miss Dora!' cried Barney Athleague faintly, 'come here a minute.'

In the general confusion, every one had forgotten the poor softie, who lay on the floor quite insensible.

'What is it, Barney? Are ye hurt?' inquired Dora, bending over him.

'Not much; only my back is bad, and I can't lift my legs. Tell your uncle Owen Kearney that Martin isn't dead. He's lyn' on the settle in a shebeen with his hand on his side, calling "Dora, Dora!" I see him—sure I see him; and Larry an' Luke is took; the sogers is bringing them to Roscommon. Oh, *wirra, wirra*!'

'Shure the poor creature is frightened to death's door,' said Owen Kearney, trying to induce Barney to get up and drink a little water; but the mug fell out of the farmer's hands in dismay and horror, for he found the poor softie was bathed in blood. 'He's shot, he's shot!' he exclaimed; and one of the soldiers drew near and examined the wound.

'There's a bullet in his back,' the man said; 'and he'll never eat another bit of this world's bread. And may God forget the man that forgot he was an omadthaun.'

Poor Barney never spoke again. Nothing could have saved his life. But his dream was literally true. At the very moment he awoke screaming, Martin Kearney was fired at by his brother Larry and his father's servant; at the hour he mentioned were the murderers taken; and Martin himself

was taken into a shebeen, as he said, and laid upon a settle in the kitchen, where he called untiringly for his cousin Dora.

Such was the softie's dream; and such sad stories as that above related are a part and parcel of every Irish rebellion. Martin Kearney did not die; and Larry pleaded guilty, declaring that he was forced to attempt his brother's life both by solemn oath of obedience and by lot; at the same time confessing all he knew of the strength and doings of the Mollies, assuring his judges that he joined them in ignorance, and now thought of them only with horror and regret. Therefore, in consideration of his youth, repentance, and valuable information he gave with regard to the rebels, his life was spared, and he was instead sentenced to twenty-one years' penal servitude; while his companion, Luke Murphy, was hanged. It would have been almost a kindness to Larry to have been permitted to share the same fate. Before two years he died of a broken heart.

Owen Kearney's house was not burned; but after his son's transportation, nothing could induce him to live in it. He therefore sold his furniture and such of his stock as the cruelty and violence of the Mollies spared, and went to end his days amongst his wife's relations in the County Galway. Dora and Martin were married, and after some time emigrated, and spent the remainder of their days in comfort and happiness, clouded only by the memory of how much pleasanter it would have been if they could have settled down in the old farm-house dear to them both, to be a comfort to their father and mother in their old age, and at last to sleep beside them in Glenmadda churchyard.

The stock of one of the wealthiest gentlemen in the County Roscommon now graze where Owen Kearney's house once stood. Not a trace of his family remains in the Green Isle. Their tragical history is almost forgotten; but amongst the gossips and old women the softie's dream is still remembered.

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## GLIMPSE OF THE INDIAN FAMINE.

ON this dismal subject so much has lately appeared in the newspapers that we almost shrink from troubling our readers with it. Everybody knows the cause of the famine—a long and unhappy drought in Southern India which parched up the land; nothing would grow; the people, millions in number, had saved nothing; their means of livelihood were gone; and with a weakness which we can scarcely understand, they sat down to die—of starvation. In times when India was subject to Mongol rulers, the population, on the occurrence of such a catastrophe, would simply have been left to die outright. Famine, like war, was deemed a legitimate means for reducing a redundancy in the number of inhabitants, and was accepted as a thing quite natural and reasonable. Matters are now considerably changed. India is part of the great British empire, and British rule is no doubt a fine thing to be boasted of. It gives the English an immense lift in the way of national prestige. Along with prestige, however, come responsibilities that are occasionally found to be rather serious. The bulk of the people of India are living from hand to mouth. If their crops fail, it is all over with them. Then is heard the distant wail of famine from fellow-subjects, which it is impossible to neglect. Noble subscriptions follow, although subscriptions of one sort or other come upon us annually in regular succession from January to December. But when was the Englishman's purse shut while the cry of distress was loudly pealing around him? {765}

