



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



The Complete Works
of
Edgar Allan Poe

Volume VI.

Tales



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TALES





“Thou Art the Man”



WILL now play the Œdipus to the Rattleborough enigma. I will expound to you, as I alone can, the secret of the enginery that effected the Rattleborough miracle—the one, the true, the admitted, the undisputed, the indisputable miracle, which put a definite end to infidelity among the Rattleburghers, and converted to the orthodoxy of the grandames all the carnal-minded who had ventured to be sceptical before.

This event, which I should be sorry to discuss in a tone of unsuitable levity, occurred in the summer of 18—. Mr. Barnabas Shuttleworthy, one of the wealthiest and most respectable citizens of the borough, had been missing for several days under circumstances which gave rise to suspicion of foul play. Mr. Shuttleworthy had set out from Rattleborough very early one Saturday morning on horseback, with the avowed intention of proceeding to the city of —, about fifteen

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miles distant, and of returning the night of the same day. Two hours after his departure, however, his horse returned without him, and without the saddlebags, which had been strapped on his back at starting. The animal was wounded, too, and covered with mud. These circumstances naturally gave rise to much alarm among the friends of the missing man; and when it was found on Sunday morning that he had not yet made his appearance, the whole borough arose *en masse* to go and look for his body.

The foremost and most energetic in instituting this search was the bosom friend of Mr. Shuttleworthy, a Mr. Charles Goodfellow, or, as he was universally called, "Charley Goodfellow," or "Old Charley Goodfellow." Now, whether it is a marvellous coincidence, or whether it is that the name itself has an imperceptible effect upon the character, I have never yet been able to ascertain; but the fact is unquestionable that there never yet was any person named Charles who was not an open, manly, honest, good-natured, and frank-hearted fellow, with a rich, clear voice, that did you good to hear it, and an eye that looked you always straight in the face, as much as to say: "I have a clear conscience myself, am afraid of no man, and am altogether above doing a mean action." And thus all the hearty, careless, "walking gentlemen" of the stage are very certain to be called Charles.

Now, "Old Charley Goodfellow," although he had

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been in Rattleborough not longer than six months or thereabouts, and although nobody knew anything about him before he came to settle in the neighborhood, had experienced no difficulty in the world in making the acquaintance of all the respectable people in the borough. Not a man of them but would have taken his bare word for a thousand at any moment; and as for the women, there is no saying what they would not have done to oblige him. And all this came of his having been christened Charles, and of his possessing, in consequence, that ingenuous face which is proverbially the very “best letter of recommendation.”

I have already said that Mr. Shuttleworthy was one of the most respectable, and, undoubtedly, he was the most wealthy man in Rattleborough, while “Old Charley Goodfellow” was upon as intimate terms with him as if he had been his own brother. The two old gentlemen were next-door neighbors, and, although Mr. Shuttleworthy seldom, if ever, visited “Old Charley,” and never was known to take a meal in his house, still this did not prevent the two friends from being exceedingly intimate, as I have just observed; for “Old Charley” never let a day pass without stepping in three or four times to see how his neighbor came on, and very often he would stay to breakfast or tea, and almost always to dinner; and then the amount of wine that was made way with by the two cronies at a sitting it would really be a difficult thing to ascertain. “Old

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Charley's " favorite beverage was Château Margaux, and it appeared to do Mr. Shuttleworthy's heart good to see the old fellow swallow it, as he did, quart after quart; so that, one day, when the wine was in and the wit, as a natural consequence, somewhat out, he said to his crony, as he slapped him upon the back: " I tell you what it is, ' Old Charley,' you are, by all odds, the heartiest old fellow I ever came across in all my born days; and, since you love to guzzle the wine at that fashion, I 'll be darned if I don't have to make thee a present of a big box of the Château Margaux. Od rot me " (Mr. Shuttleworthy had a sad habit of swearing, although he seldom went beyond " Od rot me," or " By gosh," or " By the jolly golly ")—" Od rot me," says he, " if I don't send an order to town this very afternoon for a double box of the best that can be got, and I 'll make ye a present of it, I will!—ye need n't say a word now—I will, I tell ye, and there 's an end of it; so look out for it: it will come to hand some of these fine days, precisely when ye are looking for it the least! " I mention this little bit of liberality on the part of Mr. Shuttleworthy just by way of showing you how very intimate an understanding existed between the two friends.

Well, on the Sunday morning in question, when it came to be fairly understood that Mr. Shuttleworthy had met with foul play, I never saw any one so profoundly affected as " Old Charley Goodfellow." When

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he first heard that the horse had come home without his master and without his master's saddle-bags, and all bloody from a pistol-shot that had gone clean through and through the poor animal's chest without killing him—when he heard all this he turned as pale as if the missing man had been his own dear brother or father, and shivered and shook all over as if he had had a fit of the ague.

At first he was too much overpowered with grief to be able to do anything at all, or to decide upon any plan of action; so that for a long time he endeavored to dissuade Mr. Shuttleworthy's other friends from making a stir about the matter, thinking it best to wait awhile, say for a week or two, or a month or two, to see if something would n't turn up, or if Mr. Shuttleworthy would n't come in the natural way and explain his reasons for sending his horse on before. I dare say you have often observed this disposition to temporize, or to procrastinate, in people who are laboring under any very poignant sorrow. Their powers of mind seem to be rendered torpid, so that they have a horror of anything like action, and like nothing in the world so well as to lie quietly in bed and “ nurse their grief,” as the old ladies express it, that is to say, ruminate over their trouble.

The people of Rattleborough had, indeed, so high an opinion of the wisdom and discretion of “ Old Charley ” that the greater part of them felt disposed to

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agree with him and not make a stir in the business “until something should turn up,” as the honest old gentleman worded it; and I believe that, after all, this would have been the general determination but for the very suspicious interference of Mr. Shuttleworthy’s nephew, a young man of very dissipated habits, and otherwise of rather bad character. This nephew, whose name was Pennifeather, would listen to nothing like reason in the matter of “lying quiet,” but insisted upon making immediate search for the “corpse of the murdered man.” This was the expression he employed; and Mr. Goodfellow acutely remarked at the time that it was “a singular expression, to say no more.” This remark of “Old Charley’s,” too, had great effect upon the crowd; and one of the party was heard to ask, very impressively, “how it happened that young Mr. Pennifeather was so intimately cognizant of all the circumstances connected with his wealthy uncle’s disappearance as to feel authorized to assert, distinctly and unequivocally, that his uncle was ‘a murdered man.’” Hereupon some little squibbling and bickering occurred among various members of the crowd, and especially between “Old Charley” and Mr. Pennifeather, although this latter occurrence was, indeed, by no means a novelty, for little good-will had subsisted between the parties for the last three or four months; and matters had even gone so far that Mr. Pennifeather had actually knocked down his uncle’s

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friend for some alleged excess of liberty that the latter had taken in the uncle's house, of which the nephew was an inmate. Upon this occasion “Old Charley” is said to have behaved with exemplary moderation and Christian charity. He arose from the blow, adjusted his clothes, and made no attempt at retaliation at all, merely muttering a few words about “taking summary vengeance at the first convenient opportunity,” a natural and very justifiable ebullition of anger, which meant nothing, however, and, beyond doubt, was no sooner given vent to than forgotten.

However these matters may be (which have no reference to the point now at issue), it is quite certain that the people of Rattleborough, principally through the persuasion of Mr. Pennifeather, came at length to the determination of dispersing over the adjacent country in search of the missing Mr. Shuttleworthy. I say they came to this determination in the first instance. After it had been fully resolved that a search should be made, it was considered almost a matter of course that the seekers should disperse, that is to say, distribute themselves in parties, for the more thorough examination of the region round about. I forget, however, by what ingenious train of reasoning it was that “Old Charley” finally convinced the assembly that this was the most injudicious plan that could be pursued. Convince them, however, he did, all except Mr. Pennifeather; and in the end it was arranged that

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a search should be instituted, carefully and very thoroughly, by the burghers *en masse*, “Old Charley” himself leading the way.

As for the matter of that, there could have been no better pioneer than “Old Charley,” whom everybody knew to have the eye of a lynx; but, although he led them into all manner of out-of-the-way holes and corners, by routes that nobody had ever suspected of existing in the neighborhood, and although the search was incessantly kept up, day and night, for nearly a week, still no trace of Mr. Shuttleworthy could be discovered. When I say no trace, however, I must not be understood to speak literally; for trace, to some extent, there certainly was. The poor gentleman had been tracked, by his horse’s shoes (which were peculiar), to a spot about three miles to the east of the borough, on the main road leading to the city. Here the track made off into a by-path through a piece of woodland, the path coming out again into the main road and cutting off about half a mile of the regular distance. Following the shoe-marks down this lane, the party came at length to a pool of stagnant water, half hidden by the brambles, to the right of the lane, and opposite this pool all vestige of the track was lost sight of. It appeared, however, that a struggle of some nature had here taken place, and it seemed as if some large and heavy body, much larger and heavier than a man, had been drawn from the by-path to the pool. This latter

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was carefully dragged twice, but nothing was found, and the party were upon the point of going away in despair of coming to any result, when providence suggested to Mr. Goodfellow the expediency of draining the water off altogether. This project was received with cheers and many high compliments to “Old Charley” upon his sagacity and consideration. As many of the burghers had brought spades with them, supposing that they might possibly be called upon to disinter a corpse, the drain was easily and speedily effected; and no sooner was the bottom visible, than right in the middle of the mud that remained was discovered a black silk-velvet waistcoat, which nearly every one present immediately recognized as the property of Mr. Pennifeather. This waistcoat was much torn and stained with blood, and there were several persons among the party who had a distinct remembrance of its having been worn by its owner on the very morning of Mr. Shuttleworthy’s departure for the city; while there were others, again, ready to testify upon oath, if required, that Mr. P. did not wear the garment in question at any period during the remainder of that memorable day; nor could any one be found to say that he had seen it upon Mr. P.’s person at any period at all subsequent to Mr. Shuttleworthy’s disappearance.

Matters now wore a very serious aspect for Mr. Pennifeather, and it was observed, as an indubitable

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confirmation of the suspicions which were excited against him, that he grew exceedingly pale, and, when asked what he had to say for himself, was utterly incapable of saying a word. Hereupon, the few friends his riotous mode of living had left him deserted him at once, to a man, and were even more clamorous than his ancient and avowed enemies for his instantaneous arrest. But, on the other hand, the magnanimity of Mr. Goodfellow shone forth with only the more brilliant lustre through contrast. He made a warm and intensely eloquent defence of Mr. Pennifeather, in which he alluded more than once to his own sincere forgiveness of that wild young gentleman, "the heir of the worthy Mr. Shuttleworthy," for the insult which he [the young gentleman] had, no doubt in the heat of passion, thought proper to put upon him [Mr. Goodfellow]. "He forgave him for it," he said, "from the very bottom of his heart; and for himself [Mr. Goodfellow], so far from pushing the suspicious circumstances to extremity, which, he was sorry to say, really had arisen against Mr. Pennifeather, he [Mr. Goodfellow] would make every exertion in his power, would employ all the little eloquence in his possession to—to—to—soften down, as much as he could conscientiously do so, the worst features of this really exceedingly perplexing piece of business."

Mr. Goodfellow went on for some half hour longer in this strain, very much to the credit both of his head

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and of his heart; but your warm-hearted people are seldom apposite in their observations—they run into all sorts of blunders, contretemps, and *mal-à-propos-isms*, in the hot-headedness of their zeal to serve a friend, thus, often with the kindest intentions in the world, doing infinitely more to prejudice his cause than to advance it.

So, in the present instance, it turned out with all the eloquence of “Old Charley”; for, although he labored earnestly in behalf of the suspected, yet it so happened, somehow or other, that every syllable he uttered of which the direct but unwitting tendency was not to exalt the speaker in the good opinion of his audience, had the effect of deepening the suspicion already attached to the individual whose cause he pled, and of arousing against him the fury of the mob.

One of the most unaccountable errors committed by the orator was his allusion to the suspected as “the heir of the worthy old gentleman, Mr. Shuttleworthy.” The people had really never thought of this before. They had only remembered certain threats of disinheritance uttered a year or two previously by the uncle (who had no living relative except the nephew), and they had, therefore, always looked upon this disinheritance as a matter that was settled, so single-minded a race of beings were the Rattleburghers; but the remark of “Old Charley” brought them at once to a consideration of this point, and thus gave them to see

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the possibility of the threats having been nothing more than a threat. And straightway, hereupon, arose the natural question of *Cui bono?*—a question that tended even more than the waistcoat to fasten the terrible crime upon the young man. And here, lest I be misunderstood, permit me to digress for one moment merely to observe that the exceedingly brief and simple Latin phrase which I have employed is invariably mistranslated and misconceived. “*Cui bono?*” in all the crack novels and elsewhere,—in those of Mrs. Gore, for example (the author of *Cecíl*), a lady who quotes all tongues from the Chaldæan to Chickasaw, and is helped to her learning, “as needed,” upon a systematic plan, by Mr. Beckford,—in all the crack novels, I say, from those of Bulwer and Dickens to those of Turnapenny and Ainsworth, the two little Latin words *cui bono* are rendered “to what purpose?” or (as if *quo bono*) “to what good?” Their true meaning, nevertheless, is “for whose advantage?” *Cui*, to whom; *bono*, is it for a benefit? It is a purely legal phrase and applicable precisely in cases such as we have now under consideration, where the probability of the doer of a deed hinges upon the probability of the benefit accruing to this individual or to that from the deed’s accomplishment. Now, in the present instance, the question *Cui bono?* very pointedly implicated Mr. Pennifeather. His uncle had threatened him, after making a will in his favor, with disinheritance. But the threat had not

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been actually kept; the original will, it appeared, had not been altered. Had it been altered, the only supposable motive for murder on the part of the suspected would have been the ordinary one of revenge; and even this would have been counteracted by the hope of reinstatement into the good graces of the uncle. But the will being unaltered, while the threat to alter remained suspended over the nephew's head, there appears at once the very strongest possible inducement for the atrocity; and so concluded, very sagaciously, the worthy citizens of the borough of Rattle.

Mr. Pennifeather was, accordingly, arrested upon the spot, and the crowd, after some further search, proceeded homeward, having him in custody. On the route, however, another circumstance occurred tending to confirm the suspicion entertained. Mr. Goodfellow, whose zeal led him to be always a little in advance of the party, was seen suddenly to run forward a few paces, stoop, and then apparently to pick up some small object from the grass. Having quickly examined it, he was observed, too, to make a sort of half attempt at concealing it in his coat pocket; but this action was noticed, as I say, and consequently prevented, when the object picked up was found to be a Spanish knife, which a dozen persons at once recognized as belonging to Mr. Pennifeather. Moreover, his initials were engraved upon the handle. The blade of this knife was open and bloody.

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No doubt now remained of the guilt of the nephew, and immediately upon reaching Rattleborough he was taken before a magistrate for examination.

Here matters again took a most unfavorable turn. The prisoner, being questioned as to his whereabouts on the morning of Mr. Shuttleworthy's disappearance, had absolutely the audacity to acknowledge that on that very morning he had been out with his rifle deer-stalking in the immediate neighborhood of the pool where the blood-stained waistcoat had been discovered through the sagacity of Mr. Goodfellow.

This latter now came forward, and, with tears in his eyes, asked permission to be examined. He said that a stern sense of the duty he owed his Maker, not less than his fellow-men, would permit him no longer to remain silent. Hitherto the sincerest affection for the young man (notwithstanding the latter's ill-treatment of himself, Mr. Goodfellow) had induced him to make every hypothesis which imagination could suggest, by way of endeavoring to account for what appeared suspicious in the circumstances that told so seriously against Mr. Pennifeather; but these circumstances were now altogether too convincing, too damning; he would hesitate no longer; he would tell all he knew, although his heart (Mr. Goodfellow's) should absolutely burst asunder in the effort. He then went on to state that, on the afternoon of the day previous to Mr. Shuttleworthy's departure for the city, that worthy old

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gentleman had mentioned to his nephew, in his hearing (Mr. Goodfellow's), that his object in going to town on the morrow was to make a deposit of an unusually large sum of money in the “Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank,” and that, then and there, the said Mr. Shuttleworthy had distinctly avowed to the said nephew his irrevocable determination of rescinding the will originally made and of cutting him off with a shilling. He (the witness) now solemnly called upon the accused to state whether what he (the witness) had just stated was or was not the truth in every substantial particular. Much to the astonishment of every one present, Mr. Pennifeather frankly admitted that it was.

The magistrate now considered it his duty to send a couple of constables to search the chamber of the accused in the house of his uncle. From this search they almost immediately returned with the well-known steel-bound, russet leather pocketbook which the old gentleman had been in the habit of carrying for years. Its valuable contents, however, had been abstracted, and the magistrate in vain endeavored to extort from the prisoner the use which had been made of them, or the place of their concealment. Indeed, he obstinately denied all knowledge of the matter. The constables also discovered, between the bed and sacking of the unhappy man, a shirt and neck-handkerchief both marked with the initials of his name, and both hideously besmeared with the blood of the victim.

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At this juncture it was announced that the horse of the murdered man had just expired in the stable from the effects of the wound he had received, and it was proposed by Mr. Goodfellow that a post-mortem examination of the beast should be immediately made, with the view, if possible, of discovering the ball. This was accordingly done; and, as if to demonstrate beyond a question the guilt of the accused, Mr. Goodfellow, after considerable searching in the cavity of the chest, was enabled to detect and to pull forth a bullet of very extraordinary size, which, upon trial, was found to be exactly adapted to the bore of Mr. Pennifeather's rifle, while it was far too large for that of any other person in the borough or its vicinity. To render the matter even surer yet, however, this bullet was discovered to have a flaw or seam at right angles to the usual suture; and upon examination this seam corresponded precisely with an accidental ridge or elevation in a pair of moulds acknowledged by the accused himself to be his own property. Upon the finding of this bullet, the examining magistrate refused to listen to any further testimony and immediately committed the prisoner for trial, declining resolutely to take any bail in the case, although against this severity Mr. Goodfellow very warmly remonstrated, and offered to become surety in whatever amount might be required. This generosity on the part of "Old Charley" was only in accordance with the whole tenor of his amiable and chivalrous con-

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duct during the entire period of his sojourn in the borough of Rattle. In the present instance the worthy man was so entirely carried away by the excessive warmth of his sympathy that he seemed to have quite forgotten, when he offered to go bail for his young friend, that he himself (Mr. Goodfellow) did not possess a single dollar's worth of property upon the face of the earth.

The result of the committal may be readily foreseen. Mr. Pennifeather, amid the loud execrations of all Rattleborough, was brought to trial at the next criminal sessions, when the chain of circumstantial evidence (strengthened as it was by some additional damning facts, which Mr. Goodfellow's sensitive conscientiousness forbade him to withhold from the court) was considered so unbroken and so thoroughly conclusive, that the jury, without leaving their seats, returned an immediate verdict of "Guilty of murder in the first degree." Soon afterward the unhappy wretch received sentence of death, and was remanded to the county jail to await the inexorable vengeance of the law.

In the meantime the noble behavior of "Old Charley Goodfellow" had doubly endeared him to the honest citizens of the borough. He became ten times a greater favorite than ever; and, as a natural result of the hospitality with which he was treated, he relaxed, as it were, perforce, the extremely parsimonious

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habits which his poverty had hitherto impeded him to observe, and very frequently had little reunions at his own house, when wit and jollity reigned supreme—dampened a little, of course, by the occasional remembrance of the untoward and melancholy fate which impended over the nephew of the late lamented bosom friend of the generous host.

One fine day this magnanimous old gentleman was agreeably surprised at the receipt of the following letter:

Charles Goodfellow, Esq., Rattleborough.

From H., F., B., & Co.

Chât. Mar. A—No. 1.—6 doz. bottles ($\frac{1}{3}$ Gross).

"Charles Goodfellow, Esquire:

"Dear Sir—In conformity with an order transmitted to our firm about two months since, by our esteemed correspondent, Mr. Barnabas Shuttleworthy, we have the honor of forwarding this morning, to your address, a double box of Château Margaux, of the antelope brand, violet seal. Box numbered and marked as per margin.

"We remain, sir,

"Your most ob't ser'ts,

"HOGGS, FROGS, BOGS, & Co.

"City of —, June 21, 18—.

"P. S.—The box will reach you, by wagon, on the day after your receipt of this letter. Our respects to Mr. Shuttleworthy.

H., F., B., & Co."

The fact is, that Mr. Goodfellow had, since the death of Mr. Shuttleworthy, given over all expectation of ever receiving the promised Château Margaux; and he therefore looked upon it now as a sort of especial dis-

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pensation of Providence in his behalf. He was highly delighted, of course, and in the exuberance of his joy invited a large party of friends to a *petit souper* on the morrow, for the purpose of broaching the good old Mr. Shuttleworthy's present. Not that he said anything about “the good old Mr. Shuttleworthy” when he issued the invitations. The fact is, he thought much and concluded to say nothing at all. He did not mention to any one, if I remember aright, that he had received a present of Château Margaux. He merely asked his friends to come and help him drink some of a remarkably fine quality and rich flavor that he had ordered up from the city a couple of months ago, and of which he would be in the receipt upon the morrow. I have often puzzled myself to imagine why it was that “Old Charley” came to the conclusion to say nothing about having received the wine from his old friend, but I could never precisely understand his reason for the silence, although he had some excellent and very magnanimous reason, no doubt.

The morrow at length arrived, and with it a very large and highly respectable company at Mr. Goodfellow's house. Indeed, half the borough was there,—I, myself, among the number,—but, much to the vexation of the host, the Château Margaux did not arrive until a late hour, and when the sumptuous supper supplied by “Old Charley” had been done very ample justice by the guests. It came at length, however,—a

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monstrously big box of it there was, too,—and as the whole party were in excessively good humor, it was decided, *nem. con.*, that it should be lifted upon the table and its contents disembowelled forthwith.

No sooner said than done. I lent a helping hand; and, in a trice, we had the box upon the table, in the midst of all the bottles and glasses, not a few of which were demolished in the scuffle. “Old Charley,” who was pretty much intoxicated, and excessively red in the face, now took a seat, with an air of mock dignity, at the head of the board and thumped furiously upon it with a decanter, calling upon the company to keep order “during the ceremony of disinterring the treasure.”

After some vociferation, quiet was at length fully restored, and, as very often happens in similar cases, a profound and remarkable silence ensued. Being then requested to force open the lid, I complied, of course, “with an infinite deal of pleasure.” I inserted a chisel, and giving it a few slight taps with a hammer, the top of the box flew suddenly off, and, at the same instant there sprang up into a sitting position, directly facing the host, the bruised, bloody, and nearly putrid corpse of the murdered Mr. Shuttleworthy himself. It gazed for a few moments, fixedly and sorrowfully, with its decaying and lack-lustre eyes, full into the countenance of Mr. Goodfellow, uttered slowly, but clearly and impressively, the words, “Thou art the man!” and

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then, falling over the side of the chest as if thoroughly satisfied, stretched out its limbs quiveringly upon the table.

The scene that ensued is altogether beyond description. The rush for the doors and windows was terrific, and many of the most robust men in the room fainted outright through sheer horror. But after the first wild, shrieking burst of affright, all eyes were directed to Mr. Goodfellow. If I live a thousand years I can never forget the more than mortal agony which was depicted in that ghastly face of his, so lately rubicund with triumph and wine. For several minutes he sat rigidly as a statue of marble, his eyes seeming, in the intense vacancy of their gaze, to be turned inward and absorbed in the contemplation of his own miserable, murderous soul. At length their expression appeared to flash suddenly out into the external world, when, with a quick leap, he sprang from his chair, and falling heavily with his head and shoulders upon the table, and in contact with the corpse, poured out rapidly and vehemently a detailed confession of the hideous crime for which Mr. Pennifeather was then imprisoned and doomed to die.

What he recounted was in substance this: He followed his victim to the vicinity of the pool; there shot his horse with a pistol; despatched its rider with the butt-end; possessed himself of the pocket-book; and, supposing the horse dead, dragged it with great labor

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to the brambles by the pond. Upon his own beast he slung the corpse of Mr. Shuttleworthy, and thus bore it to a secure place of concealment a long distance off through the woods.

The waistcoat, the knife, the pocket-book, and bullet had been placed by himself where found, with the view of avenging himself upon Mr. Pennifeather. He had also contrived the discovery of the stained handkerchief and shirt.

Toward the end of the blood-chilling recital, the words of the guilty wretch faltered and grew hollow. When the record was finally exhausted, he arose, staggered backward from the table, and fell—dead.

The means by which this happily timed confession was extorted, although efficient, were simple indeed. Mr. Goodfellow's excess of frankness had disgusted me, and excited my suspicions from the first. I was present when Mr. Pennifeather had struck him, and the fiendish expression which then arose upon his countenance, although momentary, assured me that his threat of vengeance would, if possible, be rigidly fulfilled. I was thus prepared to view the manœuvring of “Old Charley” in a very different light from that in which it was regarded by the good citizens of Rattleborough. I saw at once that all the criminating discoveries arose, either directly or indirectly, from himself. But the

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fact which clearly opened my eyes to the true state of the case was the affair of the bullet, found by Mr. G. in the carcass of the horse. I had not forgotten, although the Rattleburghers had, that there was a hole where the ball had entered the horse and another where it went out. If it were found in the animal, then, after having made its exit, I saw clearly that it must have been deposited by the person who found it. The bloody shirt and handkerchief confirmed the idea suggested by the bullet; for the blood on examination proved to be capital claret, and no more. When I came to think of these things, and also of the late increase of liberality and expenditure on the part of Mr. Goodfellow, I entertained a suspicion which was none the less strong because I kept it altogether to myself.

In the meantime I instituted a rigorous private search for the corpse of Mr. Shuttleworthy, and for good reasons searched in quarters as divergent as possible from those to which Mr. Goodfellow conducted his party. The result was that, after some days, I came across an old dry well, the mouth of which was nearly hidden by brambles; and here, at the bottom, I discovered what I sought.

Now it so happened that I had overheard the colloquy between the two cronies, when Mr. Goodfellow had contrived to cajole his host into the promise of a box of Château Margaux. Upon this hint I acted. I procured a stiff piece of whalebone, thrust it down the

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throat of the corpse, and deposited the latter in an old wine box, taking care so to double the body up as to double the whalebone with it. In this manner I had to press forcibly upon the lid to keep it down while I secured it with nails; and I anticipated, of course, that as soon as these latter were removed, the top would fly off and the body up.

Having thus arranged the box, I marked, numbered, and addressed it as already told; and then writing a letter in the name of the wine merchants with whom Mr. Shuttleworthy dealt, I gave instructions to my servant to wheel the box to Mr. Goodfellow's door in a barrow, at a given signal from myself. For the words which I intended the corpse to speak, I confidently depended upon my ventriloquial abilities: for their effect I counted upon the conscience of the murderous wretch.

I believe there is nothing more to be explained. Mr. Pennifeather was released upon the spot, inherited the fortune of his uncle, profited by the lessons of experience, turned over a new leaf, and led happily ever afterward a new life.





The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.,

LATE EDITOR OF THE "GOOSETHERUM-
FOODLE"

BY HIMSELF



AM now growing in years, and, since I understand that Shakespeare and Mr. Emmons are deceased, it is not impossible that I may even die. It has occurred to me, therefore, that I may as well retire from the field of letters and repose upon my laurels. But I am ambitious of signalizing my abdication of the literary sceptre by some important bequest to posterity; and perhaps I cannot do a better thing than just pen for it an account of my earlier career. My name, indeed, has been so long and so constantly before the public eye, that I am not only

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willing to admit the naturalness of the interest which it has everywhere excited, but ready to satisfy the extreme curiosity which it has inspired. In fact, it is no more than the duty of him who achieves greatness to leave behind him, in his ascent, such landmarks as may guide others to be great. I propose, therefore, in the present paper (which I had some idea of calling "Memoranda to Serve for the Literary History of America") to give a detail of those important, yet feeble and tottering, first steps, by which, at length, I attained the highroad to the pinnacle of human renown.