There is much satisfaction in knowing that more than half a million sterling has been gathered for the assuagement of the Indian famine. Although vast numbers perished of hunger, vast numbers were saved by a well-conducted system of dispensing food suitable to the simple wants of the people. The natives of Southern India live chiefly on rice, and a little serves them. The distribution of rice was accordingly a ready and easy method of succouring the poor famishing families. Along with boiled rice there was usually given a cup of water, rendered palatable by some sharp condiment, such as pepper or chillies. This desire for hot-tasting condiments seems to be an inherent necessity in warm climates, for which Nature has made the most beneficent provision. With these few preliminary remarks, we proceed to offer some extracts from the letters of a young medical gentleman connected with the army at Madras, descriptive of the plans adopted to feed the assembled crowds who flocked to large camps or barrack-yards in a state of pitiable suffering. The letters were no way designed for publication, a circumstance which gives them additional value.

'MADRAS, *July 25, 1877.*—There is not much news this week. One day I drove out to one of the Relief Camps beyond Palaveram to see it. A most curious and interesting sight it was. We went at half-past five, which was feeding-time; and there we saw nine thousand five hundred starving wretches all seated on their hunkers [crouched down in a sitting attitude on their heels], awaiting their food. What a motley crew and queer mixture of old men with more than a foot in the grave; strong men and young women and unweaned babes all mixed indiscriminately, but all seated in long rows of about a hundred each, in perfect order, and kept so by not more than a dozen native police with two half-caste inspectors. The majority of the people were Pariahs. Few caste people care to come to the camps, and prefer to die rather than have their food cooked for them by non-caste persons. However, there were some—about two hundred in all—Hindus and Mohammedans, and they were set apart from the Pariahs.

'The food, rice, is cooked in enormous chatties, and then spread out on matting to cool; after which it is put into gigantic tubs, which are carried slung on bamboos by a couple of coolies to the people, and a large tin measureful given to each. A measureful of pepper water (a mixture of

chillies and water) is also given to each, and as much drinking-water as they like.

'So much for the food; now for the camp itself. It is situated on a large plain, and the inclosure is about a mile round. It is in the form of a square, three sides consisting of chuppers [a kind of wood and matting tents], roofed in, and protected from the wind on one side, being open on the other. Each of the three chuppers or houses of accommodation is built of the very simplest material: the floor is hardened mud, perfectly smooth and comfortable, as you know the people make it; while the roof consists of leaves matted together, supported on bamboos, and the side of matting. Each chupper is about a quarter of a mile long, and has accommodation for no end of people, the evils of overcrowding being avoided by the almost free exposure to the air. To windward is the Hospital, a good building, rain-proof, and covered in on all sides. Still further away are cholera and small-pox hospitals. The people at the camps receive two meals a day of rice and pepper water; and once a week on Sundays they get mutton. At this camp alone not less than fifty bags of rice were cooked and consumed daily, sometimes much more. The camp is open to all comers, and each is provided with a cloth and residence. The people appear all to be contented and happy, and await their turn for food calmly and patiently. The feeding is proceeded with rapidly now; but when first the famine came, it was not so; and owing to the paucity of servants, the feeding used to last from five P.M. till five the next morning. Rather trying for starving people to wait that time; hard too on the servants. Now, thanks to good administration, the feeding is all finished in about three hours. I was struck on the whole with the aspect of the people; they all with few exceptions looked well and in good condition. However, the Inspector said, had I seen them when they first came, it was different, and that if they were to return to their own villages, they would be dead in a few days. In fact, all the villages round are empty. Rice has now reached the appalling price of three and a half measures for the rupee, and of course one has to pay all one's servants extra. The poor cannot live, and they say the famine is getting worse! Only one man did I see who was lying among the others. Poor fellow! he had just managed to crawl into camp, and he was dying. I ordered him to be removed to the Hospital, a living skeleton.

'The Hospital was truly a sad sight, the saddest I ever saw. There in one ward, lying on the floor, were a dozen beings, literally living skeletons, with sunken eyes, and ghastly hollow cheeks, and livid lips, with their bones almost protruding through the flesh; too ill to move, and barely able to turn their glassy, stony stare upon you. Yes, dying all from starvation, and being hourly brought nearer death by wasting diarrhoea or dysentery.

'One woman I shall never forget. She had her back to me, and her shoulder-blade stood out so fearfully that I gazed upon it in momentary expectation of its coming through the skin. So awful was it, that I felt almost tempted to take my nail and scrape it, in order to see the white of the bone. Perhaps the saddest sight of all was the lying-in ward, where a lean mother was to be seen unable from weakness to nurse the bag of bones she had given birth to; barely a child surely, with its huge head and sunken eyes and its projecting wee ribs. Poor infant, it couldn't live long.'

'*August 7.*—This morning I was up at five, and after my breakfast of porridge and goat's milk, was driving out to Jeramuchi Famine Relief Camp, eleven and a half miles distant. The camp is much the same as the Palaveram one I already described to you; but it is superior, and more luxurious in some ways. It is not built in the form of a square, and is all the better of that, I think. It is fenced in all round with a trim palisading, as was the other camp, sufficient to prevent the people straying at night. The chuppers are arranged on the pavilion system, right down the centre of the camp. During the day they are entirely open at both sides, therein differing from the Palaveram ones, where one side is always closed. However, at night either side can be closed, as the sides consist of pieces of matting on a wooden framework, which is hinged to the side of the roof; and during the day the sides are all put up, supported on two bamboos each.

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'The children at this camp are all collected together and fed first, the grown-up people afterwards. This morning I saw five thousand children, in age from twelve to infants, mustered for breakfast. An old gentleman with great swagger played a tom-tom with a couple of sticks; it was in the shape of a kettle-drum, and they all mustered, standing up in a row. M— and I walked down two streets of these children. They were almost all bright and happy-looking; and on being asked if they had enough to eat, they all replied in the affirmative, save one boy about twelve, who shook his head and smote his belly. Poor creature; his looks confirmed his words; there he was on two legs like walking-sticks, mere bones without an atom of muscle, on which he could hardly stand. On being asked when he came in, he said last night. Where were his father and mother? Oh, father, mother, brother, sister, and he all left village together; walked many, many miles; no food. First sister, then mother, died on the road; then brother; yesterday father; he alone being able to reach the Relief Camp.

'This tale is only a repetition of dozens of the same. He was ordered milk and port wine as extras; and I hope the poor orphan being will recover. We went over the rest of the camp; saw the men and women all sitting patiently in rows in their dreamy eastern way, silently awaiting the summons of the tom-tom after the children's breakfast was over, to call them to theirs. On coming to the Mohammedan women, about thirty in number, they all promptly stood up. One could not but be struck with their appearance, so fair-skinned, clean-looking, and handsome, compared to the Pariahs and others. They all spoke Hindustani of course, and were most polite and respectful. Despite the poorness of their attire and the absence of their jewellery, they had a refined air about them, and a superior look totally foreign to the ordinary Hindu. One young girl I was particularly struck with; she could only have been about fifteen, with most lovely eyes and perfect teeth, and such a figure. Ah! I thought, if this young woman was dressed in European clothes and was a lady, she would make a figure in London. Dressed in a scarlet and golden

saree, with bangles and other jewellery, she would to my mind have been the realisation of my idea of an Indian princess.