Of one's very remote ancestors it is superfluous to say much. My father, Thomas Bob, Esq., stood for many years at the summit of his profession, which was that of a merchant barber, in the city of Smug. His warehouse was the resort of all the principal people of the place, and especially of the editorial corps, a body which inspires all about it with profound veneration and awe. For my own part, I regarded them as gods, and drank in with avidity the rich wit and wisdom which continuously flowed from their august mouths during the process of what is styled "lather." My first moment of positive inspiration must be dated from that ever-memorable epoch, when the brilliant conductor of the *Gad-Fly*, in the intervals of the important process just mentioned, recited aloud, before a conclave of our apprentices, an inimitable poem in honor

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of the "Only Genuine Oil-of-Bob" (so called from its talented inventor, my father), and for which effusion the editor of the *Fly* was remunerated with a regal liberality by the firm of Thomas Bob & Company, merchant barbers.

The genius of the stanzas to the "Oil-of-Bob" first breathed into me, I say, the divine afflatus. I resolved at once to become a great man, and to commence by becoming a great poet. That very evening I fell upon my knees at the feet of my father.

"Father," I said, "pardon me! but I have a soul above lather. It is my firm intention to cut the shop. I would be an editor, I would be a poet, I would pen stanzas to the 'Oil-of-Bob.' Pardon me and aid me to be great!"

"My dear Thingum," replied my father (I had been christened Thingum after a wealthy relative so sur-named),—"my dear Thingum," he said, raising me from my knees by the ears, "Thingum, my boy, you're a trump, and take after your father in having a soul. You have an immense head, too, and it must hold a great many brains. This I have long seen, and therefore had thoughts of making you a lawyer. The business, however, has grown ungenteel, and that of politician don't pay. Upon the whole you judge wisely; the trade of editor is best, and if you can be a poet at the same time, as most of the editors are, by the by, why, you will kill two birds with one stone.

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To encourage you in the beginning of things, I will allow you a garret; pen, ink, and paper; a rhyming dictionary; and a copy of the *Gad-Fly*. I suppose you would scarcely demand any more."

"I would be an ungrateful villain if I did," I replied with enthusiasm. "Your generosity is boundless. I will repay it by making you the father of a genius."

Thus ended my conference with the best of men, and immediately upon its termination I betook myself with zeal to my poetical labors; as upon these, chiefly, I founded my hopes of ultimate elevation to the editorial chair.

In my first attempts at composition I found the stanzas to the "Oil-of-Bob" rather a drawback than otherwise. Their splendor more dazzled than enlightened me. The contemplation of their excellence tended, naturally, to discourage me by comparison with my own abortions; so that for a long time I labored in vain. At length there came into my head one of those exquisitely original ideas which now and then will permeate the brain of a man of genius. It was this:—or, rather, thus was it carried into execution. From the rubbish of an old book-stall, in a very remote corner of the town, I got together several antique and altogether unknown or forgotten volumes. The bookseller sold them to me for a song. From one of these, which purported to be a translation of one Dante's *Inferno*, I copied with remarkable neatness a long passage about

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a man named Ugolino, who had a parcel of brats. From another, which contained a good many old plays by some person whose name I forget, I extracted in the same manner, and with the same care, a great number of lines about “angels” and “ministers saying grace,” and “goblins damned,” and more besides of that sort. From a third, which was the composition of some blind man or other, either a Greek or a Choctaw,—I cannot be at the pains of remembering every trifle exactly,—I took about fifty verses beginning with “Achilles’s wrath,” and “grease,” and something else. From a fourth, which I recollect was also the work of a blind man, I selected a page or two all about “hail” and “holy light”; and, although a blind man has no business to write about light, still the verses were sufficiently good in their way.

Having made fair copies of these poems, I signed every one of them “Oppodeldoc” (a fine, sonorous name), and, doing each up nicely in a separate envelope, I dispatched one to each of the four principal magazines, with a request for speedy insertion and prompt pay. The result of this well-conceived plan, however (the success of which would have saved me much trouble in after-life), served to convince me that some editors are not to be bamboozled, and gave the *coup-de-grâce* (as they say in France) to my nascent hopes (as they say in the city of the transcendentials).

The fact is, that each and every one of the magazines

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in question gave Mr. "Oppodeldoc" a complete using-up in the "Monthly Notices to Correspondents." The *Hum-Drum* gave him a dressing after this fashion:

" 'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) has sent us a long tirade concerning a bedlamite whom he styles 'Ugo-lino,' who had a great many children that should have been all whipped and sent to bed without their suppers. The whole affair is exceedingly tame, not to say flat. 'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) is entirely devoid of imagination; and imagination, in our humble opinion, is not only the soul of POESY, but also its very heart. 'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) has the audacity to demand of us, for his twattle, a 'speedy insertion and prompt pay.' We neither insert nor purchase any stuff of the sort. There can be no doubt, however, that he would meet with a ready sale for all the balderdash he can scribble at the office of either the *Rowdy-Dow*, the *Lollipop*, or the *Goosetherumfoodle*."

All this, it must be acknowledged, was very severe upon "Oppodeldoc," but the unkindest cut was putting the word "Poesy" in small caps. In those five pre-eminent letters what a world of bitterness is there not involved!

But "Oppodeldoc" was punished with equal severity in the *Rowdy-Dow*, which spoke thus:

"We have received a most singular and insolent communication from a person (whoever he is) signing himself 'Oppodeldoc,' thus desecrating the

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greatness of the illustrious Roman emperor so named. Accompanying the letter of 'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) we find sundry lines of most disgusting and unmeaning rant about 'angels and ministers of grace,' rant such as no madman short of a Nat Lee or an 'Oppodeldoc' could possibly perpetrate. And for this trash of trash we are modestly requested to 'pay promptly.' No, sir, no! We pay for nothing of that sort. Apply to the *Hum-Drum*, the *Lollipop*, or the *Goosetherumfoodle*. These *periodicals* will undoubtedly accept any literary offal you may send them, and as undoubtedly promise to pay for it."

This was bitter indeed upon poor "Oppodeldoc"; but, in this instance, the weight of the satire falls upon the *Hum-Drum*, the *Lollipop*, and the *Goosetherumfoodle*, who are pungently styled "periodicals"—in italics, too—a thing that must have cut them to the heart.

Scarcely less savage was the *Lollipop*, which thus discoursed:

"Some individual, who rejoices in the appellation 'Oppodeldoc' (to what low uses are the names of the illustrious dead too often applied!) has enclosed us some fifty or sixty verses commencing after this fashion:

'Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, &c., &c., &c., &c.'

"'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) is respectfully informed that there is not a printer's devil in our office

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who is not in the daily habit of composing better lines. Those of 'Oppodeldoc' will not scan. 'Oppodeldoc' should learn to count. But why he should have conceived the idea that we (of all others, we!) would disgrace our pages with his ineffable nonsense is utterly beyond comprehension. Why, the absurd twattle is scarcely good enough for the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, the *Goosetherumfoodle*,—things that are in the practice of publishing *Mother Goose's Melodies* as original lyrics. And 'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) has even the assurance to demand pay for this drivel. Does 'Oppodeldoc' (whoever he is) know, is he aware that we could not be paid to insert it?"

As I perused this I felt myself growing gradually smaller and smaller, and when I came to the point at which the editor sneered at the poem as "verses," there was little more than an ounce of me left. As for "Oppodeldoc," I began to experience compassion for the poor fellow. But the *Goosetherumfoodle* showed, if possible, less mercy than the *Lollipop*. It was the *Goosetherumfoodle* that said:

"A wretched poetaster, who signs himself 'Oppodeldoc,' is silly enough to fancy that we will print and pay for a medley of incoherent and ungrammatical bombast which he has transmitted to us, and which commences with the following most intelligible line:

'Hail, Holy Light! Offspring of Heaven, first born.'

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“ We say, ‘ most intelligible.’ ‘ Oppodeldoc ’ (whoever he is) will be kind enough to tell us, perhaps, how ‘ hail ’ can be ‘ holy light.’ We always regarded it as frozen rain. Will he inform us, also, how frozen rain can be, at one and the same time, both ‘ holy light ’ (whatever that is) and an ‘ offspring ’ ? which latter term (if we understand anything about English) is only employed with propriety in reference to small babies of about six weeks old. But it is preposterous to descant upon such absurdity, although ‘ Oppodeldoc ’ (whoever he is) has the unparalleled effrontery to suppose that we will not only ‘ insert ’ his ignorant ravings, but (absolutely) pay for them !

“ Now this is fine, it is rich ! and we have half a mind to punish this young scribbler for his egotism by really publishing his effusion *verbatim et litteratim*, as he has written it. We could inflict no punishment so severe, and we would inflict it, but for the boredom which we should cause our readers in so doing.

“ Let ‘ Oppodeldoc ’ (whoever he is) send any future composition of like character to the *Hum-Drum*, the *Lollipop*, or the *Rowdy-Dow*. They will ‘ insert ’ it. They ‘ insert ’ every month just such stuff. Send it to them. WE are not to be insulted with impunity.”

This made an end of me ; and as for the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Lollipop*, I never could comprehend how they survived it. The putting them in the smallest possible minion (that was the rub,

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thereby insinuating their lowness, their baseness), while WE stood looking down upon them in gigantic capitals! oh, it was too bitter! it was wormwood, it was gall. Had I been either of these periodicals I would have spared no pains to have the *Goosetherum-foodle* prosecuted. It might have been done under the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. As for "Oppodeldoc" (whoever he was), I had by this time lost all patience with the fellow and sympathized with him no longer. He was a fool, beyond doubt (whoever he was), and got not a kick more than he deserved.

The result of my experiment with the old books convinced me, in the first place, that "honesty is the best policy," and, in the second, that if I could not write better than Mr. Dante and the two blind men, and the rest of the old set, it would, at least, be a difficult matter to write worse. I took heart, therefore, and determined to prosecute the "entirely original" (as they say on the covers of the magazines), at whatever cost of study and pains. I again placed before my eyes, as a model, the brilliant stanzas on the "Oil-of-Bob," by the editor of the *Gad-Fly*, and resolved to construct an ode on the same sublime theme, in rivalry of what had already been done.

With my first line I had no material difficulty. It ran thus:

"To pen an Ode upon the 'Oil-of-Bob.'"

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Having carefully looked out, however, all the legitimate rhymes to "Bob," I found it impossible to proceed. In this dilemma I had recourse to paternal aid; and, after some hours of mature thought, my father and myself thus constructed the poem:

"To pen an Ode upon the 'Oil-of-Bob'

Is all sorts of a job.

" (Signed)

SNOB."

To be sure, this composition was of no very great length, but I "have yet to learn," as they say in the *Edinburgh Review*, that the mere extent of a literary work has anything to do with its merit. As for the Quarterly cant about "sustained effort," it is impossible to see the sense of it. Upon the whole, therefore, I was satisfied with the success of my maiden attempt, and now the only question regarded the disposal I should make of it. My father suggested that I should send it to the *Gad-Fly*, but there were two reasons which operated to prevent me from so doing. I dreaded the jealousy of the editor, and I had ascertained that he did not pay for original contributions. I therefore, after due deliberation, consigned the article to the more dignified pages of the *Lollipop*, and awaited the event in anxiety, but with resignation.

In the very next published number I had the proud satisfaction of seeing my poem printed at length, as the leading article, with the following significant words, prefixed in italics and between brackets:

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[We call the attention of our readers to the subjoined admirable stanzas on the "*Oil-of-Bob*." We need say nothing of their sublimity, or of their pathos; it is impossible to peruse them without tears. Those who have been nauseated with a sad dose on the same august topic from the goose-quill of the editor of the "*Gad-Fly*" will do well to compare the two compositions,

P. S.—We are consumed with anxiety to probe the mystery which envelops the evident pseudonym "*Snob*," May we hope for a personal interview?]

All this was scarcely more than justice, but it was, I confess, rather more than I had expected: I acknowledged this, be it observed, to the everlasting disgrace of my country and of mankind. I lost no time, however, in calling upon the editor of the *Lollipop*, and had the good fortune to find this gentleman at home. He saluted me with an air of profound respect, slightly blended with a fatherly and patronizing admiration, wrought in him, no doubt, by my appearance of extreme youth and inexperience. Begging me to be seated, he entered at once upon the subject of my poem; but modesty will ever forbid me to repeat the thousand compliments which he lavished upon me. The eulogies of Mr. Crab (such was the editor's name) were, however, by no means fulsomely indiscriminate. He analyzed my composition with much freedom and

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great ability, not hesitating to point out a few trivial defects, a circumstance which elevated him highly in my esteem. The *Gad-Fly* was, of course, brought upon the tapis, and I hope never to be subjected to a criticism so searching, or to rebukes so withering, as were bestowed by Mr. Crab upon that unhappy effusion. I had been accustomed to regard the editor of the *Gad-Fly* as something superhuman; but Mr. Crab soon disabused me of that idea. He set the literary as well as the personal character of the Fly (so Mr. C. satirically designated the rival editor) in its true light. He, the Fly, was very little better than he should be. He had written infamous things. He was a penny-a-liner and a buffoon. He was a villain. He had composed a tragedy which set the whole country in a guffaw, and a farce which deluged the universe in tears. Besides all this, he had the impudence to pen what he meant for a lampoon upon himself (Mr. Crab), and the temerity to style him "an ass." Should I at any time wish to express my opinion of Mr. Fly, the pages of the *Lollipop*, Mr. Crab assured me, were at my unlimited disposal. In the meantime, as it was very certain that I would be attacked in the *Fly* for my attempt at composing a rival poem on the "Oil-of-Bob," he (Mr. Crab) would take it upon himself to attend, pointedly, to my private and personal interests. If I were not made a man of at once, it should not be the fault of himself (Mr. Crab).

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Mr. Crab having now paused in his discourse (the latter portion of which I found it impossible to comprehend), I ventured to suggest something about the remuneration which I had been taught to expect for my poem by an announcement on the cover of the *Lollipop*, declaring that it (the *Lollipop*) "insisted upon being permitted to pay exorbitant prices for all accepted contributions, frequently expending more money for a single brief poem than the whole annual cost of the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherum-foodle* combined.

As I mentioned the word "remuneration," Mr. Crab first opened his eyes and then his mouth to quite a remarkable extent, causing his personal appearance to resemble that of a highly agitated elderly duck in the act of quacking; and in this condition he remained (ever and anon pressing his hands tightly to his forehead, as if in a state of desperate bewilderment) until I had nearly made an end of what I had to say.

Upon my conclusion he sank back into his seat as if much overcome, letting his arms fall lifelessly by his side, but keeping his mouth still rigorously open, after the fashion of the duck. While I remained in speechless astonishment at behavior so alarming, he suddenly leaped to his feet and made a rush at the bell-rope; but just as he reached this he appeared to have altered his intention, whatever it was, for he dived under a table and immediately reappeared with a cudgel. This he

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was in the act of uplifting (for what purpose I am at a loss to imagine), when, all at once there came a benign smile over his features and he sank placidly back in his chair.

“ Mr. Bob,” he said (for I had sent up my card before ascending myself),—“ Mr. Bob, you are a young man, I presume—very ? ”

I assented, adding that I had not yet concluded my third lustrum.

“ Ah ! ” he replied, “ very good ! I see how it is ; say no more ! Touching this matter of compensation, what you observe is very just, in fact it is excessively so. But ah—ah—the first contribution, the first, I say, it is never the magazine custom to pay for,—you comprehend, eh ? The truth is, we are usually the recipients in such case.” [Mr. Crab smiled blandly as he emphasized the word “ recipients.”] “ For the most part, we are paid for the insertion of a maiden attempt, especially in verse. In the second place, Mr. Bob, the magazine rule is never to disburse what we term in France the *argent comptant* ; I have no doubt you understand. In a quarter or two after publication of the article, or in a year or two, we make no objection to giving our note at nine months ; provided, always, that we can so arrange our affairs as to be quite certain of a ‘ burst-up ’ in six. I really do hope, Mr. Bob, that you will look upon this explanation as satisfactory.” Here Mr. Crab concluded, and the tears stood in his eyes.

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Grieved to the soul at having been, however innocently, the cause of pain to so eminent and so sensitive a man, I hastened to apologize and to reassure him, by expressing my perfect coincidence with his views, as well as my entire appreciation of the delicacy of his position. Having done all this in a neat speech, I took leave.

One fine morning, very shortly afterward, "I awoke and found myself famous." The extent of my renown will be best estimated by reference to the editorial opinions of the day. These opinions, it will be seen, were embodied in critical notices of the number of the *Lollipop* containing my poem, and are perfectly satisfactory, conclusive, and clear, with the exception, perhaps, of the hieroglyphical marks, "*Sep. 15—1 t,*" appended to each of the critiques.

The *Owl*, a journal of profound sagacity, and well known for the deliberate gravity of its literary decisions—the *Owl*, I say, spoke as follows:

"The *Lollipop*! The October number of this delicious magazine surpasses its predecessors and sets competition at defiance. In the beauty of its typography and paper, in the number and excellence of its steel plates, as well as in the literary merit of its contributions, the *Lollipop* compares with its slow-paced rivals as Hyperion with a Satyr. The *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherumfoodle* excel, it is true, in braggadocio, but in all other points give us the

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Lollipop! How this celebrated journal can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses, is more than we can understand. To be sure, it has a circulation of 100,000, and its subscription list has increased one fourth during the last month; but, on the other hand, the sums it disburses constantly for contributions are inconceivable. It is reported that Mr. Slyass received no less than thirty-seven and a half cents for his inimitable paper on 'Pigs.' With Mr. Crab as editor, and with such names upon the list of contributors as Snob and Slyass, there can be no such word as 'fail' for the *Lollipop*. Go and subscribe. *Sep. 15—1 t."*

I must say that I was gratified with this high-toned notice from a paper so respectable as the *Owl*. The placing my name, that is to say, my *nom de guerre*, in priority of station to that of the great Slyass was a compliment as happy as I felt it to be deserved.

My attention was next arrested by these paragraphs in the *Toad*, a print highly distinguished for its uprightness and independence, for its entire freedom from sycophancy and subservience to the givers of dinners:

"The *Lollipop* for October is out in advance of all its contemporaries, and infinitely surpasses them, of course, in the splendor of its embellishments as well as in the richness of its contents. The *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherumfoodle* excel, we admit, in braggadocio, but, in all other points, give us

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the *Lollipop*. How this celebrated magazine can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is more than we can understand. To be sure, it has a circulation of 200,000, and its subscription list has increased one third during the last fortnight, but, on the other hand, the sums it disburses monthly for contributions are fearfully great. We learn that Mr. Mumblethumb received no less than fifty cents for his late 'Monody in a Mud-Puddle.'

"Among the original contributors to the present number we notice (besides the eminent editor, Mr. Crab), such men as Snob, Slyass, and Mumblethumb. Apart from the editorial matter, the most valuable paper, nevertheless, is, we think, a poetical gem by Snob, on the 'Oil-of-Bob,' but our readers must not suppose from the title of this incomparable *bijou* that it bears any similitude to some balderdash on the same subject by a certain contemptible individual whose name is unmentionable to ears polite. The present poem 'On the Oil-of-Bob' has excited universal anxiety and curiosity in respect to the owner of the evident pseudonym, 'Snob,'—a curiosity which, happily, we have it in our power to satisfy. 'Snob' is the *nom de plume* of Mr. Thingum Bob of this city, a relative of the great Mr. Thingum (after whom he is named), and otherwise connected with the most illustrious families of the State. His father, Thomas Bob, Esq., is an opulent merchant in Smug. Sep. 15—1 t."

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This generous approbation touched me to the heart, the more especially as it emanated from a source so avowedly, so proverbially pure as the *Toad*. The word "balderdash," as applied to the "Oil-of-Bob" of the *Fly*, I considered singularly pungent and appropriate. The words "gem" and "*bijou*," however, used in reference to my composition, struck me as being in some degree feeble. They seemed to me to be deficient in force. They were not sufficiently *prononcés* (as we have it in France).

I had scarcely finished reading the *Toad*, when a friend placed in my hands a copy of the *Mole*, a daily, enjoying high reputation for the keenness of its perception about matters in general, and for the open, honest, above-ground style of its editorials. The *Mole* spoke of the *Lollipop* as follows:

"We have just received the *Lollipop* for October, and must say that never before have we perused any single number of any periodical which afforded us a felicity so supreme. We speak advisedly. The *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherumfoodle* must look well to their laurels. These prints, no doubt, surpass everything in loudness of pretension, but, in all other points, give us the *Lollipop*! How this celebrated magazine can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is more than we can comprehend. To be sure, it has a circulation of 300,000, and its subscription list has increased one half within the last week, but

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then the sum it disburses monthly for contributions is astonishingly enormous. We have it upon good authority that Mr. Fatquack received no less than sixty-two cents and a half for his late domestic nouvelette, the *Dish-Clout*.

"The contributors to the number before us are Mr. Crab (the eminent editor), Snob, Mumblethumb, Fatquack, and others; but, after the inimitable compositions of the editor himself, we prefer a diamond-like effusion from the pen of a rising poet who writes over the signature 'Snob,' a *nom de guerre* which we predict will one day extinguish the radiance of 'Boz.' 'Snob,' we learn, is a Mr. Thingum Bob, Esq., sole heir of a wealthy merchant of this city, Thomas Bob, Esq., and a near relative of the distinguished Mr. Thingum. The title of Mr. B.'s admirable poem is the 'Oil-of-Bob,' a somewhat unfortunate name, by the by, as some contemptible vagabond connected with the penny press has already disgusted the town with a great deal of drivel upon the same topic. There will be no danger, however, of confounding the compositions. *Sep. 15—I t."*

The generous approbation of so clear-sighted a journal as the *Mole* penetrated my soul with delight. The only objection which occurred to me was that the terms "contemptible vagabond" might have been better written "odious and contemptible wretch, villain, and vagabond." This would have sounded more

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gracefully, I think. "Diamond-like," also, was scarcely, it will be admitted, of sufficient intensity to express what the *Mole* evidently thought of the brilliancy of the "Oil-of-Bob."

On the same afternoon in which I saw these notices in the *Owl*, the *Toad*, and the *Mole*, I happened to meet with a copy of the *Daddy-Long-Legs*, a periodical proverbial for the extreme extent of its understanding. And it was the *Daddy-Long-Legs* which spoke thus:

"The *Lollipop*!! This gorgeous magazine is already before the public for October. The question of pre-eminence is forever put to rest, and hereafter it will be excessively preposterous in the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, or the *Goosetherumfoodle* to make any further spasmodic attempts at competition. These journals may excel the *Lollipop* in outcry, but in all other points give us the *Lollipop*! How this celebrated magazine can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is past comprehension. To be sure it has a circulation of precisely half a million, and its subscription list has increased seventy-five per cent within the last couple of days, but then the sums it disburses monthly for contributions are scarcely credible; we are cognizant of the fact that Mademoiselle Cribalittle received no less than eighty-seven cents and a half for her late valuable Revolutionary tale, entitled 'The York-Town Katy-Did, and the Bunker-Hill Katy-Did n't.'

"The most able papers in the present number are,

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of course, those furnished by the editor (the eminent Mr. Crab), but there are numerous magnificent contributions from such names as Snob, Mademoiselle Cribalittle, Slyass, Mrs. Fibalittle, Mumblethumb, Mrs. Squibalittle, and last, though not least, Fatquack. The world may well be challenged to produce so rich a galaxy of genius.

"The poem over the signature 'Snob' is, we find, attracting universal commendation, and, we are constrained to say, deserves, if possible, even more applause than it has received. The 'Oil-of-Bob' is the title of this masterpiece of eloquence and art. One or two of our readers may have a very faint, although sufficiently disgusting, recollection of a poem (?) similarly entitled, the perpetration of a miserable penny-a-liner, mendicant, and cutthroat, connected in the capacity of scullion, we believe, with one of the indecent prints about the purlieus of the city; we beg them, for God's sake, not to confound the compositions. The author of the 'Oil-of-Bob' is, we hear, Thingum Bob, Esq., a gentleman of high genius and a scholar. 'Snob' is merely a *nom de guerre*. Sep. 15—I t."

I could scarcely restrain my indignation while I perused the concluding portions of this diatribe. It was clear to me that the yea-nay manner, not to say the gentleness, the positive forbearance, with which the *Daddy-Long-Legs* spoke of that pig, the editor of the *Gad-Fly*,—it was evident to me, I say, that this gentle-

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ness of speech could proceed from nothing else than a partiality for the *Fly*, whom it was clearly the intention of the *Daddy-Long-Legs* to elevate into reputation at my expense. Any one, indeed, might perceive with half an eye that, had the real design of the *Daddy* been what it wished to appear, it (the *Daddy*) might have expressed itself in terms more direct, more pungent, and altogether more to the purpose. The words "penny-a-liner," "mendicant," "scullion," and "cut-throat" were epithets so intentionally inexpressive and equivocal as to be worse than nothing when applied to the author of the very worst stanzas ever penned by one of the human race. We all know what is meant by "damning with faint praise," and, on the other hand, who could fail seeing through the covert purpose of the *Daddy*,—that of glorifying with feeble abuse?

What the *Daddy* chose to say to the *Fly*, however, was no business of mine. What it said of myself was. After the noble manner in which the *Owl*, the *Toad*, the *Mole*, had expressed themselves in respect to my ability, it was rather too much to be coolly spoken of by a thing like the *Daddy-Long-Legs* as merely "a gentleman of high genius and a scholar." Gentleman indeed! I made up my mind at once either to get a written apology from the *Daddy-Long-Legs* or to call it out.

Full of this purpose, I looked about me to find a friend whom I could entrust with a message to his

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Daddyship, and as the editor of the *Lollipop* had given me marked tokens of regard, I at length concluded to seek assistance upon the present occasion.

I have never yet been able to account, in a manner satisfactory to my own understanding, for the very peculiar countenance and demeanor with which Mr. Crab listened to me as I unfolded to him my design. He again went through the scene of the bell-rope and cudgel, and did not omit the duck. At one period I thought he really intended to quack. His fit, nevertheless, finally subsided as before, and he began to act and speak in a rational way. He declined bearing the cartel, however, and, in fact, dissuaded me from sending it at all; but was candid enough to admit that the *Daddy-Long-Legs* had been disgracefully in the wrong, more especially in what related to the epithets "gentleman and scholar."

Toward the end of this interview with Mr. Crab, who really appeared to take a paternal interest in my welfare, he suggested to me that I might turn an honest pennny, and at the same time advance my reputation, by occasionally playing Thomas Hawk for the *Lollipop*.

I begged Mr. Crab to inform me who was Mr. Thomas Hawk, and how it was expected that I should play him.

Here Mr. Crab again "made great eyes" (as we say in Germany), but at length, recovering himself from a profound attack of astonishment, he assured me that

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he employed the words " Thomas Hawk " to avoid the colloquialism, Tommy, which was low; but that the true idea was Tommy Hawk, or tomahawk, and that by " playing tomahawk " he referred to scalping, brow-beating, and otherwise using up the herd of poor-devil authors.

I assured my patron that, if this was all, I was perfectly resigned to the task of playing Thomas Hawk. Hereupon Mr. Crab desired me to use up the editor of the *Gad-Fly* forthwith, in the fiercest style within the scope of my ability and as a specimen of my powers. This I did upon the spot, in a review of the original " Oil-of-Bob," occupying thirty-six pages of the *Lollipop*. I found playing Thomas Hawk, indeed, a far less onerous occupation than poetizing; for I went upon system altogether, and thus it was easy to do the thing thoroughly well. My practice was this. I bought auction copies (cheap) of Lord Brougham's *Speeches*, Cobbett's *Complete Works*, the *New Slang-Syllabus*, the *Whole Art of Snubbing*, Prentice's *Billingsgate* (folio edition), and Lewis G. Clarke on *Tongue*. These works I cut up thoroughly with a curry-comb, and then, throwing the shreds into a sieve, sifted out carefully all that might be thought decent (a mere trifle); reserving the hard phrases, which I threw into a large tin pepper-castor with longitudinal holes, so that an entire sentence could get through without material injury. The mixture

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was then ready for use. When called upon to play Thomas Hawk, I anointed a sheet of foolscap with the white of a gander's egg; then, shredding the thing to be reviewed as I had previously shredded the books, only with more care, so as to get every word separate, I threw the latter shreds in with the former, screwed on the lid of the castor, gave it a shake, and so dusted out the mixture upon the egged foolscap, where it stuck. The effect was beautiful to behold. It was captivating. Indeed, the reviews I brought to pass by this simple expedient have never been approached and were the wonder of the world. At first, through bashfulness, the result of inexperience, I was a little put out by a certain inconsistency, a certain air of the bizarre (as we say in France), worn by the composition as a whole. All the phrases did not fit (as we say in the Anglo-Saxon). Many were quite awry. Some, even, were upside down; and there were none of them which were not, in some measure, injured in regard to effect by this latter species of accident, when it occurred, with the exception of Mr. Lewis Clarke's paragraphs, which were so vigorous and altogether stout that they seemed not particularly disconcerted by any extreme of position, but looked equally happy and satisfactory, whether on their heads or on their heels.

What became of the editor of the *Gad-Fly* after the publication of my criticism on his "Oil-of-Bob" it is somewhat difficult to determine. The most reasonable

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conclusion is that he wept himself to death. At all events he disappeared instantaneously from the face of the earth, and no man has seen even the ghost of him since.

This matter having been properly accomplished, and the Furies appeased, I grew at once into high favor with Mr. Crab. He took me into his confidence, gave me a permanent situation as Thomas Hawk of the *Lollipop*, and as, for the present, he could afford me no salary, allowed me to profit at discretion by his advice.

"My dear Thingum," said he to me one day after dinner, "I respect your abilities and love you as a son. You shall be my heir. When I die I will bequeath you the *Lollipop*. In the meantime I will make a man of you—I will,—provided always that you follow my counsel. The first thing to do is to get rid of the old bore."

"Boar?" said I, inquiringly, "pig, eh?—*aper*? (as we say in Latin)—who?—where?"

"Your father," said he.

"Precisely," I replied, "pig."

"You have your fortune to make, Thingum," resumed Mr. Crab, "and that governor of yours is a millstone about your neck. We must cut him at once." [Here I took out my knife.] "We must cut him," continued Mr. Crab, "decidedly and forever. He won't do—he won't. Upon second thoughts, you had better kick him, or cane him, or something of that kind."

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“What do you say,” I suggested modestly, “to my kicking him in the first instance, caning him afterward, and winding up by tweaking his nose?”

Mr. Crab looked at me musingly for some moments, and then answered:

“I think, Mr. Bob, that what you propose would answer sufficiently well—indeed, remarkably well—that is to say, as far as it went, but barbers are exceedingly hard to cut, and I think, upon the whole, that, having performed upon Thomas Bob the operations you suggest, it would be advisable to blacken, with your fists, both his eyes, very carefully and thoroughly, to prevent his ever seeing you again in fashionable promenades. After doing this I really do not perceive that you can do any more. However, it might be just as well to roll him once or twice in the gutter, and then put him in charge of the police. Any time the next morning you can call at the watch-house and swear an assault.”

I was much affected by the kindness of feeling toward me personally, which was evinced in this excellent advice of Mr. Crab, and I did not fail to profit by it forthwith. The result was that I got rid of the old bore and began to feel a little independent and gentlemanlike. The want of money, however, was, for a few weeks, a source of some discomfort; but at length, by carefully putting to use my two eyes and observing how matters went just in front of my nose,

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I perceived how the thing was to be brought about. I say "thing," be it observed, for they tell me the Latin for it is *rem*. By the way, talking of Latin, can anyone tell me the meaning of *quocunque*, or what is the meaning of *modo*?

My plan was exceedingly simple. I bought, for a song, a sixteenth of the *Snapping-Turtle*—that was all. The thing was done, and I put money in my purse. There were some trivial arrangements afterward, to be sure; but these formed no portion of the plan. They were a consequence—a result. For example, I bought pen, ink, and paper, and put them into furious activity. Having thus completed a magazine article, I gave it, for appellation, "'Fol Lol,' by the Author of the 'Oil-of-Bob,'" and enveloped it to the *Goosetherumfoodle*. That journal, however, having pronounced it "twattle" in the "Monthly Notices to Correspondents," I reheaded the paper "'Hey-Diddle-Diddle,' by Thingum Bob, Esq., Author of the Ode on the 'Oil-of-Bob,' and Editor of the *Snapping-Turtle*." With this amendment I re-enclosed it to the *Goosetherumfoodle*, and, while I awaited a reply, published daily, in the *Turtle*, six columns of what may be termed philosophical and analytical investigation of the literary merits of the *Goosetherumfoodle*, as well as of the personal character of the editor of the *Goosetherumfoodle*. At the end of a week the *Goosetherumfoodle* discovered that it had, by some odd mistake, "confounded a stupid

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article, headed 'Hey-Diddle-Diddle,' and composed by some unknown ignoramus, with a gem of resplendent lustre similarly entitled, the work of Thingum Bob, Esq. the celebrated author of the 'Oil-of-Bob.' " The *Goosetherumfoodle* deeply "regretted this very natural accident," and promised, moreover, an insertion of the genuine "Hey-Diddle-Diddle" in the very next number of the magazine.

The fact is, I thought, I really thought, I thought at the time,—I thought then, and have no reason for thinking otherwise now, that the *Goosetherumfoodle* did make a mistake. With the best intentions in the world, I never knew anything that made as many singular mistakes as the *Goosetherumfoodle*. From that day I took a liking to the *Goosetherumfoodle*, and the result was I soon saw into the very depths of its literary merits, and did not fail to expatiate upon them, in the *Turtle*, whenever a fitting opportunity occurred. And it is to be regarded as a very peculiar coincidence, as one of those positively remarkable coincidences which set a man to serious thinking, that just such a total revolution of opinion, just such entire *bouleversement* (as we say in French), just such thorough topsiturniness (if I may be permitted to employ a rather forcible term of the Choctaws), as happened, *pro* and *con*, between myself on the one part and the *Goosetherumfoodle* on the other, did actually again happen, in a brief period afterwards, and with precisely similar circum-

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stances, in the case of myself and the *Rowdy-Dow*, and in the case of myself and the *Hum-Drum*.

Thus it was that, by a master-stroke of genius, I at length consummated my triumphs by "putting money in my purse," and thus may be said really and fairly to have commenced that brilliant and eventful career which rendered me illustrious, and which now enables me to say with Chateaubriand: "I have made history" — "*J'ai fait l'histoire.*"

I have indeed "made history." From the bright epoch which I now record, my actions, my works, are the property of mankind. They are familiar to the world. It is, then, needless for me to detail how, soaring rapidly, I fell heir to the *Lollipop*; how I merged this journal in the *Hum-Drum*; how, again, I made purchase of the *Rowdy-Dow*, thus combining the three periodicals; how, lastly, I effected a bargain for the sole remaining rival and united all the literature of the country in one magnificent magazine known everywhere as the

Rowdy-Dow, Lollipop, Hum-Drum,

and

Goosetherumfoodle.

Yes; I have made history. My fame is universal. It extends to the uttermost ends of the earth. You cannot take up a common newspaper in which you shall not see some allusion to the immortal Thingum

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Bob. It is Mr. Thingum Bob said so, and Mr. Thingum Bob wrote this, and Mr. Thingum Bob did that. But I am meek and expire with an humble heart. After all, what is it—this indescribable something which men will persist in terming “genius”? I agree with Buffon, with Hogarth, it is but diligence after all.

Look at me!—how I labored, how I toiled, how I wrote! Ye gods, did I not write? I knew not the word “ease.” By day I adhered to my desk, and at night, a pale student, I consumed the midnight oil. You should have seen me, you should. I leaned to the right. I leaned to the left. I sat forward. I sat backward. I sat *tête baissée* (as they have it in the Kickapoo), bowing my head close to the alabaster page. And, through all, I—wrote. Through joy and through sorrow I—wrote. Through hunger and through thirst, I—wrote. Through good report and through ill report, I—wrote. Through sunshine and through moonshine, I—wrote. What I wrote it is unnecessary to say. The style! that was the thing. I caught it from Fatquack—whizz! fizz!—and I am giving you a specimen of it now.





Some Words with a Mummy

THE symposium of the preceding evening had been a little too much for my nerves. I had a wretched headache, and was desperately drowsy. Instead of going out, therefore, to spend the evening, as I had proposed, it occurred to me that I could not do a wiser thing than just eat a mouthful of supper and go immediately to bed.

A light supper, of course. I am exceedingly fond of Welsh-rabbit. More than a pound at once, however, may not at all times be advisable. Still, there can be no material objection to two. And really between two and three there is merely a single unit of difference. I ventured, perhaps, upon four. My wife will have it five; but, clearly, she has confounded two very distinct affairs. The abstract number, five, I am willing to admit; but, concretely, it has reference to bottles of Brown Stout, without which, in the way of condiment, Welsh-rabbit is to be eschewed.

Having thus concluded a frugal meal and donned my

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nightcap, with the sincere hope of enjoying it till noon the next day, I placed my head upon the pillow, and, through the aid of a capital conscience, fell into a profound slumber forthwith.

But when were the hopes of humanity fulfilled? I could not have completed my third snore when there came a furious ringing at the street-door bell, and then an impatient thumping at the knocker which awakened me at once. In a minute afterward, and while I was still rubbing my eyes, my wife thrust in my face a note from my old friend, Doctor Ponnonner. It ran thus:

“Come to me, by all means, my dear good friend, as soon as you receive this. Come and help us to rejoice. At last, by long persevering diplomacy, I have gained the assent of the Directors of the City Museum to my examination of the Mummy—you know the one I mean. I have permission to unswathe it and open it if desirable. A few friends only will be present—you, of course. The Mummy is now at my house and we shall begin to unroll it at eleven to-night.

“Yours, ever,

“PONNONNER.”

By the time I had reached the “Ponnonner,” it struck me that I was as wide awake as a man need be. I leaped out of bed in an ecstasy, overthrowing all in my way; dressed myself with a rapidity truly marvellous; and set off, at the top of my speed, for the Doctor’s.

There I found a very eager company assembled.

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They had been awaiting me with much impatience; the Mummy was extended upon the dining-table; and the moment I entered its examination was commenced.

It was one of a pair brought, several years previously, by Captain Arthur Sabretash, a cousin of Ponnonner's, from a tomb near Eleithias, in the Lybian mountains, a considerable distance above Thebes on the Nile. The grottoes at this point, although less magnificent than the Theban sepulchres, are of higher interest, on account of affording more numerous illustrations of the private life of the Egyptians. The chamber from which our specimen was taken was said to be very rich in such illustrations, the walls being completely covered with fresco paintings and bas-reliefs, while statues, vases, and mosaic work of rich patterns indicated the vast wealth of the deceased.

The treasure had been deposited in the museum precisely in the same condition in which Captain Sabretash had found it, that is to say, the coffin had not been disturbed. For eight years it had thus stood, subject only externally to public inspection. We had now, therefore, the complete Mummy at our disposal; and to those who are aware how very rarely the unransacked antique reaches our shores, it will be evident at once that we had great reason to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune.

Approaching the table, I saw on it a large box or case, nearly seven feet long and perhaps three feet

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wide, by two feet and a half deep. It was oblong, not coffin-shaped. The material was at first supposed to be the wood of the sycamore (*platanus*), but, upon cutting into it we found it to be pasteboard, or, more properly, *papier maché*, composed of papyrus. It was thickly ornamented with paintings, representing funeral scenes and other mournful subjects, interspersed among which, in every variety of position, were certain series of hieroglyphical characters, intended, no doubt, for the name of the departed. By good luck, Mr. Gliddon formed one of our party; and he had no difficulty in translating the letters, which were simply phonetic and represented the word "Allamistakeo."

We had some difficulty in getting this case open without injury; but, having at length accomplished the task, we came to a second, coffin-shaped, and very considerably less in size than the exterior one, but resembling it precisely in every other respect. The interval between the two was filled with resin, which had, in some degree, defaced the colors of the interior box.

Upon opening this latter (which we did quite easily), we arrived at a third case, also coffin-shaped, and varying from the second one in no particular, except in that of its material, which was cedar, and still emitted the peculiar and highly aromatic odor of that wood. Between the second and the third case there was no interval, the one fitting accurately within the other.

Removing the third case, we discovered and took out

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the body itself. We had expected to find it, as usual, enveloped in frequent rolls, or bandages, of linen; but in place of these we found a sort of sheath made of papyrus, and coated with a layer of plaster, thickly gilt and painted. The paintings represented subjects connected with the various supposed duties of the soul, and its presentation to different divinities, with numerous identical human figures, intended, very probably, as portraits of the persons embalmed. Extending from head to foot was a columnar, or perpendicular, inscription, in phonetic hieroglyphics, giving again his name and titles and the names and titles of his relations.

Around the neck thus ensheathed was a collar of cylindrical glass beads, diverse in color, and so arranged as to form images of deities, of the Scarabæus, etc., with the winged globe. Around the small of the waist was a similar collar or belt.

Stripping off the papyrus we found the flesh in excellent preservation, with no perceptible odor. The color was reddish. The skin was hard, smooth, and glossy. The teeth and hair were in good condition. The eyes (it seemed) had been removed and glass ones substituted, which were very beautiful and wonderfully lifelike, with the exception of somewhat too determined a stare. The fingers and the nails were brilliantly gilded.

Mr. Gliddon was of opinion, from the redness of the

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epidermis, that the embalmment had been effected altogether by asphaltum; but, on scraping the surface with a steel instrument and throwing into the fire some of the powder thus obtained, the flavor of camphor and other sweet-scented gums became apparent.

We searched the corpse very carefully for the usual openings through which the entrails are extracted, but, to our surprise, we could discover none. No member of the party was at that period aware that entire or unopened mummies are not unfrequently met. The brain it was customary to withdraw through the nose; the intestines through an incision in the side; the body was then shaved, washed, and salted; then laid aside for several weeks, when the operation of embalming, properly so called, began.

As no trace of an opening could be found, Doctor Ponnonner was preparing his instruments for dissection, when I observed that it was then past two o'clock. Hereupon it was agreed to postpone the internal examination until the next evening; and we were about to separate for the present, when some one suggested an experiment or two with the Voltaic pile.

The application of electricity to a mummy three or four thousand years old at the least, was an idea, if not very sage, still sufficiently original, and we all caught it at once. About one tenth in earnest and nine tenths in jest, we arranged a battery in the Doctor's study and conveyed thither the Egyptian.

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It was only after much trouble that we succeeded in laying bare some portions of the temporal muscle which appeared of less stony rigidity than other parts of the frame, but which, as we had anticipated, of course, gave no indication of galvanic susceptibility when brought in contact with the wire. This, the first trial, indeed, seemed decisive, and, with a hearty laugh at our own absurdity, we were bidding each other good night, when my eyes, happening to fall upon those of the Mummy, were there immediately riveted in amazement. My brief glance, in fact, had sufficed to assure me that the orbs, which we had all supposed to be glass, and which were originally noticeable for a certain wild stare, were now so far covered by the lids that only a small portion of the *tunica albuginea* remained visible.

With a shout I called attention to the fact, and it became immediately obvious to all.

I cannot say that I was alarmed at the phenomenon, because "alarmed" is, in my case, not exactly the word. It is possible, however, that but for the Brown Stout I might have been a little nervous. As for the rest of the company, they really made no attempt at concealing the downright fright which possessed them. Doctor Ponnonner was a man to be pitied. Mr. Gliddon, by some peculiar process, rendered himself invisible. Mr. Silk Buckingham, I fancy, will scarcely be so bold as to deny that he made his way, upon all fours, under the table.

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After the first shock of astonishment, however, we resolved, as a matter of course, upon further experiment forthwith. Our operations were now directed against the great toe of the right foot. We made an incision over the outside of the exterior *os sesamoïdeum pollicis pedis*, and thus got at the root of the *abductor* muscle. Readjusting the battery, we now applied the fluid to the bisected nerves, when, with a movement of exceeding lifelikeness, the Mummy first drew up its right knee so as to bring it nearly in contact with the abdomen, and then, straightening the limb with inconceivable force, bestowed a kick upon Doctor Ponnonner, which had the effect of discharging that gentleman, like an arrow from a catapult, through a window into the street below.

We rushed out *en masse* to bring in the mangled remains of the victim, but had the happiness to meet him upon the staircase, coming up in an unaccountable hurry, brimful of the most ardent philosophy, and more than ever impressed with the necessity of prosecuting our experiment with vigor and with zeal.

It was by his advice, accordingly, that we made, upon the spot, a profound incision into the tip of the subject's nose, while the Doctor himself, laying violent hands upon it, pulled it into vehement contact with the wire.

Morally and physically, figuratively and literally, was the effect electric. In the first place, the corpse opened

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its eyes and winked very rapidly for several minutes, as does Mr. Barnes in the pantomime; in the second place, it sneezed; in the third, it sat up on end; in the fourth, it shook its fist in Doctor Ponnonner's face; in the fifth, turning to Messieurs Gliddon and Buckingham, it addressed them, in very capital Egyptian, thus:

"I must say, gentlemen, that I am as much surprised as I am mortified at your behavior. Of Doctor Ponnonner nothing better was to be expected. He is a poor little fat fool who knows no better. I pity and forgive him. But you, Mr. Gliddon, and you, Silk, who have travelled and resided in Egypt until one might imagine you to the manner born,—you, I say, who have been so much among us that you speak Egyptian fully as well, I think, as you write your mother-tongue; you, whom I have always been led to regard as the firm friend of the mummies,—I really did anticipate more gentlemanly conduct from you. What am I to think of your standing quietly by and seeing me thus unhandsomely used? What am I to suppose by your permitting Tom, Dick, and Harry to strip me of my coffins and my clothes in this wretchedly cold climate? In what light (to come to the point) am I to regard your aiding and abetting that miserable little villain, Doctor Ponnonner, in pulling me by the nose?"

It will be taken for granted, no doubt, that upon hearing this speech under the circumstances, we all either made for the door or fell into violent hysterics,

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or went off in a general swoon. One of these three things was, I say, to be expected. Indeed, each and all of these lines of conduct might have been very plausibly pursued. And, upon my word, I am at a loss to know how or why it was that we pursued neither the one nor the other. But perhaps the true reason is to be sought in the spirit of the age, which proceeds by the rule of contraries altogether, and is now usually admitted as the solution of everything in the way of paradox and impossibility. Or perhaps, after all, it was only the Mummy's exceedingly natural and matter-of-course air that divested his words of the terrible. However this may be, the facts are clear, and no member of our party betrayed any very particular trepidation, or seemed to consider that anything had gone very especially wrong.

For my part I was convinced it was all right, and merely stepped aside out of the range of the Egyptian's fist. Doctor Ponnonner thrust his hands into his breeches' pockets, looked hard at the Mummy, and grew excessively red in the face. Mr. Gliddon stroked his whiskers and drew up the collar of his shirt. Mr. Buckingham hung down his head and put his right thumb into the left corner of his mouth.

The Egyptian regarded him with a severe countenance for some minutes, and at length, with a sneer, said :

“ Why don't you speak, Mr. Buckingham ? Did

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you hear what I asked you, or not? Do take your thumb out of your mouth!"

Mr. Buckingham hereupon gave a slight start, took his right thumb out of the left corner of his mouth, and, by way of indemnification, inserted his left thumb in the right corner of the aperture above-mentioned.

Not being able to get an answer from Mr. B——, the figure turned peevishly to Mr. Gliddon, and, in a peremptory tone, demanded in general terms what we all meant.

Mr. Gliddon replied at great length, in phonetics; and but for the deficiency of American printing-offices in hieroglyphical type, it would afford me much pleasure to record here, in the original, the whole of his very excellent speech.

I may as well take this occasion to remark that all the subsequent conversation in which the Mummy took a part was carried on in primitive Egyptian, through the medium (so far as concerned myself and other untravelled members of the company),—through the medium, I say, of Messieurs Gliddon and Buckingham as interpreters. These gentlemen spoke the mother-tongue of the Mummy with inimitable fluency and grace; but I could not help observing that (owing, no doubt, to the introduction of images entirely modern, and, of course, entirely novel to the stranger) the two travellers were reduced occasionally to the employment

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of sensible forms for the purpose of conveying a particular meaning. Mr. Gliddon at one period, for example, could not make the Egyptian comprehend the term "politics" until he sketched upon the wall, with a bit of charcoal, a little carbuncle-nosed gentleman, out at elbows, standing upon a stump, with his left leg drawn back, his right arm thrown forward, with his fist shut, the eyes rolled up toward heaven, and the mouth open at an angle of ninety degrees. Just in the same way Mr. Buckingham failed to convey the absolutely modern idea, "wig," until (at Doctor Ponnonner's suggestion) he grew very pale in the face and consented to take off his own.

It will be readily understood that Mr. Gliddon's discourse turned chiefly upon the vast benefits accruing to science from the unrolling and disembowelling of mummies; apologizing upon this score for any disturbance that might have been occasioned him, in particular, the individual Mummy called Allamistakeo; and concluding with a mere hint (for it could scarcely be considered more) that, as these little matters were now explained, it might be well to proceed with the investigation intended. Here Doctor Ponnonner made ready his instruments.

In regard to the latter suggestions of the orator, it appears that Allamistakeo had certain scruples of conscience, the nature of which I did not distinctly learn; but he expressed himself satisfied with the apologies

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tendered, and, getting down from the table, shook hands with the company all round.

When this ceremony was at an end, we immediately busied ourselves in repairing the damages which our subject had sustained from the scalpel. We sewed up the wound in his temple, bandaged his foot, and applied a square inch of black plaster to the tip of his nose.

It was now observed that the Count (this was the title, it seems, of Allamistakeo) had a slight fit of shivering, no doubt from the cold. The Doctor immediately repaired to his wardrobe, and soon returned with a black dress coat, made in Jennings' best manner, a pair of sky-blue plaid pantaloons with straps, a pink gingham chemise, a flapped vest of brocade, a white sack overcoat, a walking cane with a hook, a hat with no brim, patent-leather boots, straw-colored kid gloves, an eye-glass, a pair of whiskers, and a waterfall cravat. Owing to the disparity of size between the Count and the Doctor (the proportion being as two to one), there was some little difficulty in adjusting these habiliments upon the person of the Egyptian; but when all was arranged, he might have been said to be dressed. Mr. Gliddon therefore gave him his arm and led him to a comfortable chair by the fire, while the Doctor rang the bell upon the spot and ordered a supply of cigars and wine.

The conversation soon grew animated. Much curiosity was, of course, expressed in regard to the

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somewhat remarkable fact of Allamistakeo's still remaining alive.

"I should have thought," observed Mr. Buckingham, "that it is high time you were dead."

"Why," replied the Count, very much astonished, "I am little more than seven hundred years old! My father lived a thousand, and was by no means in his dotage when he died."

Here ensued a brisk series of questions and computations, by means of which it became evident that the antiquity of the Mummy had been grossly misjudged. It had been five thousand and fifty years and some months since he had been consigned to the catacombs at Eleithias.

"But my remark," resumed Mr. Buckingham, "had no reference to your age at the period of interment (I am willing to grant, in fact, that you are still a young man); my allusion was to the immensity of time during which, by your own showing, you must have been done up in asphaltum."

"In what?" said the Count.

"In asphaltum," persisted Mr. B——.

"Ah, yes; I have some faint notion of what you mean; it might be made to answer, no doubt, but in my time we employed scarcely anything else than the bichloride of mercury."

"But what we are especially at a loss to understand," said Doctor Ponnonner, "is how it happens that,

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having been dead and buried in Egypt five thousand years ago, you are here to-day all alive and looking so delightfully well."

"Had I been, as you say, dead," replied the Count, "it is more than probable that dead I should still be; for I perceive you are yet in the infancy of galvanism, and cannot accomplish with it what was a common thing among us in the old days. But the fact is, I fell into catalepsy, and it was considered by my best friends that I was either dead or should be; they accordingly embalmed me at once; I presume you are aware of the chief principle of the embalming process?"

"Why, not altogether."

"Ah, I perceive; a deplorable condition of ignorance! Well, I cannot enter into details just now: but it is necessary to explain that to embalm (properly speaking), in Egypt, was to arrest indefinitely all the animal functions subjected to the process. I use the word 'animal' in its widest sense, as including the physical not more than the moral and vital being. I repeat that the leading principle of embalmment consisted, with us, in the immediately arresting and holding in perpetual abeyance all the animal functions subjected to the process. To be brief, in whatever condition the individual was at the period of embalmment, in that condition he remained. Now, as it is my good fortune to be of the blood of the Scarabæus, I was embalmed alive, as you see me at present."

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“ The blood of the Scarabæus! ” exclaimed Doctor Ponnonner.

“ Yes. The Scarabæus was the insignium, or the ‘ arms,’ of a very distinguished and very rare patrician family. To be ‘ of the blood of the Scarabæus ’ is merely to be one of that family of which the Scarabæus is the insignium. I speak figuratively.”

“ But what has this to do with your being alive ? ”

“ Why, it is the general custom in Egypt to deprive a corpse before embalmment of its bowels and brains; the race of the Scarabæi alone did not coincide with the custom. Had I not been a Scarabæus, therefore, I should have been without bowels and brains; and without either it is inconvenient to live.”

“ I perceive that,” said Mr. Buckingham, “ and I presume that all the entire mummies that come to hand are of the race of Scarabæi.”

“ Beyond doubt.”

“ I thought,” said Mr. Gliddon, very meekly, “ that the Scarabæus was one of the Egyptian gods.”

“ One of the Egyptian what ? ” exclaimed the Mummy, starting to his feet.

“ Gods! ” repeated the traveller.

“ Mr. Gliddon, I really am astonished to hear you talk in this style,” said the Count, resuming his chair.

“ No nation upon the face of the earth has ever acknowledged more than one god. The Scarabæus, the Ibis, etc., were with us (as similar creatures have been

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with others) the symbols, or media, through which we offered worship to the Creator too august to be more directly approached."

There was here a pause. At length the colloquy was renewed by Doctor Ponnonner.

"It is not improbable, then, from what you have explained," said he, "that among the catacombs near the Nile there may exist other mummies of the Scarabæus tribe in a condition of vitality?"

"There can be no question of it," replied the Count; "all the Scarabæi embalmed accidentally while alive, are alive. Even some of those purposely so embalmed may have been overlooked by their executors and still remain in the tomb."

"Will you be kind enough to explain," I said, "what you mean by 'purposely so embalmed'?"

"With great pleasure," answered the Mummy, after surveying me leisurely through his eye-glass, for it was the first time I had ventured to address him a direct question.