'The Hospital presented the same sad scene of cases of emaciation as at Palaveram; there were more than one hundred cases of dysentery and diarrhœa. I also saw another case of a milkless mother trying to suckle her newly born handful of bones in the lying-in ward. It is a mercy with such a large community that no cholera prevails. They have about twenty cases of small-pox. Leaving camp, we saw two stretchers coming in with coolies. Every morning the highways and byways are searched for three miles round; and those poor creatures who have died or are found dying, unable to come to camp, are brought in. If dead, they are at once buried about a mile away from camp; if alive, they are sent to Hospital. The famine continues very bad; and there was a great meeting in Madras at the Banqueting-hall, when it was acknowledged government could not now cope with it without extraneous aid. Accordingly a telegram was despatched to England, calling on the Lord Mayors of London, Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, and the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, to open subscription lists. I am sure it is a worthy cause.... In Mysore alone there have been more deaths the last three months than during the last five years. The Viceroy is said to be coming down immediately from Simla to personally inspect the state of matters.'

In a subsequent letter, October 25th, the writer adds—"The accounts are still dreadful. Many poor creatures die after reaching the camps, from inability to swallow or receive the nourishment offered to them in the hospitals. The day the Viceroy visited Bangalore, no fewer than ninety dead bodies were found in the streets and the bazaar. The people at home have certainly done much to help their poor brethren in India; but I believe they would do still more were they to be thoroughly aware of the terrible scenes which have come under my notice.'

In conclusion, it is not out of place to say that the frequently occurring famines in that country call for measures of prevention as well as temporary aid. In making roads and railways, the English have done vast service to India; but something equally imposing in the way of irrigation from artificial tanks and from rivers has seemingly become an absolute though costly necessity, for only by such means can a repetition of these dire famines be averted. In this direction evidently lies the duty of legislators, and we hope they will, with considerate foresight, be not slack in its performance. There might also, possibly, be something done by enabling masses of the redundant population to emigrate, under safe conduct, as coolies to countries where their labour is required.

W. C.

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## A BURIED CITY.

THE history of the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii under the ashes of Vesuvius is well known; but long before that period, and contemporary with the age of Stone, a city in the Grecian Archipelago was buried in the same manner, with its inhabitants, their tools, and their domestic utensils. Here they have lain for thousands of years, until M. Christomanos, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Athens, called the attention of the public to them.

There is a small group of islands to the north of Candia where these discoveries have been made, chiefly in Santorini and Therasia, which with one or two others form a circle round a bay. The two already mentioned are in the shape of a horse-shoe, with the concavity turned inwards, rising from the bay in almost inaccessible cliffs. Horizontal strata of deep black lava, layers of reddish scoria, and cinders of violet gray, are unequally distributed over these steep rocks, the whole being covered by pumice-stone of a brilliant whiteness. A few banks of marble and schist crop out to shew the original formation over which the volcanic ashes have poured; and long vertical streams of what has been molten matter can be traced down the cliffs. On the opposite side, facing the open sea, the islands are altogether different, sloping gently down, and covered with pumice-stone, the light fragments of which are soon displaced by the wind, and sometimes carried to great distances by the equinoctial storms. A few villages are scattered about, and the vine clothes the ground with its beautiful greenery.

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From time immemorial the pumice of Santorini and Therasia has been dug out for building houses; and when mixed with lime, it affords an excellent cement, acquiring such hardness that it resists shocks of earthquakes and the action of air and water. It has been used for building piers and moles along the Mediterranean; and recently the works at the Isthmus of Suez and the ports of Egypt have given a great impetus to the trade, and thus opened out the underlying soil and remains of human habitations. There are immense quarries where the stone has been worked; the material being transported to the edge of the cliff, and thrown down a *glissade* about a hundred and fifty feet high, to the side of the ships awaiting it. Contenting themselves with cutting up the highest layers only, the workmen avoided the lower part, which seemed to be mixed with stony masses. These hindered their work, and were not valuable; but upon examination they prove to be walls of ancient houses. This had no interest for the owners of the land, who had long been aware of the fact; but an accidental visit from M. Christomanos awakened the interest of scientific folks at Athens.

At first the idea arose that this was an ancient burial-ground, and that the tombs had been hollowed out of the pumice-stone after the volcanic eruption; but it is now fully ascertained that they were built long before. The largest edifice, which has been cleared of the tufa which fills it,



consists of six rooms of unequal size, the largest being about eighteen feet by fifteen; and one wall extends round a court of twenty-four feet in length, with a single entrance. The walls are built in quite a different manner from the fashion now used in the islands; they are formed of a series of irregular blocks of lava, uncut, laid together without any order; no mortar, but the interstices filled with a kind of red ashes. Between the stones, long twisted branches of the olive-tree are laid, still covered with bark, but in a very advanced state of decomposition. The wood has become nearly black, as if burnt, and falls to powder at the slightest touch. The inside of the rooms has never been whitewashed; but probably a rough coating of red earthy matter, similar to that which lies between the stones, has been put on.

At the north side there are two windows; a third and a door are found on the other sides, and several openings into the different rooms. As these were formed by pieces of wood, which have decayed, the situation of the openings is chiefly ascertained by the mass of stones that have fallen in. In every case the roof lies in the interior of the rooms, and has been formed of wood laid upon the walls in such a manner as to be sloping; whilst in the largest apartment a cylindrical block of stone buried in the floor, has evidently supported a beam of wood, from which radiated the other pieces of the roof.

The things which have been discovered in this building are numerous and varied. There are vases of pottery and lava, seeds, straw, the bones of animals, tools of flint and lava, and a human skeleton. It may be remarked that not one article of iron or bronze has been found, not even the trace of a nail in the pieces of wood which have formed the roof; the absence of metals is complete. The pottery is all well proportioned, the commonest kind consisting of yellow jars, very thick, and capable of holding many gallons. They are filled with barley, the seeds of coriander and aniseed, gray peas, and other articles which cannot be made out. The form, material, and size resemble the jars used in Greece for keeping cereals in very early though historic times. In many of the rooms, heaps of barley lie against the walls. There are smaller jars of finer ware and a brighter colour, ornamented with circular bands and vertical stripes. The colouring-matter, of a deep red, has been put on in a moist state without variety of design, being always in circles and straight lines.

Besides a double necklace and ear-rings of a woman, many articles made of obsidian, a volcanic product sometimes called volcanic glass, have been found in Therasia. These are cut, but not polished; some of a triangular form have probably been the points of arrows; others are like small knives or scrapers for preparing skins. The use of obsidian appears to have been common during the Stone age among those nations who lived in volcanic regions, and even in later periods. It is said that it is still used by the women of Peru for scissors. It was more generally in vogue before the discovery of metals than since, particularly in Greece, where arms and tools of stone disappeared after copper was found. In the strata where they are at Therasia, there is nothing of iron or bronze.

Two small rings of gold are rather remarkable; they are so small that they would not pass over a child's finger. It may be inferred that they were links of a necklace. In each there is a hole about the size of a needle's eye. Probably they had been threaded one after another on the same string, and not interlaced like the rings of a chain. The interior is hollow; and no indication of soldering can be perceived, neither does the gold seem to have any alloy of other metal. The maker had flattened the bit of native gold by hammering it to the state of a thin circular leaf, and then folding it up with the edges to the inside of the ring. As gold has never been found in Santorini or in any of the neighbouring volcanic islands, it proves that the inhabitants held communication with the continent; certain streams of Asia Minor having been celebrated in antiquity for the great quantity of gold brought down.

Geologists have endeavoured to draw out the history of the terrible event which overwhelmed these islands and their inhabitants. At the beginning of the tertiary period, Greece, united to Africa, seems to have formed part of a large marshy continent, where now flows the Mediterranean. It was inhabited by those gigantic mammals whose bones have been largely found in Africa. Towards the close of this epoch a lowering of the land separated Europe from Africa, and gave to the Mediterranean its present configuration. An oscillation of the crust of the earth afterwards produced openings, through which igneous matter has flowed. Torrents of lava gave birth to the volcanic rocks which are to be found in Greece and the neighbouring islands, and a volcano had evidently opened in the present bay of Santorini. The hill Saint Elias, the top of which forms the culminating point of the island, was then an island composed of schist and marble. The igneous matter, cooled by contact with the water and the atmosphere, attached itself to this hill, and the whole united together, formed the space now occupied by Santorini, Therasia, and Aspronisi. Repeated layers of lava, scoria, and ashes collected during many ages when the crater which occupied the central part was gradually becoming undermined.