"With great pleasure," he said. "The usual duration of man's life in my time was about eight hundred years. Few men died, unless by most extraordinary accident, before the age of six hundred; few lived longer than a decade of centuries; but eight were considered the natural term. After the discovery of the embalming principle, as I have already described it to you, it occurred to our philosophers that a laudable

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curiosity might be gratified, and, at the same time, the interests of science much advanced, by living this natural term in instalments. In the case of history, indeed, experience demonstrated that something of this kind was indispensable. An historian, for example, having attained the age of five hundred, would write a book with great labor and then get himself carefully embalmed; leaving instructions to his executors *pro tem.*, that they should cause him to be revived after the lapse of a certain period, say five or six hundred years. Resuming existence at the expiration of this time he would invariably find his great work converted into a species of haphazard note-book, that is to say, into a kind of literary arena for the conflicting guesses, riddles, and personal squabbles of whole herds of exasperated commentators. These guesses, etc., which passed under the name of annotations, or emendations, were found so completely to have enveloped, distorted, and overwhelmed the text that the author had to go about with a lantern to discover his own book. When discovered it was never worth the trouble of the search. After rewriting it throughout, it was regarded as the bounden duty of the historian to set himself to work immediately in correcting, from his own private knowledge and experience, the traditions of the day concerning the epoch at which he had originally lived. Now this process of rescription and personal rectification, pursued by various individual sages from time to time,

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had the effect of preventing our history from degenerating into absolute fable."

"I beg your pardon," said Doctor Ponnonner at this point, laying his hand gently upon the arm of the Egyptian; "I beg your pardon, sir, but may I presume to interrupt you for one moment?"

"By all means, sir," replied the Count, drawing up.

"I merely wished to ask you a question," said the Doctor. "You mentioned the historian's personal correction of traditions respecting his own epoch. Pray, sir, upon an average, what proportion of these kabbala were usually found to be right?"

"The kabbala, as you properly term them, sir, were generally discovered to be precisely on a par with the facts recorded in the unrewritten histories themselves; that is to say, not one individual iota of either was ever known, under any circumstances, to be not totally and radically wrong."

"But since it is quite clear," resumed the Doctor, "that at least five thousand years have elapsed since your entombment, I take it for granted that your histories at that period, if not your traditions, were sufficiently explicit on that one topic of universal interest, the Creation, which took place, as I presume you are aware, only about ten centuries before."

"Sir!" said the Count Allamistakeo.

The Doctor repeated his remarks, but it was only after much additional explanation that the foreigner

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could be made to comprehend them. The latter at length said, hesitatingly:

“ The ideas you have suggested are to me, I confess, utterly novel. During my time I never knew any one to entertain so singular a fancy as that the universe (or this world if you will have it so) ever had a beginning at all. I remember once, and once only, hearing something remotely hinted, by a man of many speculations, concerning the origin of the human race; and by this individual the very word ‘ Adam ’ (or Red Earth), which you make use of, was employed. He employed it, however, in a generical sense, with reference to the spontaneous germination from rank soil (just as a thousand of the lower genera of creatures are germinated),—the spontaneous germination, I say, of five vast hordes of men, simultaneously upspringing in five distinct and nearly equal divisions of the globe.”

Here, in general, the company shrugged their shoulders, and one or two of us touched our foreheads with a very significant air. Mr. Silk Buckingham, first glancing slightly at the occiput and then at the sinciput of Allamistakeo, spoke as follows:

“ The long duration of human life in your time, together with the occasional practice of passing it, as you have explained, in instalments, must have had, indeed, a strong tendency to the general development and conglomeration of knowledge. I presume, therefore, that we are to attribute the marked inferiority of the old

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Egyptians in all particulars of science, when compared with the moderns, and more especially with the Yankees, altogether to the superior solidity of the Egyptian skull ? ”

“ I confess again,” replied the Count, with much suavity, “ that I am somewhat at a loss to comprehend you; pray, to what particulars of science do you allude ? ”

Here our whole party, joining voices, detailed at great length the assumptions of phrenology and the marvels of animal magnetism.

Having heard us to an end, the Count proceeded to relate a few anecdotes, which rendered it evident that prototypes of Gall and Spurzheim had flourished and faded in Egypt so long ago as to have been nearly forgotten, and that the manœuvres of Messmer were really very contemptible tricks when put in collation with the positive miracles of the Theban savants, who created lice and a great many other similar things.

I here asked the Count if his people were able to calculate eclipses. He smiled rather contemptuously and said they were.

This put me a little out, but I began to make other inquiries in regard to his astronomical knowledge, when a member of the company, who had never as yet opened his mouth, whispered in my ear that for information on this head I had better consult Ptolemy (whoever Ptolemy is), as well as one Plutarch *de facie lunæ*.

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I then questioned the Mummy about burning-glasses and lenses, and, in general, about the manufacture of glass; but I had not made an end of my queries before the silent member again touched me quietly on the elbow and begged me for God's sake to take a peep at Diodorus Siculus. As for the Count, he merely asked me, in the way of reply, if we moderns possessed any such microscopes as would enable us to cut cameos in the style of the Egyptians. While I was thinking how I should answer this question, little Doctor Ponnonner committed himself in a very extraordinary way.

"Look at our architecture!" he exclaimed, greatly to the indignation of both the travellers, who pinched him black and blue to no purpose.

"Look," he cried with enthusiasm, "at the Bowling-Green Fountain in New York! or if this be too vast a contemplation, regard for a moment the Capitol at Washington, D. C.!" and the good little medical man went on to detail, very minutely, the proportions of the fabric to which he referred. He explained that the portico alone was adorned with no less than four-and-twenty columns, five feet in diameter, and ten feet apart.

The Count said that he regretted not being able to remember, just at that moment, the precise dimensions of any one of the principal buildings of the city of Aznac, whose foundations were laid in the night of Time, but the ruins of which were still standing, at the

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epoch of his entombment, in a vast plain of sand to the westward of Thebes. He recollected, however (talking of the porticos), that one affixed to an inferior palace in a kind of suburb called Carnac, consisted of a hundred and forty-four columns, thirty-seven feet in circumference and twenty-five feet apart. The approach to this portico from the Nile was through an avenue two miles long, composed of sphinxes, statues, and obelisks, twenty, sixty, and a hundred feet in height. The palace itself (as well as he could remember) was, in one direction, two miles long, and might have been altogether about seven in circuit. Its walls were richly painted all over, within and without, with hieroglyphics. He would not pretend to assert that even fifty or sixty of the Doctor's Capitols might have been built within these walls, but he was by no means sure that two or three hundred of them might not have been squeezed in with some trouble. That palace at Carnac was an insignificant little building after all. He (the Count), however, could not conscientiously refuse to admit the ingenuity, magnificence, and superiority of the fountain at the Bowling Green, as described by the Doctor. Nothing like it, he was forced to allow, had ever been seen in Egypt or elsewhere.

I here asked the Count what he had to say to our railroads.

"Nothing," he replied, "in particular." They were rather slight, rather ill-conceived, and clumsily put

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together. They could not be compared, of course, with the vast, level, direct, iron-grooved causeways upon which the Egyptians conveyed entire temples and solid obelisks of a hundred and fifty feet in altitude.

I spoke of our gigantic mechanical forces.

He agreed that we knew something in that way, but inquired how I should have gone to work in getting up the imposts on the lintels of even the little palace at Carnac.

This question I concluded not to hear, and demanded if he had any idea of artesian wells; but he simply raised his eyebrows; while Mr. Gliddon winked at me very hard and said, in a low tone, that one had been recently discovered by the engineers employed to bore for water in the Great Oasis.

I then mentioned our steel; but the foreigner elevated his nose and asked me if our steel could have executed the sharp carved work seen on the obelisks, and which was wrought altogether by edge-tools of copper.

This disconcerted us so greatly that we thought it advisable to vary the attack to metaphysics. We sent for a copy of the book called the *Dial* and read out of it a chapter or two about something which is not very clear, but which the Bostonians call the "Great Movement of Progress."

The Count merely said that Great Movements were awfully common things in his day, and as for Progress,

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it was at one time quite a nuisance, but it never progressed. We then spoke of the great beauty and importance of democracy, and were at much trouble in impressing the Count with a due sense of the advantages we enjoyed in living where there was suffrage *ad libitum* and no king.

He listened with marked interest, and in fact seemed not a little amused. When we had done, he said that a great while ago there had occurred something of a very similar sort. Thirteen Egyptian provinces determined all at once to be free and to set a magnificent example to the rest of mankind. They assembled their wise men and concocted the most ingenious constitution it is possible to conceive. For a while they managed remarkably well; only their habit of bragging was prodigious. The thing ended, however, in the consolidation of the thirteen states, with some fifteen or twenty others, in the most odious and insupportable despotism that was ever heard of upon the face of the earth.

I asked what was the name of the usurping tyrant.

As well as the Count could recollect, it was Mob.

Not knowing what to say to this, I raised my voice, and deplored the Egyptian ignorance of steam.

The Count looked at me with much astonishment, but made no answer. The silent gentleman, however, gave me a violent nudge in the ribs with his elbows, told me I had sufficiently exposed myself for once, and

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demanded if I was really such a fool as not to know that the modern steam-engine is derived from the invention of Hero, through Solomon de Caus.

We were now in imminent danger of being discomfited; but, as good luck would have it, Doctor Ponnonner, having rallied, returned to our rescue, and inquired if the people of Egypt would seriously pretend to rival the moderns in the all-important particular of dress.

The Count, at this, glanced downward to the straps of his pantaloons, and then, taking hold of the end of one of his coat-tails, held it up close to his eyes for some minutes. Letting it fall, at last, his mouth extended itself very gradually from ear to ear; but I do not remember that he said anything in the way of reply.

Hereupon we recovered our spirits, and the Doctor, approaching the Mummy with great dignity, desired it to say candidly, upon its honor as a gentleman, if the Egyptians had comprehended, at any period, the manufacture of either Ponnonner's lozenges or Brandreth's pills.

We looked, with profound anxiety, for an answer, but in vain. It was not forthcoming. The Egyptian blushed and hung down his head. Never was triumph more consummate; never was defeat borne with so ill a grace. Indeed, I could not endure the spectacle of the poor Mummy's mortification. I reached my hat, bowed to him stiffly, and took leave.

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Upon getting home I found it past four o'clock, and went immediately to bed. It is now ten A.M. I have been up since seven, penning these memoranda for the benefit of my family and of mankind. The former I shall behold no more. My wife is a shrew. The truth is, I am heartily sick of this life and of the nineteenth century in general. I am convinced that everything is going wrong. Besides, I am anxious to know who will be President in 2045. As soon, therefore, as I shave and swallow a cup of coffee I shall just step over to Ponnonner's and get embalmed for a couple of hundred years.





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Nil sapientiæ odiosius acumine nimio.—SENECA.



AT Paris, just after dark one gusty evening in the autumn of 18—, I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschäum, in company with my friend, C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or book-closet, *au troisième*, No. 33 Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain. For one hour at least we had maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppressed the atmosphere of the chamber. For myself, however, I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter for conversation between us at an earlier period of the evening; I mean the affair of the Rue Morgue and the mystery attending the murder of Marie Rogêt. I looked upon it, therefore, as something of a coincidence, when the door of our apartment was thrown open and admitted our old acquaintance, Monsieur G——, the Prefect of the Parisian police.

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We gave him a hearty welcome; for there was nearly half as much of the entertaining as of the contemptible about the man, and we had not seen him for several years. We had been sitting in the dark, and Dupin now arose for the purpose of lighting a lamp, but sat down again, without doing so, upon G——'s saying that he had called to consult us, or rather to ask the opinion of my friend, about some official business which had occasioned a great deal of trouble.

"If it is any point requiring reflection," observed Dupin, as he forbore to enkindle the wick, "we shall examine it to better purpose in the dark."

"That is another of your odd notions," said the Prefect, who had the fashion of calling everything "odd" that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived amid an absolute legion of "oddities."

"Very true," said Dupin, as he supplied his visitor with a pipe and rolled toward him a comfortable chair.

"And what is the difficulty now?" I asked. "Nothing more in the assassination way, I hope?"

"Oh, no; nothing of that nature. The fact is, the business is very simple indeed, and I make no doubt that we can manage it sufficiently well ourselves; but then I thought Dupin would like to hear the details of it, because it is so excessively odd."

"Simple and odd?" said Dupin.

"Why, yes; and not exactly that either. The fact

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is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair is so simple, and yet baffles us altogether."

"Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault," said my friend.

"What nonsense you do talk!" replied the Prefect, laughing heartily.

"Perhaps the mystery is a little too plain," said Dupin.

"Oh, good heavens! who ever heard of such an idea?"

"A little too self-evident."

"Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!" roared our visitor, profoundly amused. "Oh, Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!"

"And what, after all, is the matter on hand?" I asked.

"Why, I will tell you," replied the Prefect, as he gave a long, steady, and contemplative puff and settled himself in his chair,—“I will tell you in a few words; but, before I begin, let me caution you that this is an affair demanding the greatest secrecy, and that I should most probably lose the position I now hold were it known that I confided it to any one.”

"Proceed," said I.

"Or not," said Dupin.

"Well, then; I have received personal information, from a very high quarter, that a certain document of the last importance has been purloined from the royal

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apartments. The individual who purloined it is known—this beyond a doubt; he was seen to take it. It is known, also, that it still remains in his possession.”

“How is this known?” asked Dupin.

“It is clearly inferred,” replied the Prefect, “from the nature of the document and from the non-appearance of certain results which would at once arise from its passing out of the robber’s possession, that is to say, from his employing it as he must design in the end to employ it.”

“Be a little more explicit,” I said.

“Well, I may venture so far as to say that the paper gives its holder a certain power in a certain quarter where such power is immensely valuable.” The Prefect was fond of the cant of diplomacy.

“Still I do not quite understand,” said Dupin.

“No? Well; the **disclosure** of the document to a third person, who shall be nameless, would bring in question the honor of a personage of most exalted station; and this fact gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so **jeopardized**.”

“But this ascendancy,” I interposed, “would depend upon the robber’s knowledge of the loser’s knowledge of the robber. Who would dare——”

“The thief,” said G——, “is the Minister D——, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man. The method of the theft was not

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less ingenious than bold. The document in question,—a letter, to be frank,—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal boudoir. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried and vain endeavor to thrust it in a drawer, she was forced to place it, open as it was, upon a table. The address, however, was uppermost, and, the contents thus unexposed, the letter escaped notice. At this juncture enters the Minister D——. His lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognizes the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret. After some business transactions, hurried through in his ordinary manner, he produces a letter somewhat similar to the one in question, opens it, pretends to read it, and then places it in close juxtaposition to the other. Again he converses for some fifteen minutes upon the public affairs. At length, in taking leave, he takes also from the table the letter to which he had no claim. Its rightful owner saw, but, of course, dared not call attention to the act, in the presence of the third personage, who stood at her elbow. The Minister decamped, leaving his own letter, one of no importance, upon the table.”

“Here, then,” said Dupin to me, “you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy com-

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plete, the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber."

"Yes," replied the Prefect; "and the power thus attained has, for some months past, been wielded, for political purposes, to a very dangerous extent. The personage robbed is more thoroughly convinced every day of the necessity of reclaiming her letter. But this, of course, cannot be done openly. In fine, driven to despair, she has committed the matter to me."

"Than whom," said Dupin, amid a perfect whirlwind of smoke, "no more sagacious agent could, I suppose, be desired or even imagined."

"You flatter me," replied the Prefect; "but it is possible that some such opinion may have been entertained."

"It is clear," said I, "as you observe, that the letter is still in the possession of the Minister; since it is this possession, and not any employment of the letter, which bestows the power. With the employment the power departs."

"True," said G——; "and upon this conviction I proceeded. My first care was to make thorough search of the Minister's hotel; and here my chief embarrassment lay in the necessity of searching without his knowledge. Beyond all things, I have been warned of the danger which would result from giving him reason to suspect our design."

"But," said I, "you are quite *au fait* in these

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investigations. The Parisian police have done this thing often before."

"Oh, yes; and for this reason I did not despair. The habits of the Minister gave me, too, a great advantage. He is frequently absent from home all night. His servants are by no means numerous. They sleep at a distance from their master's apartment, and, being chiefly Neapolitans, are readily made drunk. I have keys, as you know, with which I can open any chamber or cabinet in Paris. For three months a night has not passed, during the greater part of which I have not been engaged, personally, in ransacking the D—— Hotel. My honor is interested, and, to mention a great secret, the reward is enormous. So I did not abandon the search until I had become fully satisfied that the thief is a more astute man than myself. I fancy that I have investigated every nook and corner of the premises in which it is possible that the paper can be concealed."

"But is it not possible," I suggested, "that although the letter may be in possession of the Minister, as it unquestionably is, he may have concealed it elsewhere than upon his own premises?"

"This is barely possible," said Dupin. "The present peculiar condition of affairs at court, and especially of those intrigues in which D—— is known to be involved, would render the instant availability of the document, its susceptibility of being produced at a

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moment's notice, a point of nearly equal importance with its possession."

"Its susceptibility of being produced?" said I.

"That is to say, of being destroyed," said Dupin.

"True," I observed; "the paper is clearly, then, upon the premises. As for its being upon the person of the minister, we may consider that as out of the question."

"Entirely," said the Prefect. "He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigidly searched under my own inspection."

"You might have spared yourself this trouble," said Dupin. "D——, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not, must have anticipated these waylayings, as a matter of course."

"Not altogether a fool," said G——, "but then he is a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool."

"True," said Dupin, after a long and thoughtful whiff from his meerschaum, "although I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself."

"Suppose you detail," said I, "the particulars of your search."

"Why, the fact is, we took our time, and we searched everywhere. I have had long experience in these affairs. I took the entire building, room by room; devoting the nights of a whole week to each. We examined, first, the furniture of each apartment. We opened every possible drawer; and I presume you know

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that, to a properly trained police-agent, such a thing as a 'secret' drawer is impossible. Any man is a dolt who permits a 'secret' drawer to escape him in a search of this kind. The thing is so plain. There is a certain amount of bulk, of space, to be accounted for in every cabinet. Then we have accurate rules. The fiftieth part of a line could not escape us. After the cabinets we took the chairs. The cushions we probed with the fine long needles you have seen me employ. From the tables we removed the tops."

"Why so?"

"Sometimes the top of a table or other similarly arranged piece of furniture is removed by the person wishing to conceal an article; then the leg is excavated, the article deposited within the cavity, and the top replaced. The bottoms and tops of bedposts are employed in the same way."

"But could not the cavity be detected by sounding?" I asked.

"By no means, if, when the article is deposited, a sufficient wadding of cotton be placed around it. Besides, in our case, we were obliged to proceed without noise."

"But you could not have removed, you could not have taken to pieces all articles of furniture in which it would have been possible to make a deposit in the manner you mention.* A letter may be compressed into a thin spiral roll, not differing much in shape or

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bulk from a large knitting-needle, and in this form it might be inserted into the rung of a chair, for example. You did not take to pieces all the chairs ? ”

“ Certainly not, but we did better : we examined the rungs of every chair in the hotel, and, indeed, the jointings of every description of furniture, by the aid of a most powerful microscope. Had there been any traces of recent disturbance we should not have failed to detect it instantly. A single grain of gimlet-dust, for example, would have been as obvious as an apple. Any disorder in the gluing, any unusual gaping in the joints, would have sufficed to insure detection.”

“ I presume you looked to the mirrors, between the boards and the plates, and you probed the beds and the bedclothes, as well as the curtains and carpets.”

“ That of course ; and when we had absolutely completed every particle of the furniture in this way, then we examined the house itself. We divided its entire surface into compartments, which we numbered, so that none might be missed ; then we scrutinized each individual square inch throughout the premises, including the two houses immediately adjoining, with the microscope, as before.”

“ The two houses adjoining ! ” I exclaimed ; “ you must have had a great deal of trouble.”

“ We had ; but the reward offered is prodigious.”

“ You include the grounds about the houses ? ”

“ All the grounds are paved with brick. They gave

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us comparatively little trouble. We examined the moss between the bricks and found it undisturbed."

"You looked among D——'s papers, of course, and into the books of the library?"

"Certainly; we opened every package and parcel; we not only opened every book, but we turned over every leaf in each volume, not contenting ourselves with a mere shake, according to the fashion of some of our police officers. We also measured the thickness of every book-cover with the most accurate admeasurement, and applied to each the most jealous scrutiny of the microscope. Had any of the bindings been recently meddled with, it would have been utterly impossible that the fact should have escaped observation. Some five or six volumes, just from the hands of the binder, we carefully probed, longitudinally, with the needles."

"You explored the floors beneath the carpets?"

"Beyond doubt. We removed every carpet and examined the boards with the microscope."

"And the paper on the walls?"

"Yes."

"You looked into the cellars?"

"We did."

"Then," I said, "you have been making a miscalculation, and the letter is not upon the premises, as you suppose."

"I fear you are right there," said the Prefect. "And now, Dupin, what would you advise me to do?"

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“To make a thorough research of the premises.”

“That is absolutely needless,” replied G——. “I am not more sure that I breathe than I am that the letter is not at the hotel.”

“I have no better advice to give you,” said Dupin. “You have, of course, an accurate description of the letter?”

“Oh, yes!” and here the Prefect, producing a memorandum-book, proceeded to read aloud a minute account of the internal, and especially of the external, appearance of the missing document. Soon after finishing the perusal of this description he took his departure, more entirely depressed in spirits than I had ever known the good gentleman before.

In about a month afterward he paid us another visit, and found us occupied very nearly as before. He took a pipe and a chair and entered into some ordinary conversation. At length I said:

“Well, but, G——, what of the purloined letter? I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister?”

“Confound him! say I—yes; I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested, but it was all labor lost, as I knew it would be.”

“How much was the reward offered, did you say?” asked Dupin.

“Why, a very great deal, a very liberal reward; I don’t like to say how much, precisely; but one thing I

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will say,—that I would n't mind giving my individual check for fifty thousand francs to any one who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; and the reward has been lately doubled. If it were trebled, however, I could do no more than I have done."

"Why, yes," said Dupin, drawlingly, between the whiffs of his meerschaum, "I really—think, G——, you have not exerted yourself—to the utmost in this matter. You might—do a little more, I think, eh?"

"How? in what way?"

"Why—puff, puff—you might—puff, puff—employ counsel in the matter, eh?—puff, puff, puff. Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?"

"No; hang Abernethy!"

"To be sure! hang him and welcome. But, once upon a time, a certain rich miser conceived the design of sponging upon this Abernethy for a medical opinion. Getting up, for this purpose, an ordinary conversation in a private company, he insinuated his case to the physician as that of an imaginary individual.

" 'We will suppose,' said the miser, 'that his symptoms are such and such; now, Doctor, what would you have directed him to take?'

" 'Take!' said Abernethy, 'why, take advice, to be sure.' "

"But," said the Prefect, a little discomposed, "I am perfectly willing to take advice and to pay for it. I

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would really give fifty thousand francs to any one who would aid me in the matter."

"In that case," replied Dupin, opening a drawer and producing a check-book, "you may as well fill me up a check for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it I will hand you the letter."

I was astounded. The Prefect appeared absolutely thunderstricken. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, looking incredulously at my friend with open mouth, and eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then, apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and after several pauses and vacant stares finally filled up and signed a check for fifty thousand francs and handed it across the table to Dupin. The latter examined it carefully and deposited it in his pocketbook; then, unlocking an *escritoire*, took thence a letter and gave it to the Prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house without having uttered a syllable since Dupin had requested him to fill up the check.

When he had gone, my friend entered into some explanations.

"The Parisian police," he said, "are exceedingly able in their way. They are persevering, ingenious,

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cunning, and thoroughly versed in the knowledge which their duties seem chiefly to demand. Thus, when G—— detailed to us his mode of searching the premises at the Hotel D——, I felt entire confidence in his having made a satisfactory investigation, so far as his labors extended.”

“ ‘ So far as his labors extended ’ ? ” said I.

“ Yes,” said Dupin. “ The measures adopted were not only the best of their kind, but carried out to absolute perfection. Had the letter been deposited within the range of their search, these fellows would, beyond a question, have found it.”

I merely laughed, but he seemed quite serious in all that he said.

“ The measures, then,” he continued, “ were good in their kind and well executed; their defect lay in their being inapplicable to the case and to the man. A certain set of highly ingenious resources are, with the Prefect, a sort of Procrustean bed, to which he forcibly adapts his designs. But he perpetually errs by being too deep or too shallow for the matter in hand; and many a schoolboy is a better reasoner than he. I knew one about eight years of age, whose success at guessing in the game of ‘ even and odd ’ attracted universal admiration. This game is simple, and is played with marbles. One player holds in his hand a number of these toys and demands of another whether that number is even or odd. If the guess is right, the

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guesser wins one; if wrong, he loses one. The boy to whom I allude won all the marbles of the school. Of course he had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand, asks, 'Are they even or odd?' Our schoolboy replies, 'Odd,' and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he then says to himself: 'The simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his amount of cunning is just sufficient to make him have them odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd;' he guesses odd and wins. Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first, he would have reasoned thus: 'This fellow finds that in the first instance I guessed odd, and in the second he will propose to himself, upon the first impulse, a simple variation from even to odd, as did the first simpleton; but then a second thought will suggest that this is too simple a variation, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before. I will therefore guess even;'—he guesses even and wins. Now this mode of reasoning in the schoolboy, whom his fellows termed 'lucky,'—what, in its last analysis, is it?"

"It is merely," I said, "an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent."

"It is," said Dupin; "and upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the thorough identification

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in which his success consisted, I received answer as follows: 'When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.' This response of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucauld, to La Bruyère, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella."

"And the identification," I said, "of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent depends, if I understand you aright, upon the accuracy with which the opponent's intellect is admeasured."

"For its practical value it depends upon this," replied Dupin; "and the Prefect and his cohort fail so frequently, first, by default of this identification, and, secondly, by ill-admeasurement, or rather through non-admeasurement, of the intellect with which they are engaged. They consider only their own ideas of ingenuity; and, in searching for anything hidden, advert only to the modes in which they would have hidden it. They are right in this much, that their own ingenuity is a faithful representative of that of the mass; but when the cunning of the individual felon is diverse in character from their own the felon foils them, of

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course. This always happens when it is above their own, and very usually when it is below. They have no variation of principle in their investigations; at best, when urged by some unusual emergency, by some extraordinary reward, they extend or exaggerate their old modes of practice without touching their principles. What, for example, in this case of D——, has been done to vary the principle of action? What is all this boring, and probing, and sounding, and scrutinizing with the microscope, and dividing the surface of the building into registered square inches; what is it all but an exaggeration of the application of the one principle or set of principles of search, which are based upon the one set of notions regarding human ingenuity, to which the Prefect, in the long routine of his duty, has been accustomed? Do you not see he has taken it for granted that all men proceed to conceal a letter, not exactly in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg, but, at least, in some out-of-the-way hole or corner suggested by the same tenor of thought which would urge a man to secrete a letter in a gimlet-hole bored in a chair-leg? And do you not see, also, that such *recherchés* nooks for concealment are adapted only for ordinary occasions, and would be adopted only by ordinary intellects; for, in all cases of concealment, a disposal of the article concealed, a disposal of it in this *recherche* manner, is, in the very first instance, presumable and presumed; and thus its discovery depends, not at all upon the

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acumen, but altogether upon the mere care, patience, and determination of the seekers; and where the case is of importance, or, what amounts to the same thing in the policial eyes, when the reward is of magnitude, the qualities in question have never been known to fail. You will now understand what I meant in suggesting that, had the purloined letter been hidden anywhere within the limits of the Prefect's examination,—in other words, had the principle of its concealment been comprehended within the principles of the Prefect,—its discovery would have been a matter altogether beyond question. This functionary, however, has been thoroughly mystified; and the remote source of his defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets; this the Prefect feels; and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio mediū* in thence inferring that all poets are fools."

"But is this really the poet?" I asked. "There are two brothers, I know; and both have attained reputation in letters. The Minister, I believe, has written learnedly on the Differential Calculus. He is a mathematician and no poet."

"You are mistaken; I know him well; he is both. As poet and mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have been at the mercy of the Prefect."

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"You surprise me," I said, "by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries? The mathematical reason has long been regarded as the reason *par excellence*."

"'Il y a à parier,'" replied Dupin, quoting from Chamfort, "'que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenue au plus grand nombre.'" The mathematicians, I grant you, have done their best to promulgate the popular error to which you allude, and which is none the less an error for its promulgation as truth. With an art worthy a better cause, for example, they have insinuated the term 'analysis' into application to algebra. The French are the originators of this particular deception; but if a term is of any importance, if words derive any value from applicability, then 'analysis' conveys 'algebra' about as much as, in Latin, '*ambitus*' implies 'ambition,' '*religio*' 'religion,' or '*homines honesti*' a set of honorable men."

"You have a quarrel on hand, I see," said I, "with some of the algebraists of Paris; but proceed."

"I dispute the availability, and thus the value of that reason which is cultivated in any especial form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the reason deduced by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of form and quantity; mathematical reasoning is merely logic applied to

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observation upon form and quantity. The great error lies in supposing that even the truths of what is called pure algebra are abstract or general truths. And this error is so egregious that I am confounded at the universality with which it has been received. Mathematical axioms are not axioms of general truth. What is true of relation, of form and quantity, is often grossly false in regard to morals, for example. In this latter science it is very usually untrue that the aggregated parts are equal to the whole. In chemistry, also, the axiom fails. In the consideration of motive it fails; for two motives, each of a given value, have not, necessarily, a value, when united, equal to the sum of their values apart. There are numerous other mathematical truths which are only truths within the limits of relation. But the mathematician argues from his finite truths, through habit, as if they were of an absolutely general applicability, as the world indeed imagines them to be. Bryant, in his very learned *Mythology*, mentions an analogous source of error when he says that 'although the pagan fables are not believed, yet we forget ourselves continually and make inferences from them as existing realities.' With the algebraists, however, who are pagans themselves, the 'pagan fables' are believed, and the inferences are made, not so much through lapse of memory as through an unaccountable addling of the brains. In short, I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who

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could be trusted out of equal roots, or one who did not clandestinely hold it as a point of his faith that $x^2 + px$ was absolutely and unconditionally equal to q . Say to one of these gentlemen, by way of experiment, if you please, that you believe occasions may occur where $x^2 + px$ is not altogether equal to q , and, having made him understand what you mean, get out of his reach as speedily as convenient, for, beyond doubt, he will endeavor to knock you down.

“I mean to say,” continued Dupin, while I merely laughed at his last observations, “that if the Minister had been no more than a mathematician, the Prefect would have been under no necessity of giving me this check. I knew him, however, as both mathematician and poet, and my measures were adapted to his capacity with reference to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. I knew him as a courtier, too, and as a bold intrigant. Such a man, I considered, could not fail to be aware of the ordinary policial modes of action. He could not have failed to anticipate—and events have proved that he did not fail to anticipate—the waylayings to which he was subjected. He must have foreseen, I reflected, the secret investigations of his premises. His frequent absences from home at night, which were hailed by the Prefect as certain aids to his success, I regarded only as ruses to afford opportunity for thorough search to the police, and thus the sooner to impress them with the conviction, to which

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G——, in fact, did finally arrive,—the conviction that the letter was not upon the premises. I felt, also, that the whole train of thought, which I was at some pains in detailing to you just now, concerning the invariable principle of policial action in searches for articles concealed,—I felt that this whole train of thought would necessarily pass through the mind of the Minister. It would imperatively lead him to despise all the ordinary nooks of concealment. He could not, I reflected, be so weak as not to see that the most intricate and remote recess of his hotel would be as open as his commonest closets to the eyes, to the probes, to the gimlets, and to the microscopes of the Prefect. I saw, in fine, that he would be driven, as a matter of course, to simplicity, if not deliberately induced to it as a matter of choice. You will remember, perhaps, how desperately the Prefect laughed when I suggested, upon our first interview, that it was just possible this mystery troubled him so much on account of its being so very self-evident.”

“Yes,” said I, “I remember his merriment well. I really thought he would have fallen into convulsions.”

“The material world,” continued Dupin, “abounds with very strict analogies to the immaterial; and thus some color of truth has been given to the rhetorical dogma that metaphor, or simile, may be made to strengthen an argument as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiae*, for ex-

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ample, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true in the former, that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent momentum is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is, in the latter, that intellects of the vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more eventful in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved, and more embarrassed, and full of hesitation in the first few steps of their progress. Again: have you ever noticed which of the street signs, over the shop doors, are the most attractive of attention ? ”

“ I have never given the matter a thought,” I said.

“ There is a game of puzzles,” he resumed, “ which is played upon a map. One party playing requires another to find a given word, the name of town, river, state, or empire,—any word, in short, upon the motley and perplexed surface of the chart. A novice in the game generally seeks to embarrass his opponents by giving them the most minutely lettered names; but the adept selects such words as stretch, in large characters, from one end of the chart to the other. These, like the over-largely lettered signs and placards of the street, escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious; and here the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those

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considerations which are too obtrusively and too palpably self-evident. But this is a point, it appears, somewhat above or beneath the understanding of the Prefect. He never once thought it probable, or possible, that the Minister had deposited the letter immediately beneath the nose of the whole world by way of best preventing any portion of that world from perceiving it.

“ But the more I reflected upon the daring, dashing, and discriminating ingenuity of D——; upon the fact that the document must always have been at hand, if he intended to use it to good purpose; and upon the decisive evidence, obtained by the Prefect, that it was not hidden within the limits of that dignitary’s ordinary search, the more satisfied I became that, to conceal this letter, the Minister had resorted to the comprehensive and sagacious expedient of not attempting to conceal it at all.

“ Full of these ideas, I prepared myself with a pair of green spectacles, and called one fine morning, quite by accident, at the ministerial hotel. I found D—— at home, yawning, lounging, and dawdling, as usual, and pretending to be in the last extremity of *ennui*. He is, perhaps, the most really energetic human being now alive; but that is only when nobody sees him.

“ To be even with him, I complained of my weak eyes, and lamented the necessity of the spectacles, under cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly

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surveyed the whole apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of my host.

“ I paid especial attention to a large writing-table near which he sat, and upon which lay confusedly some miscellaneous letters and other papers, with one or two musical instruments and a few books. Here, however, after a long and very deliberate scrutiny, I saw nothing to excite particular suspicion.

“ At length my eyes, in going the circuit of the room, fell upon a trumpery filigree card-rack of paste-board, that hung dangling by a dirty blue ribbon from a little brass knob just beneath the middle of the mantelpiece. In this rack, which had three or four compartments, were five or six visiting-cards and a solitary letter. This last was much soiled and crumpled. It was torn nearly in two, across the middle, as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered, or stayed, in the second. It had a large black seal, bearing the D—— cipher very conspicuously, and was addressed, in a diminutive female hand, to D——, the Minister, himself. It was thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the uppermost divisions of the rack.

“ No sooner had I glanced at this letter than I concluded it to be that of which I was in search. To be sure, it was, to all appearance, radically different from the one of which the Prefect had read us so

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minute a description. Here the seal was large and black, with the D—— cipher; there it was small and red, with the ducal arms of the S—— family. Here, the address, to the Minister, was diminutive and feminine; there the superscription, to a certain royal personage, was markedly bold and decided; the size alone formed a point of correspondence. But, then, the radicalness of these differences, which was excessive: the dirt; the soiled and torn condition of the paper, so inconsistent with the true methodical habits of D——, and so suggestive of a design to delude the beholder into an idea of the worthlessness of the document,—these things, together with the hyperobtrusive situation of this document, full in the view of every visitor, and thus exactly in accordance with the conclusions to which I had previously arrived; these things, I say, were strongly corroborative of suspicion, in one who came with the intention to suspect.

“I protracted my visit as long as possible, and, while I maintained a most animated discussion with the Minister upon a topic which I knew well had never failed to interest and excite him, I kept my attention really riveted upon the letter. In this examination, I committed to memory its external appearance and arrangement in the rack; and also fell, at length, upon a discovery which set at rest whatever trivial doubt I might have entertained. In scrutinizing the edges

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of the paper, I observed them to be more chafed than seemed necessary. They presented the broken appearance which is manifested when a stiff paper, having been once folded and pressed with a folder, is refolded in a reversed direction, in the same creases or edges which had formed the original fold. This discovery was sufficient. It was clear to me that the letter had been turned, as a glove, inside out, re-directed and resealed. I bade the Minister good-morning, and took my departure at once, leaving a gold snuff-box upon the table.

“ The next morning I called for the snuff-box, when we resumed, quite eagerly, the conversation of the preceding day. While thus engaged, however, a loud report, as if of a pistol, was heard immediately beneath the windows of the hotel, and was succeeded by a series of fearful screams, and the shoutings of a terrified mob. D—— rushed to a casement, threw it open, and looked out. In the meantime I stepped to the card-rack, took the letter, put it in my pocket, and replaced it by a fac-simile (so far as regards externals) which I had carefully prepared at my lodgings, imitating the D—— cipher very readily by means of a seal formed of bread.

“ The disturbance in the street had been occasioned by the frantic behavior of a man with a musket. He had fired it among a crowd of women and children. It proved, however, to have been without a ball, and

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the fellow was suffered to go his way as a lunatic or a drunkard. When he had gone, D—— came from the window, whither I had followed him immediately upon securing the object in view. Soon afterward I bade him farewell. The pretended lunatic was a man in my own pay.”

“But what purpose had you,” I asked, “in replacing the letter by a fac-simile? Would it not have been better, at the first visit, to have seized it openly and departed?”

“D——,” replied Dupin, “is a desperate man, and a man of nerve. His hotel, too, is not without attendants devoted to his interests. Had I made the wild attempt you suggest, I might never have left the ministerial presence alive. The good people of Paris might have heard of me no more. But I had an object apart from these considerations. You know my political prepossessions. In this matter, I act as a partisan of the lady concerned. For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers, since, being unaware that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction. His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward. It is all very well to talk about the *facilis descensus Averni* ;* but in all kinds of climbing, as Catalani said of singing, it is far more easy to get

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up than to come down. In the present instance I have no sympathy, at least no pity, for him who descends. He is that *monstrum horrendum*, an unprincipled man of genius. I confess, however, that I should like very well to know the precise character of his thoughts, when, being defied by her whom the Prefect terms 'a certain personage,' he is reduced to opening the letter which I left for him in the card-rack."

"How? did you put anything particular in it?"

"Why, it did not seem altogether right to leave the interior blank; that would have been insulting. D——, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him, quite good-humoredly, that I should remember. So, as I knew he would feel some curiosity in regard to the identity of the person who had outwitted him, I thought it a pity not to give him a clew. He is well acquainted with my MS., and I just copied into the middle of the blank sheet the words

" '—— Un dessein si funeste,
S'il n' est digne d' Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.' "


They are to be found in Crébillon's *Atrée*."





The Angel of the Odd

AN EXTRAVAGANZA

T was a chilly November afternoon. I had just consummated an unusually hearty dinner, of which the dyspeptic *truffe* formed not the least important item, and was sitting alone in the dining-room, with my feet upon the fender, and at my elbow a small table which I had rolled up to the fire, and upon which were some apologies for dessert, with some miscellaneous bottles of wine, spirit, and liqueur. In the morning I had been reading Glover's *Leonidas*, Wilkie's *Epigoniad*, Lamartine's *Pilgrimage*, Barlow's *Columbiad*, Tuckerman's *Sicily*, and Griswold's *Curiosities*; I am willing to confess, therefore, that I now felt a little stupid. I made effort to arouse myself by aid of frequent Lafitte, and, all failing, I betook myself to a stray newspaper in despair. Having carefully perused the column of "Houses to Let," and the column of "Dogs Lost," and then the two

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columns of "Wives and Apprentices Run Away," I attacked with great resolution the editorial matter, and, reading it from beginning to end without understanding a syllable, conceived the possibility of its being Chinese, and so reread it from the end to the beginning, but with no more satisfactory result. I was about throwing away, in disgust,

"This folio of four pages, happy work,
Which not even poets criticise,"

when I felt my attention somewhat aroused by the paragraph which follows:

"The avenues to death are numerous and strange. A London paper mentions the decease of a person from a singular cause. He was playing at 'puff the dart,' which is played with a long needle inserted in some worsted, and blown at a target through a tin tube. He placed the needle at the wrong end of the tube, and, drawing his breath strongly to puff the dart forward with force, drew the needle into his throat. It entered the lungs, and in a few days killed him."

Upon seeing this I fell into a great rage, without exactly knowing why. "This thing," I exclaimed, "is a contemptible falsehood, a poor hoax, the lees of the invention of some pitiable penny-a-liner, of some wretched concoctor of accidents in Cocaigne. These fellows, knowing the extravagant gullibility of the age, set their wits to work in the imagination of improbable

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possibilities, of odd accidents, as they term them; but to a reflecting intellect (like mine)," I added, in parenthesis, putting my forefinger unconsciously to the side of my nose, "to a contemplative understanding such as I myself possess, it seems evident at once that the marvellous increase of late in these 'odd accidents' is by far the oddest accident of all. For my own part, I intend to believe nothing henceforward that has anything of the 'singular' about it."

"Mein Gott, den, vat a vool you bees for dat!" replied one of the most remarkable voices I ever heard. At first I took it for a rumbling in my ears, such as a man sometimes experiences when getting very drunk, but, upon second thought, I considered the sound as more nearly resembling that which proceeds from an empty barrel beaten with a big stick; and, in fact, this I should have concluded it to be, but for the articulation of the syllables and words. I am by no means naturally nervous, and the very few glasses of Lafitte which I had sipped served to embolden me a little, so that I felt nothing of trepidation, but merely uplifted my eyes with a leisurely movement, and looked carefully around the room for the intruder. I could not, however, perceive any one at all.

"Humph!" resumed the voice, as I continued my survey, "you mus-pe so dronk as de pig, den, for not zee me as I zit here at your zide."

Hereupon I bethought me of looking immediately

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before my nose, and there, sure enough, confronting me at the table, sat a personage nondescript, although not altogether indescribable. His body was a wine-pipe, or a rum-puncheon, or something of that character, and had a truly Falstaffian air. In its nether extremity were inserted two kegs, which seemed to answer all the purposes of legs. For arms there dangled from the upper portion of the carcass two tolerably long bottles, with the necks outward for hands. All the head that I saw the monster possessed of was one of those Hessian canteens which resemble a large snuff-box with a hole in the middle of the lid. This canteen (with a funnel on its top, like a cavalier cap slouched over the eyes) was set on edge upon the puncheon, with the hole toward myself; and through this hole, which seemed puckered up like the mouth of a very precise old maid, the creature was emitting certain rumbling and grumbling noises which he evidently intended for intelligible talk.

"I zay," said he, "you mos pe dronk as de pig, vor zit dare and not zee me zit ere; and I zay, doo, you most pe pigger vool as de goose, vor to dispelief vat iz print in de print. 'T iz de troof, dat it iz, eberry vord ob it."

"Who are you, pray?" said I, with much dignity, although somewhat puzzled; "how did you get here? and what is it you are talking about?"

"As vor ow I com'd ere," replied the figure, "dat iz

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none of your pizzness; and as vor vat I be talking apout, I be talk apout vat I tink proper; and as vor who I be, vy dat is de very ting I com'd here for to let you zee for yourzelf."

"You are a drunken vagabond," said I, "and I shall ring the bell and order my footman to kick you into the street."

"He! he! he!" said the fellow, "hu! hu! hu! dat you can't do."

"Can't do!" said I, "what do you mean? I can't do what?"

"Ring de pell," he replied, attempting a grin with his little villainous mouth.

Upon this I made an effort to get up, in order to put my threat into execution; but the ruffian just reached across the table very deliberately, and, hitting me a tap on the forehead with the neck of one of the long bottles, knocked me back into the armchair from which I had half arisen. I was utterly astounded; and, for a moment, was quite at a loss what to do. In the meantime, he continued his talk.

"You zee," said he, "it iz te bess vor zit still; and now you shall know who I pe. Look at me! zee! I am te Angel ov te Odd."

"And odd enough, too," I ventured to reply; "but I was always under the impression that an angel had wings."

"Te wing!" he cried, highly incensed; "vat I pe

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do mit te wing ? Mein Gott! do you take me vor a shicken ? ”

“ No ; oh, no ! ” I replied, much alarmed, “ you are no chicken, certainly not.”

“ Well, den, zit still and pehabe yourself, or I ’ll rap you again mid me vist. It iz te shicken ab te wing, und te owl ab te wing, und te imp ab de wing, und te head-teuffel ab te wing. Te angel ab not te wing, and I am te Angel ov te Odd.”

“ And your business with me at present is—is——”

“ My pizzness ! ” ejaculated the thing, “ vy vot a low-bred puppy you mos pe vor to ask a gentleman und an angel apout his pizzness ! ”

This language was rather more than I could bear, even from an angel ; so, plucking up courage, I seized a salt-cellar which lay within reach, and hurled it at the head of the intruder. Either he dodged, however, or my aim was inaccurate ; for all I accomplished was the demolition of the crystal which protected the dial of the clock upon the mantelpiece. As for the Angel, he evinced his sense of my assault by giving me two or three hard consecutive raps upon the forehead as before. These reduced me at once to submission, and I am almost ashamed to confess that, either through pain or vexation, there came a few tears into my eyes.

“ Mein Gott ! ” said the Angel of the Odd, apparently much softened at my distress ; “ mein Gott, te man

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is eder ferry dronk or ferry sorry. You mos not trink it so strong, you mos put de water in te wine. Here, trink dis, like a goot veller, und don't gry now, don't! "

Hereupon the Angel of the Odd replenished my goblet (which was about a third full of port) with a colorless fluid that he poured from one of his hand bottles. I observed that these bottles had labels about their necks, and that these labels were inscribed, "Kirschwasser."

The considerate kindness of the Angel mollified me in no little measure; and, aided by the water with which he diluted my port more than once, I at length regained sufficient temper to listen to his very extraordinary discourse. I cannot pretend to recount all that he told me, but I gleaned from what he said that he was the genius who presided over the *contretemps* of mankind, and whose business it was to bring about the odd accidents which are continually astonishing the sceptic. Once or twice, upon my venturing to express my total incredulity in respect to his pretensions, he grew very angry indeed, so that at length I considered it the wiser policy to say nothing at all, and let him have his own way. He talked on, therefore, at great length, while I merely leaned back in my chair with my eyes shut, and amused myself with munching raisins and filliping the stems about the room. But, by and by, the Angel suddenly construed this behavior of mine into contempt. He arose in a

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terrible passion, slouched his funnel down over his eyes, swore a vast oath, uttered a threat of some character which I did not precisely comprehend, and finally made me a low bow and departed, wishing me, in the language of the archbishop in *Gil-Blas*, "*beaucoup de bonheur et un peu plus de bon sens.*"

His departure afforded me relief. The very few glasses of Lafitte that I had sipped had the effect of rendering me drowsy, and I felt inclined to take a nap of some fifteen or twenty minutes, as is my custom after dinner. At six I had an appointment of consequence, which it was quite indispensable that I should keep. The policy of insurance for my dwelling-house had expired the day before; and, some dispute having arisen, it was agreed that, at six, I should meet the board of directors of the company and settle the terms of a renewal. Glancing upward at the clock on the mantelpiece (for I felt too drowsy to take out my watch), I had the pleasure to find that I had still twenty-five minutes to spare. It was half-past five; I could easily walk to the insurance office in five minutes; and my usual siestas had never been known to exceed five-and-twenty. I felt sufficiently safe, therefore, and composed myself to my slumbers forthwith.

Having completed them to my satisfaction, I again looked toward the timepiece, and was half inclined to believe in the possibility of odd accidents when I found that, instead of my ordinary fifteen or twenty

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minutes, I had been dozing only three; for it still wanted seven-and-twenty of the appointed hour. I betook myself again to my nap, and at length a second time awoke, when, to my utter amazement, it still wanted twenty-seven minutes of six. I jumped up to examine the clock, and found that it had ceased running. My watch informed me that it was half-past seven; and, of course, having slept two hours, I was too late for my appointment. "It will make no difference," I said; "I can call at the office in the morning and apologize; in the meantime what can be the matter with the clock?" Upon examining it I discovered that one of the raisin-stems which I had been filliping about the room during the discourse of the Angel of the Odd had flown through the fractured crystal, and lodging, singularly enough, in the key-hole, with an end projecting outward, had thus arrested the revolution of the minute-hand.

"Ah!" said I; "I see how it is. This thing speaks for itself. A natural accident, such as will happen now and then!"

I gave the matter no further consideration, and at my usual hour retired to bed. Here, having placed a candle upon a reading-stand at the bed-head, and having made an attempt to peruse some pages of the *Omnipresence of the Deity*, I unfortunately fell asleep in less than twenty seconds, leaving the light burning as it was.

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My dreams were terrifically disturbed by visions of the Angel of the Odd. Methought he stood at the foot of the couch, drew aside the curtains, and, in the hollow, detestable tones of a rum-puncheon, menaced me with the bitterest vengeance for the contempt with which I had treated him. He concluded a long harangue by taking off his funnel-cap, inserting the tube into my gullet, and thus deluging me with an ocean of Kirschwasser, which he poured, in a continuous flood, from one of the long-necked bottles that stood him instead of an arm. My agony was at length insufferable, and I awoke just in time to perceive that a rat had run off with the lighted candle from the stand, but not in season to prevent his making his escape with it through the hole. Very soon, a strong, suffocating odor assailed my nostrils; the house, I clearly perceived, was on fire. In a few minutes the blaze broke forth with violence, and in an incredibly brief period the entire building was wrapped in flames. All egress from my chamber, except through a window, was cut off. The crowd, however, quickly procured and raised a long ladder. By means of this I was descending rapidly, and in apparent safety, when a huge hog, about whose rotund stomach, and indeed about whose whole air and physiognomy, there was something which reminded me of the Angel of the Odd,—when this hog, I say, which hitherto had been quietly slumbering in the mud, took it suddenly into

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his head that his left shoulder needed scratching, and could find no more convenient rubbing-post than that afforded by the foot of the ladder. In an instant I was precipitated, and had the misfortune to fracture my arm.

This accident, with the loss of my insurance, and with the more serious loss of my hair, the whole of which had been singed off by the fire, predisposed me to serious impressions, so that, finally, I made up my mind to take a wife. There was a rich widow disconsolate for the loss of her seventh husband, and to her wounded spirit I offered the balm of my vows. She yielded a reluctant consent to my prayers. I knelt at her feet in gratitude and adoration. She blushed, and bowed her luxuriant tresses into close contact with those supplied me, temporarily, by Grandjean. I know not how the entanglement took place, but so it was. I arose with a shining pate, wigless; she, in disdain and wrath, half buried in alien hair. Thus ended my hopes of the widow by an accident which could not have been anticipated, to be sure, but which the natural sequence of events had brought about.

Without despairing, however, I undertook the siege of a less implacable heart. The fates were again propitious for a brief period; but again a trivial incident interfered. Meeting my betrothed in an avenue thronged with the *élite* of the city, I was hastening

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to greet her with one of my best-considered bows, when a small particle of some foreign matter, lodging in the corner of my eye, rendered me, for the moment, completely blind. Before I could recover my sight, the lady of my love had disappeared, irreparably affronted at what she chose to consider my premeditated rudeness in passing her by ungreeted. While I stood bewildered at the suddenness of this accident (which might have happened, nevertheless, to any one under the sun), and while I still continued incapable of sight, I was accosted by the Angel of the Odd, who proffered me his aid with a civility which I had no reason to expect. He examined my disordered eye with much gentleness and skill, informed me that I had a drop in it, and (whatever a "drop" was) took it out, and afforded me relief.

I now considered it high time to die, (since fortune had so determined to persecute me,) and accordingly made my way to the nearest river. Here, divesting myself of my clothes, (for there is no reason why we cannot die as we were born,) I threw myself headlong into the current, the sole witness of my fate being a solitary crow that had been seduced into the eating of brandy-saturated corn, and so had staggered away from his fellows. No sooner had I entered the water than this bird took it into its head to fly away with the most indispensable portion of my apparel. Postponing therefore, for the present, my suicidal design, I just

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slipped my nether extremities into the sleeves of my coat, and betook myself to a pursuit of the felon with all the nimbleness which the case required and its circumstances would admit. But my evil destiny attended me still. As I ran at full speed, with my nose up in the atmosphere, and intent only upon the purloiner of my property, I suddenly perceived that my feet rested no longer upon terra firma; the fact is, I had thrown myself over a precipice, and should inevitably have been dashed to pieces but for my good fortune in grasping the end of a long guide-rope which depended from a passing balloon.

As soon as I sufficiently recovered my senses to comprehend the terrific predicament in which I stood, or rather hung, I exerted all the power of my lungs to make that predicament known to the aëronaut overhead. But for a long time I exerted myself in vain. Either the fool could not, or the villain would not, perceive me. Meantime the machine rapidly soared, while my strength even more rapidly failed. I was soon upon the point of resigning myself to my fate, and dropping quietly into the sea, when my spirits were suddenly revived by hearing a hollow voice from above, which seemed to be lazily humming an opera air. Looking up, I perceived the Angel of the Odd. He was leaning, with his arms folded, over the rim of the car; and with a pipe in his mouth, at which he puffed leisurely, seemed to be upon excellent

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terms with himself and the universe. I was too much exhausted to speak, so I merely regarded him with an imploring air.

For several minutes, although he looked me full in the face, he said nothing. At length, removing carefully his meerschaum from the right to the left corner of his mouth, he condescended to speak.

"Who pe you," he asked, "und what der teuffel you pe do dare?"

To this piece of impudence, cruelty, and affectation, I could reply only by ejaculating the monosyllable "Help!"

"Elp!" echoed the ruffian, "not I. Dare iz te pottle, elp yourself, und pe tam'd!"

With these words he let fall a heavy bottle of Kirschwasser which, dropping precisely upon the crown of my head, caused me to imagine that my brains were entirely knocked out. Impressed with this idea, I was about to relinquish my hold and give up the ghost with a good grace, when I was arrested by the cry of the Angel, who bade me hold on.

"Old on!" he said; "don't pe in te urry, don't. Will you pe take de odder pottle, or ave you pe got zober yet and come to your zenzenes?"

I made haste, hereupon, to nod my head twice, once in the negative, meaning thereby that I would prefer not taking the other bottle at present; and once in the affirmative, intending thus to imply that I was sober

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and had positively come to my senses. By these means I somewhat softened the Angel.

“Und you pelief, ten,” he inquired, “at te last ? You pelief, ten, in te possibility of te odd ?”

I again nodded my head in assent.

“Und you ave pelief in me, te Angel of te Odd ?”

I nodded again.

“Und you acknowledge tat you pe te blind dronk and te vool ?”

I nodded once more.

“Put your right hand into your left-hand preeches pocket, ten, in token ov your vull zubmizzion unto te Angel ov te Odd.”

This thing, for very obvious reasons, I found it quite impossible to do. In the first place, my left arm had been broken in my fall from the ladder, and, therefore, had I let go my hold with the right hand, I must have let go altogether. In the second place, I could have no breeches until I came across the crow. I was therefore obliged, much to my regret, to shake my head in the negative, intending thus to give the Angel to understand that I found it inconvenient, just at that moment, to comply with his very reasonable demand! No sooner, however, had I ceased shaking my head than—

“Go to der teuffel, ten!” roared the Angel of the Odd.