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Volcanoes are the weak parts of the earth's crust; there is not one in full activity which does not present alternative series of increase or lessening. The cone rises gradually until by degrees it is obstructed with lava, then a sudden fall destroys it and hollows a new crater, sometimes larger and deeper than the first. Many such occurrences have been described, but none can equal in importance the gigantic fall which formed the Bay of Santorini. All the central part must have given way, and been suddenly engulfed, leaving but a narrow border of land, through the northern part of which the sea has dashed to fill up the hollow. Instead of a mountain three thousand feet high, there is a bay of immense depth, surrounded by precipitous rocks, close to which ships can anchor.

This violent catastrophe must have taken place when man was on the island; and the event must have been sudden, since the remains prove that there was no time to move away or to displace

anything in the houses. The eruption of pumice-stone has preceded the sinking of the cone, for the tufa which covers the downs is cut through by subjacent streams of lava; nor does it seem to have been preceded by any violent earthquakes, as in that case the houses found in Therasia would have been demolished and the walls no longer standing. This is remarkable, as the construction of the buildings proves that the island was subject to them; the pieces of wood inserted in the walls seeming to be for no other object than to prevent the disastrous effects of such a shaking. This custom is still in use among all the islands of the Archipelago.

From the abundance of wood used in the houses, the island must in those days have been well supplied with timber. The olive-tree grew freely, and barley was the commonest of the cereals. Probably too the climate was different. The vine does not seem to have been there; still less was it the only plant cultivated, as now, at Santorini. The population were husbandmen, understanding how to grind barley in mills and make it into bread; how to press oil from olives, to bring up cattle, and to weave stuffs. Yet the great abundance of utensils of lava, obsidian, and flint, without any metals, shews that theirs was the age of stone, when the use of metals was unknown. The blocks of stones at the angles of the house at Therasia and the column standing near, indicate considerable skill in the workmen, when the kind of tools they used is taken into consideration; whilst the vases of pottery-ware are remarkable for their elegance of form.

It only remains to consider how many years ago it is since this great eruption took place. The data are vague, but geologists have tried to make some approximation. It is well known that after any violent catastrophe the subterranean forces seem to be exhausted; the periods of repose in a volcano are proportional to the previous energy. About one hundred and ninety-six years before Christ there is the record of an eruption, which raised in the centre of the bay a small islet called Palæa Kameni. After the Christian era, frequent slight emissions only served to increase the size of the island, and during the middle ages there was a period of calm. In the fifteenth century the excitement again burst forth, raising reefs both inside and outside the bay. The second duration of rest was about ten centuries; so that to the first, according to its intensity, there may be calculated at least twice that time; thus the formation of the bay was perhaps two thousand years B.C.

Historical records furnish more positive teaching, as the bay certainly existed fifteen hundred years B.C. It was at this epoch that the islands of the Greek Archipelago were invaded by the Phœnicians. This nation occupied Therasia and Santorini, as the many ruins still to be found testify, and they are built on the top of the pumice-stone. But the great eruption must have been long before that, since thick beds of pebbles and shells, from fifteen to twenty yards deep, lie on the tufa; and geologists know well, from the habitual slowness of this raising of the soil, that it corresponds to many centuries. There was also a population on the islands differing from those who were buried in the ashes, and from the Phœnicians. The latter knew the use of bronze, and introduced it on all the shores of the Mediterranean. Most likely we may place the great event during the early days of Egyptian civilisation, which some historians compute to be four or five thousand years ago. The primitive population present no trace of the influence which that nation exerted, and with which commerce would have placed them in frequent relations.

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