In pronouncing these words, he drew a sharp knife

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across the guide-rope by which I was suspended, and as we then happened to be precisely over my own house, (which, during my peregrinations, had been handsomely rebuilt,) it so occurred that I tumbled headlong down the ample chimney and alit upon the dining-room hearth.

Upon coming to my senses (for the fall had very thoroughly stunned me), I found it about four o'clock in the morning. I lay outstretched where I had fallen from the balloon. My head grovelled in the ashes of an extinguished fire, while my feet reposed upon the wreck of a small table, overthrown, and amid the fragments of a miscellaneous dessert, intermingled with a newspaper, some broken glass and shattered bottles, and an empty jug of the Schiedam Kirschwasser. Thus revenged himself the Angel of the Odd.





The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade

Truth is stranger than fiction.—*Old Saying.*

HAVING had occasion, lately, in the course of some Oriental investigations, to consult the *Tellmenow Isitspörnot*, a work which (like the *Zohar* of Simeon Jochaides) is scarcely known at all, even in Europe; and which has never been quoted, to my knowledge, by any American, if we except, perhaps, the author of the *Curiosities of American Literature*,—having had occasion, I say, to turn over some pages of the first-mentioned very remarkable work, I was not a little astonished to discover that the literary world has hitherto been strangely in error respecting the fate of the vizier's daughter, Scheherazade, as that fate is depicted in the *Arabian Nights*, and that the *dénouement* there given, if not altogether inaccurate, as far as it goes, is at least to blame in not having gone very much farther.

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For full information on this interesting topic, I must refer the inquisitive reader to the *Isítsoörnot* itself; but, in the meantime, I shall be pardoned for giving a summary of what I there discovered.

It will be remembered, that, in the usual version of the tales, a certain monarch, having good cause to be jealous of his queen, not only puts her to death, but makes a vow, by his beard and the prophet, to espouse each night the most beautiful maiden in his dominions, and the next morning to deliver her up to the executioner.

Having fulfilled this vow for many years to the letter, and with a religious punctuality and method that conferred great credit upon him as a man of devout feeling and excellent sense, he was interrupted one afternoon (no doubt at his prayers) by a visit from his grand vizier, to whose daughter, it appears, there had occurred an idea.

Her name was Scheherazade, and her idea was, that she would either redeem the land from the depopulating tax upon its beauty, or perish, after the approved fashion of all heroines, in the attempt.

Accordingly, and although we do not find it to be leap-year (which makes the sacrifice more meritorious), she deposes her father, the grand vizier, to make an offer to the king of her hand. This hand the king eagerly accepts (he had intended to take it at all events, and had put off the matter from day to day, only

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through fear of the vizier), but, in accepting it now, he gives all parties very distinctly to understand, that, grand vizier or no grand vizier, he has not the slightest design of giving up one iota of his vow or of his privileges. When, therefore, the fair Scheherazade insisted upon marrying the king, and did actually marry him despite her father's excellent advice not to do anything of the kind,—when she would and did marry him, I say, will I nill I, it was with her beautiful black eyes as thoroughly open as the nature of the case would allow.

It seems, however, that this politic damsel (who had been reading Machiavelli, beyond doubt) had a very ingenious little plot in her mind. On the night of the wedding, she contrived, upon I forget what specious pretence, to have her sister occupy a couch sufficiently near that of the royal pair to admit of easy conversation from bed to bed; and, a little before cock-crowing, she took care to awaken the good monarch, her husband (who bore her none the worse will because he intended to wring her neck on the morrow),—she managed to awaken him, I say, (although on account of a capital conscience and an easy digestion he slept well,) by the profound interest of a story (about a rat and a black cat, I think) which she was narrating (all in an undertone, of course) to her sister. When the day broke, it so happened that this history was not altogether finished, and that Scheherazade, in the

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nature of things could not finish it just then, since it was high time for her to get up and be bowstrung—a thing very little more pleasant than hanging, only a trifle more genteel!

The king's curiosity, however, prevailing, I am sorry to say, even over his sound religious principles, induced him for this once to postpone the fulfilment of his vow until next morning, for the purpose and with the hope of hearing that night how it fared in the end with the black cat (a black cat, I think it was) and the rat.

The night having arrived, however, the Lady Scheherazade not only put the finishing stroke to the black cat and the rat (the rat was blue), but, before she well knew what she was about, found herself deep in the intricacies of a narration having reference (if I am not altogether mistaken) to a pink horse (with green wings) that went, in a violent manner, by clock-work, and was wound up with an indigo key. With this history the king was even more profoundly interested than with the other; and, as the day broke before its conclusion (notwithstanding all the queen's endeavors to get through with it in time for the bowstringing), there was again no resource but to postpone that ceremony as before, for twenty-four hours. The next night there happened a similar accident, with a similar result; and then the next, and then again the next; so that, in the end, the good monarch, having

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been unavoidably deprived of all opportunity to keep his vow during a period of no less than one thousand and one nights, either forgets it altogether by the expiration of this time, or gets himself absolved of it in the regular way, or (what is more probable) breaks it outright, as well as the head of his father confessor. At all events, Scheherazade, who, being lineally descended from Eve, fell heir, perhaps, to the whole seven baskets of talk, which the latter lady, we all know, picked up from under the trees in the garden of Eden,—Scheherazade, I say, finally triumphed, and the tariff upon beauty was repealed.

Now, this conclusion (which is that of the story as we have it upon record) is, no doubt, excessively proper and pleasant; but alas! like a great many pleasant things, is more pleasant than true; and I am indebted altogether to the *Isítóörnot* for the means of correcting the error. "*Le mieux*," says a French proverb, "*est l'ennemi du bien*," and, in mentioning that Scheherazade had inherited the seven baskets of talk, I should have added that she put them out at compound interest until they amounted to seventy-seven.

"My dear sister," said she, on the thousand-and-second night (I quote the language of the *Isítóörnot* at this point, verbatim),—"my dear sister," said she, "now that all this little difficulty about the bowstring has blown over, and that this odious tax is so happily repealed, I feel that I have been guilty of great indis-

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cretion in withholding from you and the king (who, I am sorry to say, snores, a thing no gentleman would do) the full conclusion of Sinbad the sailor. This person went through numerous other and more interesting adventures than those which I related; but the truth is, I felt sleepy on the particular night of their narration, and so was seduced into cutting them short, a grievous piece of misconduct, for which I only trust that Allah will forgive me. But even yet it is not too late to remedy my great neglect; and as soon as I have given the king a pinch or two in order to wake him up so far that he may stop making that horrible noise, I will forthwith entertain you (and him if he pleases) with the sequel of this very remarkable story."

Hereupon the sister of Scheherazade, as I have it from the *Isitsoörnot*, expressed no very particular intensity of gratification; but the king, having been sufficiently pinched, at length ceased snoring, and finally said, "Hum!" and then "Hoo!" when the queen, understanding these words (which are no doubt Arabic) to signify that he was all attention, and would do his best not to snore any more,—the queen, I say, having arranged these matters to her satisfaction, re-entered thus, at once, into the history of Sinbad the sailor:

"At length, in my old age, (these are the words of Sinbad himself, as retailed by Scheherazade),—at length, in my old age, and after enjoying many years

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of tranquillity at home, I became once more possessed of a desire of visiting foreign countries; and one day, without acquainting any of my family with my design, I packed up some bundles of such merchandise as was most precious and least bulky, and, engaging a porter to carry them, went with him down to the seashore, to await the arrival of any chance vessel that might convey me out of the kingdom into some region which I had not as yet explored.

“Having deposited the packages upon the sands, we sat down beneath some trees, and looked out into the ocean in the hope of perceiving a ship, but during several hours we saw none whatever. At length I fancied that I could hear a singular buzzing or humming sound, and the porter, after listening awhile, declared that he also could distinguish it. Presently it grew louder, and then still louder, so that we could have no doubt that the object which caused it was approaching us. At length, on the edge of the horizon, we discovered a black speck, which rapidly increased in size, until we made it out to be a vast monster, swimming with a great part of its body above the surface of the sea. It came toward us with inconceivable swiftness, throwing up huge waves of foam around its breast, and illuminating all that part of the sea through which it passed with a long line of fire that extended far off into the distance.

“As the thing drew near we saw it very distinctly.

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Its length was equal to that of three of the loftiest trees that grow, and it was as wide as the great hall of audience in your palace, O most sublime and munificent of the caliphs. Its body, which was unlike that of ordinary fishes, was as solid as a rock, and of a jetty blackness throughout all that portion of it which floated above the water, with the exception of a narrow blood-red streak that completely begirdled it. The belly, which floated beneath the surface, and of which we could only get a glimpse now and then as the monster rose and fell with the billows, was entirely covered with metallic scales, of a color like that of the moon in misty weather. The back was flat and nearly white, and from it there extended upwards six spines, about half the length of the whole body.

“This horrible creature had no mouth that we could perceive; but, as if to make up for this deficiency, it was provided with at least fourscore of eyes, that protruded from their sockets like those of the green dragon-fly, and were arranged all around the body in two rows, one above the other, and parallel to the blood-red streak, which seemed to answer the purpose of an eyebrow. Two or three of these dreadful eyes were much larger than the others, and had the appearance of solid gold.

“Although this beast approached us, as I have before said, with the greatest rapidity, it must have been moved altogether by necromancy; for it had

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neither fins like a fish nor web-feet like a duck, nor wings like the sea-shell which is blown along in the manner of a vessel; nor yet did it writhe itself forward as do eels. Its head and its tail were shaped precisely alike, only, not far from the latter, were two small holes that served for nostrils, and through which the monster puffed out its thick breath with prodigious violence, and with a shrieking, disagreeable noise.

“Our terror at beholding this hideous thing was very great, but it was even surpassed by our astonishment when, upon getting a nearer look, we perceived upon the creature’s back a vast number of animals about the size and shape of men, and altogether much resembling them, except that they wore no garment (as men do), being supplied (by nature, no doubt) with an ugly, uncomfortable covering, a good deal like cloth, but fitting so tight to the skin as to render the poor wretches laughably awkward, and put them apparently to severe pain. On the very tips of their heads were certain square-looking boxes, which, at first sight, I thought might have been intended to answer as turbans, but I soon discovered that they were excessively heavy and solid, and I therefore concluded they were contrivances designed, by their great weight, to keep the heads of the animals steady and safe upon their shoulders. Around the necks of the creatures were fastened black collars (badges of servi-

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tude, no doubt) such as we keep on our dogs, only much wider and infinitely stiffer, so that it was quite impossible for these poor victims to move their heads in any direction without moving the body at the same time; and thus they were doomed to perpetual contemplation of their noses, a view puggish and snubby in a wonderful, if not positively in an awful, degree.

“When the monster had nearly reached the shore where we stood, it suddenly pushed out one of its eyes to a great extent, and emitted from it a terrible flash of fire, accompanied by a dense cloud of smoke, and a noise that I can compare to nothing but thunder. As the smoke cleared away, we saw one of the odd man-animals standing near the head of the large beast with a trumpet in his hand, through which (putting it to his mouth) he presently addressed us in loud, harsh, and disagreeable accents, that perhaps we should have mistaken for language, had they not come altogether through the nose.

“Being thus evidently spoken to, I was at a loss how to reply, as I could in no manner understand what was said; and in this difficulty I turned to the porter, who was near swooning through affright, and demanded of him his opinion as to what species of monster it was, what it wanted, and what kind of creatures those were that so swarmed upon its back. To this the porter replied, as well as he could for trepidation, that he had once before heard of this

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sea-beast; that it was a cruel demon, with bowels of sulphur and blood of fire, created by evil genii as the means of inflicting misery upon mankind; that the things upon its back were vermin such as sometimes infest cats and dogs, only a little larger and more savage; and that these vermin had their uses, however evil; for, through the torture they caused the beast by their nibblings and stings, it was goaded into that degree of wrath which was requisite to make it roar and commit ill, and so fulfil the vengeful and malicious designs of the wicked genii.

“ This account determined me to take to my heels, and, without once even looking behind me, I ran at full speed up into the hills, while the porter ran equally fast, although nearly in an opposite direction, so that, by these means, he finally made his escape with my bundles, of which I have no doubt he took excellent care, although this is a point I cannot determine, as I do not remember that I ever beheld him again.

“ For myself, I was so hotly pursued by a swarm of the men-vermin (who had come to the shore in boats) that I was very soon overtaken, bound hand and foot, and conveyed to the beast, which immediately swam out again into the middle of the sea.

“ I now bitterly repented my folly in quitting a comfortable home to peril my life in such adventures as this; but, regret being useless, I made the best of my condition, and exerted myself to secure the good-

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will of the man-animal that owned the trumpet, and who appeared to exercise authority over its fellows. I succeeded so well in this endeavor that, in a few days, the creature bestowed upon me various tokens of its favor, and in the end even went to the trouble of teaching me the rudiments of what it was vain enough to denominate its language; so that, at length, I was enabled to converse with it readily, and came to make it comprehend the ardent desire I had of seeing the world.

“ ‘ Washish squashish squeak, Sinbad, hey-diddle diddle, grunt unt grumble, hiss, fiss, whiss,’ said he to me, one day after dinner; but I beg a thousand pardons, I had forgotten that your Majesty is not conversant with the dialect of the Cock-neighs (so the man-animals were called; I presume because their language formed the connecting link between that of the horse and that of the rooster). With your permission, I will translate. ‘ Washish squashish,’ and so forth: that is to say, ‘ I am happy to find, my dear Sinbad, that you are really a very excellent fellow; we are now about doing a thing which is called circumnavigating the globe; and since you are so desirous of seeing the world, I will strain a point and give you a free passage upon the back of the beast.’ ”

When the Lady Scheherazade had proceeded thus far, relates the *Isitsoörnnot*, the king turned over from his left side to his right, and said:

“ It is, in fact, very surprising, my dear queen, that

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you omitted, hitherto, these latter adventures of Sinbad. Do you know, I think them exceedingly entertaining and strange ? ”

The king having thus expressed himself, we are told, the fair Scheherazade resumed her history in the following words :

“ Sinbad went on in this manner with his narrative : ‘ I thanked the man-animal for its kindness, and soon found myself very much at home on the beast, which swam at a prodigious rate through the ocean ; although the surface of the latter is, in that part of the world, by no means flat, but round like a pomegranate, so that we went, so to say, either up-hill or down-hill all the time.’ ”

“ That, I think, was very singular,” interrupted the king.

“ Nevertheless, it is quite true,” replied Scheherazade.

“ I have my doubts,” rejoined the king ; “ but, pray, be so good as to go on with the story.”

“ I will,” said the queen. “ ‘ The beast,’ continued Sinbad, ‘ swam, as I have related, up hill and down hill, until, at length, we arrived at an island, many hundreds of miles in circumference, but which, nevertheless, had been built in the middle of the sea by a colony of little things like caterpillars.’ ”¹

“ Hum ! ” said the king.

“ ‘ Leaving this island,’ said Sinbad (for Schehera-

¹ The corallites.

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zade, it must be understood, took no notice of her husband's ill-mannered ejaculation),—'leaving this island, we came to another where the forests were of solid stone, and so hard that they shivered to pieces the finest-tempered axes with which we endeavored to cut them down.' ”¹

“Hum!” said the king, again; but Scheherazade, paying him no attention, continued in the language of Sinbad:

¹ One of the most remarkable natural curiosities in Texas is a petrified forest, near the head of Pasigno River. It consists of several hundred trees, in an erect position, all turned to stone. Some trees, now growing, are partly petrified. This is a startling fact for natural philosophers, and must cause them to modify the existing theory of petrification.—Kennedy.

This account, at first discredited, has since been corroborated by the discovery of a completely petrified forest, near the head waters of the Cheyenne, or Chienne River, which has its source in the Black Hills of the Rocky chain.

There is scarcely, perhaps, a spectacle on the surface of the globe more remarkable, either in a geological or picturesque point of view, than that presented by the petrified forest, near Cairo. The traveller, having passed the tombs of the caliphs, just beyond the gates of the city, proceeds to the southward, nearly at right angles to the road across the desert to Suez, and after having travelled some ten miles up a low, barren valley, covered with sand, gravel, and sea shells, fresh as if the tide had retired but yesterday, crosses a low range of sand-hills, which has for some distance run parallel to his path. The scene now presented to him is, beyond conception, singular and desolate. A mass of fragments of trees, all converted into stone, and when struck by his horse's hoof ringing like cast-iron, is seen to extend itself for miles and miles around him, in the form of a decayed and prostrate forest. The wood is of a dark brown hue, but retains its form in perfection, the pieces being from one to fifteen feet in length, and from half a foot to three feet in thickness, strewed so closely together, as far as the eye can reach, that an Egyptian donkey can scarcely thread its way through amongst them and so natural that, were it in Scotland or Ireland, it might pass without remark for some enormous drained bog, on which the exhumed trees lay rotting in the sun. The roots and rudiments of the branches are, in many cases, nearly perfect, and in some the worm-holes eaten under the bark are readily recognizable. The most delicate of the sap vessels, and all the finer portions of the centre of the wood, are perfectly entire, and bear to be examined with the strongest magnifiers. The whole are so thoroughly silicified as to scratch glass and are capable of receiving the highest polish.—*Asiatic Magazine*.

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“ ‘ Passing beyond this last island, we reached a country where there was a cave that ran to the distance of thirty or forty miles within the bowels of the earth, and that contained a greater number of far more spacious and more magnificent palaces than are to be found in all Damascus and Bagdad. From the roofs of these palaces there hung myriads of gems, like diamonds, but larger than men; and in among the streets of towers and pyramids and temples, there flowed immense rivers as black as ebony, and swarming with fish that had no eyes.’ ” ¹

“ Hum! ” said the king.

“ ‘ We then swam into a region of the sea where we found a lofty mountain, down whose sides there streamed torrents of melted metal, some of which were twelve miles wide and sixty miles long, ² while from an abyss on the summit issued so vast a quantity of ashes that the sun was entirely blotted out from the heavens, and it became darker than the darkest midnight; so that when we were even at the distance of a hundred and fifty miles from the mountain, it was impossible to see the whitest object, however close we held it to our eyes.’ ” ³

¹ The Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

² In Iceland, 1783.

³ “ During the eruption of Hecla, in 1766, clouds of this kind produced such a degree of darkness that, at Glaumba, which is more than fifty leagues from the mountain, people could only find their way by groping. During the eruption of Vesuvius, in 1794, at Caserta, four leagues distant, people could only walk by the light of torches. On the first of May, 1812, a cloud

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“ Hum! ” said the king.

“ “ After quitting this coast, the beast continued his voyage until we met with a land in which the nature of things seemed reversed, for we here saw a great lake, at the bottom of which, more than a hundred feet beneath the surface of the water, there flourished in full leaf a forest of tall and luxuriant trees.’ ” ¹

“ Hoo! ” said the king.

“ “ Some hundred miles farther on brought us to a climate where the atmosphere was so dense as to sustain iron or steel, just as our own does feathers.’ ” ²

“ Fiddle de dee,” said the king.

“ “ Proceeding still in the same direction, we presently arrived at the most magnificent region in the whole world. Through it there meandered a glorious river for several thousands of miles. This river was of unspeakable depth, and of a transparency richer than that of amber. It was from three to six miles in width; and its banks, which arose on either side to twelve hundred feet in perpendicular height, were

of volcanic ashes and sand, coming from a volcano in the island of St. Vincent, covered the whole of Barbadoes, spreading over it so intense a darkness that, at mid-day, in the open air, one could not perceive the trees or other objects near him, or even a white handkerchief placed at a distance of six inches from the eye.”—Murray, p. 215, Phil. edit.

¹ “ In the year 1790, in the Caraccas, during an earthquake, a portion of the granite soil sank and left a lake eight hundred yards in diameter, and from eighty to a hundred feet deep. It was a part of the forest of Aripao which sank, and the trees remained green for several months under the water.”—Murray, p. 221.

² The hardest steel ever manufactured may, under the action of a blow-pipe, be reduced to an impalpable powder, which will float readily in the atmospheric air.

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crowned with ever-blossoming trees, and perpetual sweet-scented flowers, that made the whole territory one gorgeous garden; but the name of this luxuriant land was the Kingdom of Horror, and to enter it was inevitable death.' ”¹

“Humph!” said the king.

“‘We left this kingdom in great haste, and, after some days, came to another, where we were astonished to perceive myriads of monstrous animals with horns resembling scythes upon their heads. These hideous beasts dig for themselves vast caverns in the soil, of a funnel shape, and line the sides of them with rocks, so disposed one upon the other that they fall instantly, when trodden upon by other animals, thus precipitating them into the monsters’ dens, where their blood is immediately sucked, and their carcasses afterwards hurled contemptuously out to an immense distance from “the caverns of death.” ’ ”²

“Pooh!” said the king.

“‘Continuing our progress, we perceived a district with vegetables that grow not upon any soil, but in the air.’³ There were others that sprang from the

¹ The region of the Niger. See Simmond’s *Colonial Magazine*.

² The *Myrmelcon*—lion-ant. The term “monster” is equally applicable to small abnormal things and to great, while such epithets as “vast” are merely comparative. The cavern of the myrmeleon is vast in comparison with the hole of the common red ant. A grain of silex is also a “rock.”

³ The *Epidendrum*, *Flos Aeris*, of the family of the *Orchideæ*, grows with merely the surface of its roots attached to a tree or other object, from which it derives no nutriment, subsisting altogether upon air.

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substance of other vegetables;¹ others that derived their substance from the bodies of living animals;² and then, again, there were others that glowed all over with intense fire;³ others that moved from place to place at pleasure;⁴ and, what was still more wonderful, we discovered flowers that lived and breathed and moved their limbs at will, and had, moreover, the detestable passion of mankind for enslaving other creatures, and confining them in horrid and solitary prisons until the fulfilment of appointed tasks.' ”⁵

¹ The parasites, such as the wonderful *Rafflesia Arnoldi*.

² Schouw advocates a class of plants that grow upon living animals, the *Plantæ Epizœæ*. Of this class are the *Fuci* and *Algæ*.

Mr. J. B. Williams, of Salem, Mass., presented the National Institute with an insect from New Zealand, with the following description: “The Hotte, a decided caterpillar, or worm, is found growing at the foot of the Rata tree, with a plant growing out of its head. This most peculiar and most extraordinary insect travels up both the Rata and Puriri trees, and, entering into the top, eats its way, perforating the trunk of the tree until it reaches the root; it then comes out of the root, and dies, or remains dormant, and the plant propagates out of its head; the body remains perfect and entire, of a harder substance than when alive. From this insect the natives make a coloring for tattooing.”

³ In mines and natural caves we find a species of cryptogamous fungus that emits an intense phosphorescence.

⁴ The *orchis*, *scabious*, and *vallisneria*.

⁵ The corolla of this flower (*Aristolochia Clematidis*), which is tubular, but terminating upwards in a ligulate limb, is inflated into a globular figure at the base. The tubular part is internally beset with stiff hairs, pointing downwards. The globular part contains the pistil, which consists merely of a germen and stigma, together with the surrounding stamens. But the stamens, being shorter than even the germen, cannot discharge the pollen so as to throw it upon the stigma, as the flower stands always upright till after impregnation. And hence, without some additional and peculiar aid, the pollen must necessarily fall down to the bottom of the flower. Now, the aid that nature has furnished in this case, is that of the *Tipula Pennicornis*, a small insect, which, entering the tube of the corolla in quest of honey, descends to the bottom, and rummages about till it becomes quite covered with pollen; but, not being able to force its way out again, owing to the downward position of the hairs, which converge to a point like the wires of a

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“Pshaw!” said the king.

“‘Quitting this land, we soon arrived at another in which the bees and the birds are mathematicians of such genius and erudition, that they give daily instructions in the science of geometry to the wise men of the empire. The king of the place having offered a reward for the solution of two very difficult problems, they were solved upon the spot,—the one by the bees, and the other by the birds; but the king keeping their solution a secret, it was only after the most profound researches and labor, and the writing of an infinity of big books, during a long series of years, that the men-mathematicians at length arrived at the identical solutions which had been given upon the spot by the bees and by the birds.’”¹

mouse-trap, and, being somewhat impatient of its confinement, it brushes backwards and forwards, trying every corner, till, after repeatedly traversing the stigma, it covers it with pollen sufficient for its impregnation, in consequence of which the flower soon begins to droop, and the hairs to shrink to the side of the tube, effecting an easy passage for the escape of the insect.”

—Rev. P. Keith, *System of Physiological Botany*.

¹ The bees, ever since bees were, have been constructing their cells with just such sides, in just such number, and at just such inclinations, as it has been demonstrated (in a problem involving the profoundest mathematical principles) are the very sides, in the very number, and at the very angles, which will afford the creatures the most room that is compatible with the greatest stability of structure.

During the latter part of the last century, the question arose among mathematicians, “to determine the best form that can be given to the sails of a windmill, according to their varying distances from the revolving vanes, and likewise from the centres of the revolution.” This is an excessively complex problem, for it is, in other words, to find the best possible position at an infinity of varied distances, and at an infinity of points on the arm. There were a thousand futile attempts to answer the query on the part of the most illustrious mathematicians; and when, at length, an undeniable solution was discovered, men found that the wings of a bird had given it with absolute precision ever since the first bird had traversed the air.

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“ Oh my ! ” said the king.

“ ‘ We had scarcely lost sight of this empire when we found ourselves close upon another, from whose shores there flew over our heads a flock of fowls a mile in breadth, and two hundred and forty miles long; so that, although they flew a mile during every minute, it required no less than four hours for the whole flock to pass over us, in which there were several millions of millions of fowl.’ ”¹

“ Oh fy ! ” said the king.

“ ‘ No sooner had we got rid of these birds, which occasioned us great annoyance, than we were terrified by the appearance of a fowl of another kind, and infinitely larger than even the rocs which I met in my former voyages; for it was bigger than the biggest of the domes on your seraglio, O most munificent of Caliphs. This terrible fowl had no head that we could perceive, but was fashioned entirely of belly, which was of prodigious fatness and roundness, of a soft-looking substance, smooth, shining, and striped with various colors. In its talons, the monster was bearing away to his eyrie in the heavens a house from which it had knocked off the roof, and in the interior of which we distinctly saw human beings, who, beyond

¹ He observed a flock of pigeons passing betwixt Frankfort and the Indiana territory, one mile at least in breadth; it took up four hours in passing; which, at the rate of one mile per minute, gives a length of 240 miles; and, supposing three pigeons to each square yard, gives 2,230,272,000 pigeons.—*Travels in Canada and the United States*, by Lieut. F. Hall.

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doubt, were in a state of frightful despair at the horrible fate which awaited them. We shouted with all our might, in the hope of frightening the bird into letting go of its prey; but it merely gave a snort or puff, as if of rage, and then let fall upon our heads a heavy sack which proved to be filled with sand.' ”

“ Stuff! ” said the king.

“ ‘ It was just after this adventure that we encountered a continent of immense extent and prodigious solidity, but which, nevertheless, was supported entirely upon the back of a sky-blue cow that had no fewer than four hundred horns.’ ” ¹

“ That, now, I believe,” said the king, “ because I have read something of the kind before, in a book.”

“ ‘ We passed immediately beneath this continent (swimming in between the legs of the cow), and, after some hours, found ourselves in a wonderful country indeed, which, I was informed by the man-animal, was his own native land, inhabited by things of his own species. This elevated the man-animal very much in my esteem, and in fact, I now began to feel ashamed of the contemptuous familiarity with which I had treated him; for I found that the man-animals in general were a nation of the most powerful magicians, who lived with worms in their brain,² which,

¹ “ The earth is upheld by a cow of a blue color, having horns four hundred in number.”—Sale’s *Koran*.

² “ The *Entozoa*, or intestinal worms, have repeatedly been observed in the muscles, and in the cerebral substance of men.”—See Wyatt’s *Physiology*, p. 143.

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no doubt, served to stimulate them by their painful writhings and wriggings to the most miraculous efforts of imagination.' ”

“ Nonsense! ” said the king.

“ ‘ Among the magicians were domesticated several animals of very singular kinds; for example, there was a huge horse whose bones were iron and whose blood was boiling water. In place of corn, he had black stones for his usual food; and yet, in spite of so hard a diet, he was so strong and swift that he could drag a load more weighty than the grandest temple in this city, at a rate surpassing that of the flight of most birds.’ ” ¹

“ Twattle! ” said the king.

“ ‘ I saw, also, among these people a hen without feathers, but bigger than a camel; instead of flesh and bone she had iron and brick; her blood, like that of the horse (to whom, in fact, she was nearly related), was boiling water; and like him she ate nothing but wood or black stones. This hen brought forth very frequently a hundred chickens in the day; and, after birth, they took up their residence for several weeks within the stomach of their mother.’ ” ²

“ Fal lal! ” said the king.

“ ‘ One of this nation of mighty conjurers created a

¹ On the Great Western Railway, between London and Exeter, a speed of 71 miles per hour has been attained. A train weighing 90 tons was whirled from Paddington to Didcot (53 miles) in 51 minutes.

² The Eccleobion.

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man out of brass and wood and leather, and endowed him with such ingenuity that he would have beaten at chess all the race of mankind with the exception of the great Caliph, Haroun Alraschid.¹ Another of these magi constructed (of like material) a creature that put to shame even the genius of him who made it; for so great were its reasoning powers that, in a second, it performed calculations of so vast an extent that they would have required the united labor of fifty thousand fleshy men for a year.² But a still more wonderful conjurer fashioned for himself a mighty thing that was neither man nor beast, but which had brains of lead, intermixed with a black matter like pitch, and fingers that it employed with such incredible speed and dexterity that it would have no trouble in writing out twenty thousand copies of the Koran in an hour; and this with so exquisite a precision, that in all the copies there should not be found one to vary from another by the breadth of the finest hair. This thing was of prodigious strength, so that it erected or overthrew the mightiest empires at a breath; but its powers were exercised equally for evil and for good.’ ”

“ Ridiculous! ” said the king.

“ ‘ Among this nation of necromancers there was also one who had in his veins the blood of the sala-

¹ Maelzel's automaton chess-player.

² Babbage's calculating machine.

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manders; for he made no scruple of sitting down to smoke his chibouk in a red-hot oven until his dinner was thoroughly roasted upon its floor.¹ Another had the faculty of converting the common metals into gold without even looking at them during the process.² Another had such a delicacy of touch that he made a wire so fine as to be invisible.³ Another had such quickness of perception that he counted all the separate motions of an elastic body, while it was springing backward and forward at the rate of nine hundred millions of times in a second.' ”⁴

“ Absurd ! ” said the king.

“ ‘ Another of these magicians, by means of a fluid that nobody ever yet saw, could make the corpses of his friends brandish their arms, kick out their legs, fight, or even get up and dance at his will.⁵ Another had cultivated his voice to so great an extent that he could have made himself heard from one end of the world to the other.⁶ Another had so long an arm that he could sit down in Damascus and indite a letter at Bagdad, or indeed at any distance whatsoever.⁷

¹ Chabert, and since him, a hundred others.

² The electrotype.

³ Wollaston made of platinum for the field of views in a telescope a wire one eighteen-thousandth part of an inch in thickness. It could be seen only by means of the microscope.

⁴ Newton demonstrated that the retina, beneath the influence of the violet ray of the spectrum, vibrated 900,000,000 of times in a second.

⁵ The Voltaic pile.

⁶ The electro-telegraph printing apparatus.

⁷ The electro-telegraph transmits intelligence instantaneously, at least so far as regards any distance upon the earth.

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Another commanded the lightning to come down to him out of the heavens; and it came at his call, and served him for a plaything when it came. Another took two loud sounds and out of them made a silence. Another constructed a deep darkness out of two brilliant lights.¹ Another made ice in a red-hot furnace.² Another directed the sun to paint his portrait, and the sun did.³ Another took this luminary with the moon and the planets, and, having first weighed them with scrupulous accuracy, probed into their depths and found out the solidity of the substance of which they are made. But the whole nation is, indeed, of so surprising a necromantic ability, that not even their infants, nor their commonest cats and dogs, have any difficulty in seeing objects that do not exist

¹ Common experiments in natural philosophy. If two red rays from two luminous points be admitted into a dark chamber so as to fall on a white surface, and differ in their length by 0.0000258 of an inch, their intensity is doubled. So also if the difference in length be any whole-number multiple of that fraction. A multiple by $2\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, &c., gives an intensity equal to one ray only; but a multiple by $2\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, &c., gives the result of total darkness. In violet rays similar effects arise when the difference in length is 0.000157 of an inch; and with all other rays the results are the same, the difference varying with a uniform increase from the violet to the red.

Analogous experiments in respect to sound produce analogous results.

² Place a platina crucible over a spirit lamp, and keep it at a red heat; pour in some sulphuric acid, which, though the most volatile of bodies at a common temperature, will be found to become completely fixed in a hot crucible, and not a drop evaporates; being surrounded by an atmosphere of its own. it does not, in fact, touch the sides. A few drops of water are now introduced, when the acid, immediately coming in contact with the heated sides of the crucible, flies off in sulphurous acid vapor, and so rapid is its progress, that the caloric of the water passes off with it, which falls a lump of ice to the bottom; by taking advantage of the moment before it is allowed to remelt, it may be turned out a lump of ice from a red-hot vessel.

³ The daguerreotype.

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at all, or that for twenty millions of years before the birth of the nation itself had been blotted out from the face of creation.' ”¹

“ Preposterous! ” said the king.

“ ‘ The wives and daughters of these incomparably great and wise magi, ’ ” continued Scheherazade, without being in any manner disturbed by these frequent and most ungentlemanly interruptions on the part of her husband,—“ ‘ the wives and daughters of these eminent conjurers are everything that is accomplished and refined, and would be everything that is interesting and beautiful but for an unhappy fatality that besets them, and from which not even the miraculous powers of their husbands and fathers have, hitherto, been adequate to save. Some fatalities come in certain shapes, and some in others, but this of which I speak has come in the shape of a crotchet. ’ ”

“ A what ? ” said the king.

“ ‘ A crotchet, ’ ” said Scheherazade. “ ‘ One of the evil genii, who are perpetually upon the watch to

¹ Although light travels 167,000 miles in a second, the distance of 61 Cygni (the only star whose distance is ascertained) is so inconceivably great that its rays would require more than ten years to reach the earth. For stars beyond this, 20, or even 1000, years, would be a moderate estimate. Thus, if they had been annihilated 20, or 1000, years ago, we might still see them to-day by the light which started from their surfaces 20 or 1000 years in the past time. That many which we see daily are really extinct is not impossible, not even improbable.

The elder Herschel maintains that the light of the faintest nebulae seen through his great telescope must have taken 3,000,000 years in reaching the earth. Some, made visible by Lord Ross's instrument, must, then, have required at least 20,000,000.

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inflict ill, has put it into the heads of these accomplished ladies that the thing which we describe as personal beauty consists altogether in the protuberance of the region which lies not very far below the small of the back. Perfection of loveliness, they say, is in the direct ratio of the extent of this lump. Having been long possessed of this idea, and bolsters being cheap in that country, the days have long gone by since it was possible to distinguish a woman from a dromedary——’ ”

“ Stop! ” said the king, “ I can’t stand that, and I won’t. You have already given me a dreadful headache with your lies. The day, too, I perceive, is beginning to break. How long have we been married? my conscience is getting to be troublesome again. And then that dromedary touch,—do you take me for a fool? Upon the whole, you might as well get up and be throttled.”

These words, as I learn from the *Isítsoörnót*, both grieved and astonished Scheherazade; but as she knew the king to be a man of scrupulous integrity, and quite unlikely to forfeit his word, she submitted to her fate with a good grace. She derived, however, great consolation (during the tightening of the bowstring) from the reflection that much of the history remained still untold, and that the petulance of her brute of a husband had reaped for him a most righteous reward in depriving him of many inconceivable adventures.



The Power of Words

OINOS. Pardon, Agathos, the weakness of a spirit new-fledged with immortality!

Agathos. You have spoken nothing, my Oinos, for which pardon is to be demanded. Not even here is knowledge a thing of intuition. For wisdom, ask of the angels freely, that it may be given.

Oinos. But in this existence I dreamed that I should be at once cognizant of all things, and thus at once be happy in being cognizant of all.

Agathos. Ah, not in knowledge is happiness, but in the acquisition of knowledge! In forever knowing, we are forever blessed; but to know all, were the curse of a fiend.

Oinos. But does not the Most High know all?

Agathos. That (since He is the Most Happy) must be still the one thing unknown even to Him.

Oinos. But, since we grow hourly in knowledge, must not at last all things be known?

Agathos. Look down into the abysmal distances!

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attempt to force the gaze down the multitudinous vistas of the stars, as we sweep slowly through them thus, and thus, and thus! Even the spiritual vision,—is it not at all points arrested by the continuous golden walls of the universe?—the walls of the myriads of the shining bodies that mere number has appeared to blend into unity?

Oínos. I clearly perceive that the infinity of matter is no dream.

Agathos. There are no dreams in Aidenn; but it is here whispered that, of this infinity of matter, the sole purpose is to afford infinite springs, at which the soul may allay the thirst to know, which is forever unquenchable within it, since to quench it would be to extinguish the soul's self. Question me then, my Oínos, freely and without fear. Come! we will leave to the left the loud harmony of the Pleiades, and swoop outward from the throne into the starry meadows beyond Orion, where, for pansies and violets, and heart's-ease, are the beds of the triplicate and triple-tinted suns.

Oínos. And now, Agathos, as we proceed, instruct me! speak to me in the earth's familiar tones! I understood not what you hinted to me, just now, of the modes or the methods of what, during mortality, we were accustomed to call creation. Do you mean to say that the Creator is not God?

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Agathos. I mean to say that the Deity does not create.

Oínos. Explain.

Agathos. In the beginning only, He created. The seeming creatures which are now, throughout the universe, so perpetually springing into being, can only be considered as the mediate or indirect, not as the direct or immediate results of the Divine creative power.

Oínos. Among men, my *Agathos*, this idea would be considered heretical in the extreme.

Agathos. Among angels, my *Oínos*, it is seen to be simply true.

Oínos. I can comprehend you thus far,—that certain operations of what we term nature, or the natural laws, will, under certain conditions, give rise to that which has all the appearance of creation. Shortly before the final overthrow of the earth, there were, I well remember, many very successful experiments in what some philosophers were weak enough to denominate the creation of animalculæ.

Agathos. The cases of which you speak were, in fact, instances of the secondary creation, and of the only species of creation which has ever been, since the first word spoke into existence the first law.

Oínos. Are not the starry worlds, that from the abyss of nonentity burst hourly forth into the heavens,—are not these stars, *Agathos*, the immediate handiwork of the King?

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Agathos. Let me endeavor, my Oinos, to lead you, step by step, to the conception I intend. You are well aware that, as no thought can perish, so no act is without infinite result. We moved our hands, for example, when we were dwellers on the earth, and, in so doing, we gave vibration to the atmosphere which engirdled it. This vibration was indefinitely extended till it gave impulse to every particle of the earth's air, which thenceforward, and forever, was actuated by the one movement of the hand. This fact the mathematicians of our globe well knew. They made the special effects, indeed, wrought in the fluid by special impulses the subject of exact calculation, so that it became easy to determine in what precise period an impulse of given extent would engirdle the orb, and impress (forever) every atom of the atmosphere circumambient. Retrograding, they found no difficulty, from a given effect, under given conditions, in determining the value of the original impulse. Now the mathematicians who saw that the results of any given impulse were absolutely endless, and who saw that a portion of these results were accurately traceable through the agency of algebraic analysis; who saw, too, the facility of the retrogradation—these men saw, at the same time, that this species of analysis itself, had within itself a capacity for indefinite progress, that there were no bounds conceivable to its advancement and applicability, except within the intellect of

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him who advanced or applied it. But at this point our mathematicians paused.

Oinos. And why, Agathos, should they have proceeded ?

Agathos. Because there were some considerations of deep interest beyond. It was deducible from what they knew, that to a being of infinite understanding, one to whom the perfection of the algebraic analysis lay unfolded, there could be no difficulty in tracing every impulse given the air, and the ether through the air, to the remotest consequences at any even infinitely remote epoch of time. It is indeed demonstrable that every such impulse given the air must, in the end, impress every individual thing that exists within the universe; and the being of infinite understanding, the being whom we have imagined, might trace the remote undulations of the impulse, trace them upward and onward in their influences upon all particles of all matter, upward and onward forever in their modifications of old forms; or, in other words, in their creation of new, until he found them reflected, unimpressive at last, back from the throne of the Godhead. And not only could such a being do this, but at any epoch, should a given result be afforded him, should one of these numberless comets, for example, be presented to his inspection, he could have no difficulty in determining, by the analytic retrogradation, to what original impulse it was due. This power of retrogradation in its

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absolute fulness and perfection, this faculty of referring, at all epochs, all effects to all causes, is, of course, the prerogative of the Deity alone; but in every variety of degree, short of the absolute perfection, is the power itself exercised by the whole host of the angelic intelligences.

Oínos. But you speak merely of impulses upon the air.

Agathos. In speaking of the air, I referred only to the earth; but the general proposition has reference to impulses upon the ether, which, since it pervades, and alone pervades all space, is thus the great medium of creation.

Oínos. Then all motion, of whatever nature, creates ?

Agathos. It must; but a true philosophy has long taught that the source of all motion is thought, and the source of all thought is——

Oínos. God.

Agathos. I have spoken to you, Oínos, as to a child of the fair earth which lately perished; of impulses upon the atmosphere of the earth.

Oínos. You did.

Agathos. And while I thus spoke, did there not cross your mind some thought of the physical power of words ? Is not every word an impulse on the air ?

Oínos. But why, Agathos, do you weep; and why, oh, why, do your wings droop as we hover above this

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fair star, which is the greenest and yet most terrible of all we have encountered in our flight? Its brilliant flowers look like a fairy dream, but its fierce volcanoes like the passions of a turbulent heart.

Agathos. They are! they are! This wild star,—it is now three centuries since, with clasped hands, and with streaming eyes, at the feet of my beloved, I spoke it, with a few passionate sentences, into birth. Its brilliant flowers are the dearest of all unfulfilled dreams, and its raging volcanoes are the passions of the most turbulent and unhallowed of hearts.





The Imp of the Perverse

IN the consideration of the faculties and impulses—of the *prima mobilia* of the human soul, the phrenologists have failed to make room for a propensity which, although obviously existing as a radical, primitive, irreducible sentiment, has been equally overlooked by all the moralists who have preceded them. In the pure arrogance of the reason, we have all overlooked it. We have suffered its existence to escape our senses, solely through want of belief,—of faith,—whether it be faith in Revelation or faith in the Kabbala. The idea of it has never occurred to us, simply because of its supererogation. We saw no need of the impulse—for the propensity. We could not perceive its necessity. We could not understand, that is to say, we could not have understood, had the notion of this *primum mobile* ever obtruded itself; we could not have understood in what manner it might be made to further the objects of humanity, either temporal or eternal. It cannot be denied that phrenology and, in

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great measure, all metaphysicianism have been concocted a *priori*. The intellectual or logical man, rather than the understanding or observant man, set himself to imagine designs, to dictate purposes to God. Having thus fathomed, to his satisfaction, the intentions of Jehovah, out of these intentions he built his innumerable systems of mind. In the matter of phrenology, for example, we first determined, naturally enough, that it was the design of the Deity that man should eat. We then assigned to man an organ of alimentiveness, and this organ is the scourge with which the Deity compels man, will-I nill-I, into eating. Secondly, having settled it to be God's will that man should continue his species, we discovered an organ of amativeness forthwith. And so with combativeness, with ideality, with causality, with constructiveness,—so, in short, with every organ, whether representing a propensity, a moral sentiment, or a faculty of the pure intellect. And in these arrangements of the *príncipia* of human action, the Spurzheimites, whether right or wrong, in part, or upon the whole, have but followed in principle the footsteps of their predecessors, deducing and establishing everything from the preconceived destiny of man, and upon the ground of the objects of his Creator.

It would have been wiser, it would have been safer, to classify (if classify we must) upon the basis of what man usually or occasionally did, and was always

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occasionally doing, rather than upon the basis of what we took it for granted the Deity intended him to do. If we cannot comprehend God in his visible works, how then in his inconceivable thoughts, that call the works into being? If we cannot understand him in his objective creatures, how then in his substantive moods and phases of creation?

Induction, *a posteriori*, would have brought phrenology to admit, as an innate and primitive principle of human action, a paradoxical something, which we may call perverseness for want of a more characteristic term. In the sense I intend, it is, in fact, a *mobile* without motive, a motive not *motívirt*. Through its promptings we act without comprehensible object; or, if this shall be understood as a contradiction in terms, we may so far modify the proposition as to say that through its promptings we act for the reason that we should not. In theory, no reason can be more unreasonable; but, in fact, there is none more strong. With certain minds, under certain conditions, it becomes absolutely irresistible. I am not more certain that I breathe than that the assurance of the wrong or error of any action is often the one unconquerable force which impels us, and alone impels us, to its prosecution. Nor will this overwhelming tendency to do wrong for the wrong's sake admit of analysis, or resolution into ulterior elements. It is a radical, a primitive impulse, elementary. | It will be said, I am

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aware, that when we persist in acts because we feel we should not persist in them, our conduct is but a modification of that which ordinarily springs from the combativeness of phrenology. But a glance will show the fallacy of this idea. The phrenological combativeness has for its essence the necessity of self-defence. It is our safeguard against injury. Its principle regards our well-being; and thus the desire to be well is excited simultaneously with its development. It follows, that the desire to be well must be excited simultaneously with any principle which shall be merely a modification of combativeness, but in the case of that something which I term perverseness, the desire to be well is not only not aroused, but a strongly antagonistical sentiment exists.

An appeal to one's own heart is, after all, the best reply to the sophistry just noticed. No one who trustingly consults and thoroughly questions his own soul will be disposed to deny the entire radicalness of the propensity in question. It is not more incomprehensible than distinctive. There lives no man who at some period has not been tormented, for example, by an earnest desire to tantalize a listener by circumlocution. The speaker is aware that he displeases; he has every intention to please; he is usually curt, precise, and clear; the most laconic and luminous language is struggling for utterance upon his tongue; it is only with difficulty that he restrains himself from

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giving it flow; he dreads and deprecates the anger of him whom he addresses; yet the thought strikes him that by certain involutions and parentheses this anger may be engendered. That single thought is enough. The impulse increases to a wish, the wish to a desire, the desire to an uncontrollable longing, and the longing (to the deep regret and mortification of the speaker, and in defiance of all consequences) is indulged.

We have a task before us which must be speedily performed. We know that it will be ruinous to make delay. The most important crisis of our life calls, trumpet-tongued, for immediate energy and action. We glow, we are consumed with eagerness to commence the work, with the anticipation of whose glorious result our whole souls are on fire. It must, it shall be undertaken to-day, and yet we put it off until to-morrow; and why? There is no answer, except that we feel perverse, using the word with no comprehension of the principle. To-morrow arrives, and with it a more impatient anxiety to do our duty, but with this very increase of anxiety arrives, also, a nameless, a positively fearful, because unfathomable, craving for delay. This craving gathers strength as the moments fly. The last hour for action is at hand. We tremble with the violence of the conflict within us, of the definite with the indefinite, of the substance with the shadow. But, if the contest have proceeded thus far, it is the shadow which prevails: we struggle

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in vain. The clock strikes, and is the knell of our welfare. At the same time, it is the chanticleer-note to the ghost that has so long overawed us. It flies, it disappears; we are free. The old energy returns. We will labor *now*. Alas, it is too late!

We stand upon the brink of a precipice. We peer into the abyss, we grow sick and dizzy. Our first impulse is to shrink from the danger. Unaccountably we remain. By slow degrees our sickness and dizziness and horror become merged in a cloud of unnamable feeling. By gradations still more imperceptible, this cloud assumes shape, as did the vapor from the bottle out of which arose the genius in the *Arabian Nights*. But out of this our cloud upon the precipice's edge, there grows into palpability a shape far more terrible than any genius or any demon of a tale, and yet it is but a thought, although a fearful one, and one which chills the very marrow of our bones with the fierceness of the delight of its horror. It is merely the idea of what would be our sensations during the sweeping precipitancy of a fall from such a height. And this fall, this rushing annihilation, for the very reason that it involves that one most ghastly and loathsome of all the most ghastly and loathsome images of death and suffering which have ever presented themselves to our imagination—for this very cause do we now the most vividly desire it. And because our reason violently deters us from the brink,

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therefore do we the most impetuously approach it. There is no passion in nature so demoniacally impatient as that of him who, shuddering upon the edge of a precipice, thus meditates a plunge. To indulge, for a moment, in any attempt at thought is to be inevitably lost; for reflection but urges us to forbear, and therefore it is, I say, that we cannot. If there be no friendly arm to check us, or if we fail in a sudden effort to prostrate ourselves backward from the abyss, we plunge, and are destroyed.

Examine these and similar actions as we will, we shall find them resulting solely from the spirit of the Perverse. We perpetrate them merely because we feel that we should not. Beyond or behind this there is no intelligible principle; and we might, indeed, deem this perverseness a direct instigation of the Arch-Fiend, were it not occasionally known to operate in furtherance of good.

I have said thus much, that in some measure I may answer your question, that I may explain to you why I am here, that I may assign to you something that shall have at least the faint aspect of a cause for my wearing these fetters, and for my tenanting this cell of the condemned. Had I not been thus prolix, you might either have misunderstood me altogether, or, with the rabble, have fancied me mad. As it is, you will easily perceive that I am one of the many uncounted victims of the Imp of the Perverse.

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It is impossible that any deed could have been wrought with a more thorough deliberation. For weeks, for months, I pondered upon the means of the murder. I rejected a thousand schemes, because their accomplishment involved a chance of detection. At length, in reading some French memoirs, I found an account of a nearly fatal illness that occurred to Madame Pilau, through the agency of a candle accidentally poisoned. The idea struck my fancy at once. I knew my victim's habit of reading in bed. I knew, too, that his apartment was narrow and ill ventilated. But I need not vex you with impertinent details. I need not describe the easy artifices by which I substituted, in his bedroom candle-stand, a wax-light of my own making for the one which I there found. The next morning he was discovered dead in his bed, and the coroner's verdict was, "Death by the visitation of God."

Having inherited his estate, all went well with me for years. The idea of detection never once entered my brain. Of the remains of the fatal taper I had myself carefully disposed. I had left no shadow of a clue by which it would be possible to convict, or even to suspect, me of the crime. It is inconceivable how rich a sentiment of satisfaction arose in my bosom as I reflected upon my absolute security. For a very long period of time I was accustomed to revel in this sentiment. It afforded me more real delight than all the mere worldly advantages accruing from

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my sin. But there arrived at length an epoch, from which the pleasurable feeling grew, by scarcely perceptible gradations, into a haunting and harassing thought. It harassed because it haunted. I could scarcely get rid of it for an instant. It is quite a common thing to be thus annoyed with the ringing in our ears, or rather in our memories, of the burthen of some ordinary song, or some unimpressive snatches from an opera. Nor will we be the less tormented if the song in itself be good, or the opera air meritorious. In this manner, at last, I would perpetually catch myself pondering upon my security, and repeating, in a low undertone, the phrase, "I am safe."

One day, whilst sauntering along the streets, I arrested myself in the act of murmuring, half aloud, these customary syllables. In a fit of petulance, I remodelled them thus: "I am safe, I am safe! yes, if I be not fool enough to make open confession!"

No sooner had I spoken these words than I felt an icy chill creep to my heart. I had had some experience in these fits of perversity (whose nature I have been at some trouble to explain), and I remembered well that in no instance I had successfully resisted their attacks. And now my own casual self-suggestion, that I might possibly be fool enough to confess the murder of which I had been guilty, confronted me, as if the very ghost of him whom I had murdered, and beckoned me on to death.

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At first, I made an effort to shake off this nightmare of the soul. I walked vigorously, faster, still faster; at length I ran. I felt a maddening desire to shriek aloud. Every succeeding wave of thought overwhelmed me with new terror, for, alas! I well, too well, understood that to think, in my situation, was to be lost. I still quickened my pace. I bounded like a madman through the crowded thoroughfares. At length the populace took the alarm and pursued me. I felt then the consummation of my fate. Could I have torn out my tongue, I would have done it; but a rough voice resounded in my ears, a rougher grasp seized me by the shoulder. I turned, I gasped for breath. For a moment I experienced all the pangs of suffocation; I became blind, and deaf, and giddy; and then some invisible fiend, I thought, struck me with his broad palm upon the back. The long-imprisoned secret burst forth from my soul.

They say that I spoke with a distinct enunciation, but with marked emphasis and passionate hurry, as if in dread of interruption before concluding the brief but pregnant sentences that consigned me to the hangman and to hell.

Having related all that was necessary for the fullest judicial conviction, I fell prostrate in a swoon.

But why shall I say more? To-day I wear these chains, and am here! To-morrow I shall be fetterless! but where?



The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether

DURING the autumn of 18—, while on a tour through the extreme southern provinces of France, my route led me within a few miles of a certain *maison de santé*, or private mad-house, about which I had heard much, in Paris, from my medical friends. As I had never visited a place of the kind, I thought the opportunity too good to be lost; and so proposed to my travelling companion (a gentleman with whom I had made casual acquaintance a few days before) that we should turn aside, for an hour or so, and look through the establishment. To this he objected, pleading haste, in the first place, and, in the second, a very usual horror at the sight of a lunatic. He begged of me, however, not to let any mere courtesy toward himself interfere with the gratification of my curiosity, and said that he would ride on leisurely, so that I might overtake him during the day, or, at all events, during the next. As he bade

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me good-by, I bethought me that there might be some difficulty in obtaining access to the premises, and mentioned my fears on this point. He replied that, in fact, unless I had personal knowledge of the superintendent, Monsieur Maillard, or some credential in the way of a letter, a difficulty might be found to exist, as the regulations of these private mad-houses were more rigid than the public hospital laws. For himself, he added, he had, some years since, made the acquaintance of Maillard, and would so far assist me as to ride up to the door and introduce me, although his feelings on the subject of lunacy would not permit of his entering the house.

I thanked him, and, turning from the main road, we entered a grass-grown bypath, which, in half an hour, nearly lost itself in a dense forest, clothing the base of a mountain. Through this dark and gloomy wood we rode some two miles, when the *maison de santé* came in view. It was a fantastic chateau, much dilapidated, and indeed scarcely tenantable through age and neglect. Its aspect inspired me with absolute dread, and, checking my horse, I half resolved to turn back. I soon, however, grew ashamed of my weakness, and proceeded.

As we rode up to the gateway, I perceived it slightly open, and the visage of a man peering through. In an instant afterward, this man came forth, accosted my companion by name, shook him cordially by the

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hand, and begged him to alight. It was Monsieur Maillard himself. He was a portly, fine-looking gentleman of the old school, with a polished manner, and a certain air of gravity, dignity, and authority which was very impressive.

My friend, having presented me, mentioned my desire to inspect the establishment, and received Monsieur Maillard's assurance that he would show me all attention, now took leave, and I saw him no more.

When he had gone, the superintendent ushered me into a small and exceedingly neat parlor, containing, among other indications of refined taste, many books, drawings, pots of flowers, and musical instruments. A cheerful fire blazed upon the hearth. At a piano, singing an aria from Bellini, sat a young and very beautiful woman, who, at my entrance, paused in her song, and received me with graceful courtesy. Her voice was low, and her whole manner subdued. I thought, too, that I perceived the traces of sorrow in her countenance, which was excessively, although to my taste, not unpleasingly, pale. She was attired in deep mourning, and excited in my bosom a feeling of mingled respect, interest, and admiration.

I had heard, at Paris, that the institution of Monsieur Maillard was managed upon what is vulgarly termed the "system of soothing"; that all punishments were avoided; that even confinement was seldom resorted to; that the patients, while secretly watched,

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were left much apparent liberty, and that most of them were permitted to roam about the house and grounds in the ordinary apparel of persons in right mind.

Keeping these impressions in view, I was cautious in what I said before the young lady; for I could not be sure that she was sane; and, in fact, there was a certain restless brilliancy about her eyes which half led me to imagine she was not. I confined my remarks, therefore, to general topics, and to such as I thought would not be displeasing or exciting even to a lunatic. She replied in a perfectly rational manner to all that I said; and even her original observations were marked with the soundest good sense; but a long acquaintance with the metaphysics of mania had taught me to put no faith in such evidence of sanity, and I continued to practise, throughout the interview, the caution with which I commenced it.

Presently a smart footman in livery brought in a tray with fruit, wine, and other refreshments, of which I partook, the lady soon afterward leaving the room. As she departed I turned my eyes in an inquiring manner toward my host.

"No," he said, "oh, no, a member of my family—my niece, and a most accomplished woman."

"I beg a thousand pardons for the suspicion," I replied, "but of course you will know how to excuse me. The excellent administration of your affairs here

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is well understood in Paris, and I thought it just possible, you know——”

“ Yes, yes; say no more; or rather it is myself who should thank you for the commendable prudence you have displayed. We seldom find so much of forethought in young men; and more than once some unhappy *contretemps* has occurred in consequence of thoughtlessness on the part of our visitors. While my former system was in operation, and my patients were permitted the privilege of roaming to and fro at will, they were often aroused to a dangerous frenzy by injudicious persons who called to inspect the house. Hence I was obliged to enforce a rigid system of exclusion; and none obtained access to the premises upon whose discretion I could not rely.”

“ While your former system was in operation! ” I said, repeating his words; “ do I understand you, then, to say that the ‘ soothing system ’ of which I have heard so much is no longer in force ? ”

“ It is now,” he replied, “ several weeks since we have concluded to renounce it forever.”

“ Indeed! you astonish me! ”

“ We found it, sir,” he said, with a sigh, “ absolutely necessary to return to the old usages. The danger of the soothing system was, at all times, appalling; and its advantages have been much overrated. I believe, sir, that in this house it has been given a fair trial, if ever in any. We did everything

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that rational humanity could suggest. I am sorry that you could not have paid us a visit at an earlier period, that you might have judged for yourself. But I presume you are conversant with the soothing practice, with its details."

"Not altogether. What I have heard has been at third or fourth hand."

"I may state the system, then, in general terms, as one in which the patients were *ménagés*, humored. We contradicted no fancies which entered the brains of the mad. On the contrary, we not only indulged but encouraged them; and many of our most permanent cures have been thus effected. There is no argument which so touches the feeble reason of the madman as the *reductio ad absurdum*. We have had men, for example, who fancied themselves chickens. The cure was, to insist upon the thing as a fact; to accuse the patient of stupidity in not sufficiently perceiving it to be a fact, and thus to refuse him any other diet for a week than that which properly appertains to a chicken. In this manner a little corn and gravel were made to perform wonders."

"But was this species of acquiescence all?"

"By no means. We put much faith in amusements of a simple kind, such as music, dancing, gymnastic exercises generally, cards, certain classes of books, and so forth. We affected to treat each individual as if for some ordinary physical disorder; and the word

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'lunacy' was never employed. A great point was to set each lunatic to guard the actions of all the others. To repose confidence in the understanding or discretion of a madman is to gain him body and soul. In this way we were enabled to dispense with an expensive body of keepers."

"And you had no punishments of any kind?"

"None."

"And you never confined your patients?"

"Very rarely. Now and then, the malady of some individual growing to a crisis or taking a sudden turn of fury, we conveyed him to a secret cell lest his disorder should infect the rest, and there kept him until we could dismiss him to his friends; for with the raging maniac we have nothing to do. He is usually removed to the public hospitals."

"And you have now changed all this, and you think for the better?"

"Decidedly. The system had its disadvantages, and even its dangers. It is now happily exploded throughout all the *maisons de santé* of France."

"I am very much surprised," I said, "at what you tell me; for I made sure that, at this moment, no other method of treatment for mania existed in any portion of the country."

"You are young yet, my friend," replied my host, "but the time will arrive when you will learn to judge for yourself of what is going on in the world, without

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trusting to the gossip of others. Believe nothing you hear, and only one half that you see. Now about our *maisons de santé*, it is clear that some ignoramus has misled you. After dinner, however, when you have sufficiently recovered from the fatigue of your ride, I will be happy to take you over the house, and introduce to you a system which, in my opinion, and in that of every one who has witnessed its operation, is incomparably the most effectual as yet devised."

"Your own?" I inquired, "one of your own invention?"

"I am proud," he replied, "to acknowledge that it is, at least in some measure."

In this manner I conversed with Monsieur Maillard for an hour or two, during which he showed me the gardens and conservatories of the place.

"I cannot let you see my patients," he said, "just at present. To a sensitive mind there is always more or less of the shocking in such exhibitions; and I do not wish to spoil your appetite for dinner. We will dine. I can give you some veal à la *Ste. Ménéhould*, with cauliflowers in *velouté* sauce, after that a glass of *Clos-Vougeot*, then your nerves will be sufficiently steadied."

At six, dinner was announced; and my host conducted me into a large *salle à manger*, where a very numerous company were assembled, twenty-five or thirty in all. They were, apparently, people of rank,

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certainly of high breeding, although their habiliments, I thought, were extravagantly rich, partaking somewhat too much of the ostentatious finery of the *vile cour*. I noticed that at least two thirds of these guests were ladies; and some of the latter were by no means accoutred in what a Parisian would consider good taste at the present day. Many females, for example, whose age could not have been less than seventy, were bedecked with a profusion of jewelry, such as rings, bracelets, and earrings, and wore their bosoms and arms shamefully bare. I observed, too, that very few of the dresses were well made; or, at least, that very few of them fitted the wearers. In looking about, I discovered the interesting girl to whom Monsieur Maillard had presented me in the little parlor; but my surprise was great to see her wearing a hoop and farthingale, with high-heeled shoes, and a dirty cap of Brussels lace, so much too large for her that it gave her face a ridiculously diminutive expression. When I had first seen her, she was attired, most becomingly, in deep mourning. There was an air of oddity, in short, about the dress of the whole party, which, at first, caused me to recur to my original idea of the "soothing system," and to fancy that Monsieur Maillard had been willing to deceive me until after dinner, that I might experience no uncomfortable feelings during the repast, at finding myself dining with lunatics; but I remembered having been informed, in Paris,

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that the southern provincialists were a peculiarly eccentric people, with a vast number of antiquated notions; and then, too, upon conversing with several members of the company, my apprehensions were immediately and fully dispelled.

The dining-room itself, although perhaps sufficiently comfortable and of good dimensions, had nothing too much of elegance about it. For example, the floor was uncarpeted; in France, however, a carpet is frequently dispensed with. The windows, too, were without curtains; the shutters, being shut, were securely fastened with iron bars, applied diagonally, after the fashion of our shop-shutters. The apartment, I observed, formed, in itself, a wing of the chateau, and thus the windows were on three sides of the parallelogram, the door being at the other. There were no less than ten windows in all.

The table was superbly set out. It was loaded with plate, and more than loaded with delicacies. The profusion was absolutely barbaric. There were meats enough to have feasted the Anakim. Never, in all my life, had I witnessed so lavish, so wasteful an expenditure of the good things of life. There seemed very little taste, however, in the arrangements; and my eyes, accustomed to quiet lights, were sadly offended by the prodigious glare of a multitude of wax candles, which, in silver candelabra, were deposited upon the table, and all about the room,

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wherever it was possible to find a place. There were several active servants in attendance; and, upon a large table, at the farther end of the apartment, were seated seven or eight people with fiddles, fifes, trombones, and a drum. These fellows annoyed me very much, at intervals, during the repast, by an infinite variety of noises, which were intended for music, and which appeared to afford much entertainment to all present, with the exception of myself.

Upon the whole, I could not help thinking that there was much of the bizarre about everything I saw; but then the world is made up of all kinds of persons, with all modes of thought, and all sorts of conventional customs. I had travelled, too, so much, as to be quite an adept at the *nil admirari*; so I took my seat very coolly at the right hand of my host, and, having an excellent appetite, did justice to the good cheer set before me.

The conversation, in the meantime, was spirited and general. The ladies, as usual, talked a great deal. I soon found that nearly all the company were well educated; and my host was a world of good-humored anecdote in himself. He seemed quite willing to speak of his position as superintendent of a *maison de santé*; and, indeed, the topic of lunacy was, much to my surprise, a favorite one with all present. A great many amusing stories were told, having reference to the whims of the patients.

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“ We had a fellow here once,” said a fat little gentleman, who sat at my right, “ a fellow that fancied himself a teapot; and, by the way, is it not especially singular how often this particular crotchet has entered the brain of the lunatic ? There is scarcely an insane asylum in France which cannot supply a human teapot. Our gentleman was a Britannia-ware teapot, and was careful to polish himself every morning with buckskin and whiting.”

“ And then,” said the tall man just opposite, “ we had here, not long ago, a person who had taken it into his head that he was a donkey; which, allegorically speaking, you will say was quite true. He was a troublesome patient, and we had much ado to keep him within bounds. For a long time he would eat nothing but thistles; but of this idea we soon cured him by insisting upon his eating nothing else. Then he was perpetually kicking out his heels, so, so——”

“ Mr. De Kock, I will thank you to behave yourself ! ” here interrupted an old lady, who sat next to the speaker. “ Please keep your feet to yourself ! You have spoiled my brocade ! Is it necessary, pray, to illustrate a remark in so practical a style ? Our friend here can surely comprehend you without all this. Upon my word, you are nearly as great a donkey as the poor unfortunate imagined himself. Your acting is very natural, as I live.”

“ *Mille pardons !* Ma’m’selle ! ” replied Monsieur De

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Kock, thus addressed, "a thousand pardons! I had no intention of offending. Ma'm'selle Laplace, Monsieur De Kock will do himself the honor of taking wine with you."

Here Monsieur De Kock bowed low, kissed his hand with much ceremony, and took wine with Ma'm'selle Laplace.

"Allow me, *mon ami*," now said Monsieur Maillard, addressing myself, "allow me to send you a morsel of this veal à *la Ste. Ménéhould*; you will find it particularly fine."

At this instant three sturdy waiters had just succeeded in depositing safely upon the table an enormous dish, or trencher, containing what I supposed to be the *monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum*. A closer scrutiny assured me, however, that it was only a small calf roasted whole, and set upon its knees, with an apple in its mouth, as is the English fashion of dressing a hare.

"Thank you, no," I replied; "to say the truth, I am not particularly partial to veal à *la Ste.*—what is it?—for I do not find that it altogether agrees with me. I will change my plate, however, and try some of the rabbit."

There were several side-dishes on the table, containing what appeared to be the ordinary French rabbit; a very delicious *morceau*, which I can recommend.

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“ Pierre,” cried the host, “ change this gentleman’s plate, and give him a side-piece of this rabbit *au-chat*.”

“ This what ? ” said I.

“ This rabbit *au-chat*.”

“ Why, thank you ; upon second thoughts, no. I will just help myself to some of the ham.”

There is no knowing what one eats, thought I to myself, at the tables of these people of the province. I will have none of their rabbit *au-chat* ; and, for the matter of that, none of their *cat-au-rabbit* either.

“ And then,” said a cadaverous-looking personage, near the foot of the table, taking up the thread of the conversation where it had broken off,—“ and then, among other oddities, we had a patient, once upon a time, who very pertinaciously maintained himself to be a Cordova cheese, and went about, with a knife in his hand, soliciting his friends to try a small slice from the middle of his leg.”

“ He was a great fool, beyond doubt,” interposed some one, “ but not to be compared with a certain individual whom we all know, with the exception of this strange gentleman. I mean the man who took himself for a bottle of champagne, and always went off with a pop and a fizz, in this fashion.”

Here the speaker, very rudely, as I thought, put his right thumb in his left cheek, withdrew it with a sound resembling the popping of a cork, and then, by a dexterous movement of the tongue upon the teeth,

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created a sharp hissing and fizzing, which lasted for several minutes, in imitation of the frothing of champagne. This behavior, I saw plainly, was not very pleasing to Monsieur Maillard; but that gentleman said nothing, and the conversation was resumed by a very lean little man in a big wig.

“And then there was an ignoramus,” said he, “who mistook himself for a frog; which, by the way, he resembled in no little degree. I wish you could have seen him, sir” (here the speaker addressed myself), “it would have done your heart good to see the natural airs that he put on. Sir, if that man was not a frog, I can only observe that it is a pity he was not. His croak thus—o-o-o-o-gh, o-o-o-o-gh! was the finest note in the world, B flat; and when he put his elbows upon the table thus, after taking a glass or two of wine, and distended his mouth, thus, and rolled up his eyes, thus, and winked them with excessive rapidity, thus, why, then, sir, I take it upon myself to say, positively, that you would have been lost in admiration of the genius of the man.”

“I have no doubt of it,” I said.

“And then,” said somebody else, “then there was Petit Gaillard, who thought himself a pinch of snuff, and was truly distressed because he could not take himself between his own finger and thumb.”

“And then there was Jules Desoulières, who was a very singular genius, indeed, and went mad with the

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idea that he was a pumpkin. He persecuted the cook to make him up into pies; a thing which the cook indignantly refused to do. For my part, I am by no means sure that a pumpkin pie à *la Desoulières* would not have been very capital eating indeed!"

"You astonish me!" said I; and I looked inquisitively at Monsieur Maillard.

"Ha! ha! ha!" said that gentleman; "he! he! he!—hi! hi! hi!—ho! ho! ho!—hu! hu! hu! very good indeed! You must not be astonished, *mon ami*; our friend here is a wit, a *drôle*, you must not understand him to the letter."

"And then," said some other one of the party, "then there was Bouffon Le Grand, another extraordinary personage in his way. He grew deranged through love, and fancied himself possessed of two heads. One of these he maintained to be the head of Cicero; the other he imagined a composite one, being Demosthenes's from the top of the forehead to the mouth, and Lord Brougham's from the mouth to the chin. It is not impossible that he was wrong; but he would have convinced you of his being in the right; for he was a man of great eloquence. He had an absolute passion for oratory, and could not refrain from display. For example, he used to leap upon the dinner-table thus, and—and——"

Here a friend, at the side of the speaker, put a hand upon his shoulder and whispered a few words in his

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ear; upon which he ceased talking with great suddenness, and sank back within his chair.

“And then,” said the friend who had whispered, “there was Boullard, the tee-totum. I call him the tee-totum because, in fact, he was seized with the droll, but not altogether irrational, crotchet, that he had been converted into a tee-totum. You would have roared with laughter to see him spin. He would turn round upon one heel by the hour, in this manner—so——”

Here the friend whom he had just interrupted by a whisper performed an exactly similar office for himself.

“But then,” cried an old lady, at the top of her voice, “your Monsieur Boullard was a madman, and a very silly madman at best; for who, allow me to ask you, ever heard of a human tee-totum? The thing is absurd. Madame Joyeuse was a more sensible person, as you know. She had a crotchet, but it was instinct with common sense, and gave pleasure to all who had the honor of her acquaintance. She found, upon mature deliberation, that, by some accident, she had been turned into a chicken-cock; but, as such, she behaved with propriety. She flapped her wings with prodigious effect—so—so—so—and, as for her crow, it was delicious! Cock-a-doodle-doo! cock-a-doodle-doo! cock-a-doodle-de-doo-doo-dooo-do-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!”

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“Madame Joyeuse, I will thank you to behave yourself!” here interrupted our host, very angrily. “You can either conduct yourself as a lady should do, or you can quit the table forthwith; take your choice.”

The lady (whom I was much astonished to hear addressed as Madame Joyeuse, after the description of Madame Joyeuse she had just given) blushed up to the eyebrows, and seemed exceedingly abashed at the reproof. She hung down her head, and said not a syllable in reply. But another and younger lady resumed the theme. It was my beautiful girl of the little parlor.

“Oh, Madame Joyeuse was a fool!” she exclaimed, “but there was really much sound sense, after all, in the opinion of Eugénie Salsafette. She was a very beautiful and painfully modest young lady, who thought the ordinary mode of habiliment indecent, and wished to dress herself, always, by getting outside instead of inside of her clothes. It is a thing very easily done, after all. You have only to do so, and then so—so—so—and then so—so—so—and then——”

“*Mon Dieu!* Ma’m’selle Salsafette!” here cried a dozen voices at once. “What are you about? forbear! that is sufficient! we see very plainly how it is done! hold! hold!” and several persons were already leaping from their seats to withhold Ma’m’selle Salsafette from putting herself upon a par with the Medicean

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Venus, when the point was very effectually and suddenly accomplished by a series of loud screams, or yells, from some portion of the main body of the chateau.

My nerves were very much affected, indeed, by these yells; but the rest of the company I really pitied. I never saw any set of reasonable people so thoroughly frightened in my life. They all grew as pale as so many corpses, and, shrinking within their seats, sat quivering and gibbering with terror, and listening for a repetition of the sound. It came again, louder and seemingly nearer, and then a third time very loud, and then a fourth time with a vigor evidently diminished. At this apparent dying away of the noise, the spirits of the company were immediately regained, and all was life and anecdote as before. I now ventured to inquire the cause of the disturbance.

"A mere bagatelle," said Monsieur Maillard. "We are used to these things, and care really very little about them. The lunatics, every now and then, get up a howl in concert; one starting another, as is sometimes the case with a bevy of dogs at night. It occasionally happens, however, that the concerto yells are succeeded by a simultaneous effort at breaking loose; when, of course, some little danger is to be apprehended."

"And how many have you in charge?"

"At present we have not more than ten, altogether."

"Principally females, I presume?"

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"Oh, no; every one of them men, and stout fellows, too, I can tell you."

"Indeed! I have always understood that the majority of lunatics were of the gentler sex."

"It is generally so, but not always. Some time ago, there were about twenty-seven patients here; and, of that number, no less than eighteen were women; but, lately, matters have changed very much, as you see."

"Yes, have changed very much, as you see," here interrupted the gentleman who had broken the shins of Ma'm'selle Laplace.

"Yes, have changed very much, as you see!" chimed in the whole company at once.

"Hold your tongues, every one of you!" said my host, in a great rage. Whereupon the whole company maintained a dead silence for nearly a minute. As for one lady, she obeyed Monsieur Maillard to the letter, and thrusting out her tongue, which was an excessively long one, held it very resignedly, with both hands, until the end of the entertainment.

"And this gentlewoman," said I, to Monsieur Maillard, bending over and addressing him in a whisper, "this good lady who has just spoken, and who gives us the cock-a-doodle-de-doo, she, I presume, is harmless, quite harmless, eh?"

"Harmless!" ejaculated he, in unfeigned surprise, "why—why, what can you mean?"

"Only slightly touched," said I, touching my head.

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“ I take it for granted that she is not particularly, nor dangerously affected, eh ? ”

“ *Mon Dieu !* what is it you imagine ? This lady, my particular old friend, Madame Joyeuse, is as absolutely sane as myself. She has her little eccentricities, to be sure, but then, you know, all old women, all very old women, are more or less eccentric ! ”

“ To be sure,” said I, “ to be sure, and then the rest of these ladies and gentlemen——”

“ Are my friends and keepers,” interrupted Monsieur Maillard, drawing himself up with hauteur, “ my very good friends and assistants.”

“ What ! all of them ? ” I asked ; “ the women and all ? ”

“ Assuredly,” he said, “ we could not do at all without the women ; they are the best lunatic nurses in the world ; they have a way of their own, you know ; their bright eyes have a marvellous effect ; something like the fascination of the snake, you know.”

“ To be sure,” said I, “ to be sure ! They behave a little odd, eh ? they are a little queer, eh ? don’t you think so ? ”

“ Odd ! queer ! why, do you really think so ? We are not very prudish, to be sure, here in the South ; do pretty much as we please, enjoy life, and all that sort of thing, you know——”

“ To be sure,” said I, “ to be sure.”

“ And then perhaps this *Clos-Vougeot* is a little

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heady, you know, a little strong, you understand, eh ? ”

“ To be sure,” said I, “ to be sure. By the by, monsieur, did I understand you to say that the system you have adopted in place of the celebrated soothing system was one of very rigorous severity ? ”

“ By no means. Our confinement is necessarily close; but the treatment—the medical treatment, I mean—is rather agreeable to the patients than otherwise.”

“ And the new system is one of your own invention ? ”

“ Not altogether. Some portions of it are referable to Professor Tarr, of whom you have, necessarily, heard; and, again, there are modifications in my plan which I am happy to acknowledge as belonging of right to the celebrated Fether, with whom if I mistake not, you have the honor of an intimate acquaintance.”

“ I am quite ashamed to confess,” I replied, “ that I have never even heard the name of either gentleman before.”

“ Good heavens! ” ejaculated my host, drawing back his chair abruptly, and uplifting his hands. “ I surely do not hear you aright! You did not intend to say, eh ? that you had never heard either of the learned Doctor Tarr, or of the celebrated Professor Fether ? ”

“ I am forced to acknowledge my ignorance,” I replied; “ but the truth should be held inviolate above

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all things. Nevertheless, I feel humbled to the dust not to be acquainted with the works of these, no doubt, extraordinary men. I will seek out their writings forthwith, and peruse them with deliberate care. Monsieur Maillard, you have really (I must confess it), you have really made me ashamed of myself!"

And this was the fact.

"Say no more, my good young friend," he said kindly, pressing my hand; "join me now in a glass of Sauterne."

We drank. The company followed our example without stint. They chatted, they jested, they laughed, they perpetrated a thousand absurdities; the fiddles shrieked, the drum row-de-dowed, the trombones belowed like so many brazen bulls of Phalaris, and the whole scene, growing gradually worse and worse, as the wines gained the ascendancy, became at length a sort of pandemonium *in petto*. In the meantime, Monsieur Maillard and myself, with some bottles of Sauterne and Vougeot between us, continued our conversation at the top of the voice. A word spoken in an ordinary key stood no more chance of being heard than the voice of a fish from the bottom of Niagara Falls.

"And, sir," said I, screaming in his ear, "you mentioned something before dinner about the danger incurred in the old system of soothing. How is that?"

"Yes," he replied, "there was occasionally very great danger indeed. There is no accounting for the

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caprices of madmen; and in my opinion, as well as in that of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether, it is never safe to permit them to run at large unattended. A lunatic may be 'soothed,' as it is called, for a time, but, in the end, he is very apt to become obstreperous. His cunning, too, is proverbial and great. If he has a project in view, he conceals his design with a marvellous wisdom; and the dexterity with which he counterfeits sanity presents, to the metaphysician, one of the most singular problems in the study of mind. When a madman appears thoroughly sane, indeed, it is high time to put him in a strait-jacket."

"But the danger, my dear sir, of which you were speaking, in your own experience, during your control of this house, have you had practical reason to think liberty hazardous in the case of a lunatic?"

"Here? in my own experience? why, I may say, yes. For example: no very long while ago, a singular circumstance occurred in this very house. The 'soothing system,' you know, was then in operation, and the patients were at large. They behaved remarkably well, especially so: any one of sense might have known that some devilish scheme was brewing from that particular fact, that the fellows behaved so remarkably well. And, sure enough, one fine morning the keepers found themselves pinioned hand and foot and thrown into the cells, where they were attended, as if they were the lunatics, by the lunatics

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themselves, who had usurped the offices of the keepers."

"You don't tell me so! I never heard of anything so absurd in my life!"

"Fact; it all came to pass by means of a stupid fellow—a lunatic—who, by some means, had taken it into his head that he had invented a better system of government than any ever heard of before—of lunatic government, I mean. He wished to give his invention a trial, I suppose, and so he persuaded the rest of the patients to join him in a conspiracy for the overthrow of the reigning powers."

"And he really succeeded?"

"No doubt of it. The keepers and kept were soon made to exchange places. Not that exactly either, for the madmen had been free, but the keepers were shut up in cells forthwith, and treated, I am sorry to say, in a very cavalier manner."

"But I presume a counter-revolution was soon effected. This condition of things could not have long existed. The country people in the neighborhood, visitors coming to see the establishment, would have given the alarm."

"There you are out. The head rebel was too cunning for that. He admitted no visitors at all, with the exception, one day, of a very stupid-looking young gentleman of whom he had no reason to be afraid. He let him in to see the place, just by way of variety,

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to have a little fun with him. As soon as he had gammoned him sufficiently, he let him out and sent him about his business."

"And how long then, did the madmen reign?"

"Oh, a very long time, indeed; a month certainly; how much longer I can't precisely say. In the meantime, the lunatics had a jolly season of it, that you may swear. They doffed their own shabby clothes, and made free with the family wardrobe and jewels. The cellars of the chateau were well stocked with wine, and these madmen are just the devils that know how to drink it. They lived well, I can tell you."

"And the treatment—what was the particular species of treatment which the leader of the rebels put into operation?"

"Why, as for that, a madman is not necessarily a fool, as I have already observed; and it is my honest opinion that his treatment was a much better treatment than that which it superseded. It was a very capital system indeed,—simple, neat, no trouble at all; in fact it was delicious, it was——"

Here my host's observations were cut short by another series of yells of the same character as those which had previously disconcerted us. This time, however, they seemed to proceed from persons rapidly approaching.

"Gracious heavens!" I ejaculated, "the lunatics have most undoubtedly broken loose."

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"I very much fear it is so," replied Monsieur Maillard, now becoming excessively pale. He had scarcely finished the sentence before loud shouts and imprecations were heard beneath the windows; and immediately afterward it became evident that some persons outside were endeavoring to gain entrance into the room. The door was beaten with what appeared to be a sledge-hammer, and the shutters were wrenched and shaken with prodigious violence.

A scene of the most terrible confusion ensued. Monsieur Maillard, to my excessive astonishment, threw himself under the sideboard. I had expected more resolution at his hands. The members of the orchestra, who, for the last fifteen minutes, had been seemingly too much intoxicated to do duty, now sprang all at once to their feet and to their instruments, and, scrambling upon their table, broke out, with one accord, into "Yankee Doodle," which they performed, if not exactly in tune, at least with an energy superhuman during the whole of the uproar.

Meantime, upon the main dining-table, among the bottles and glasses, leaped the gentleman who with such difficulty had been restrained from leaping there before. As soon as he fairly settled himself, he commenced an oration, which no doubt was a very capital one, if it could only have been heard. At the same moment, the man with the tee-totum predilection set himself to spinning around the apartment, with im-

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mense energy, and with arms outstretched at right angles with his body; so that he had all the air of a tee-totum in fact, and knocked everybody down that happened to get in his way. And now, too, hearing an incredible popping and fizzing of champagne, I discovered at length that it proceeded from the person who performed the bottle of that delicate drink during dinner. And then, again, the frog-man croaked away as if the salvation of his soul depended upon every note that he uttered. And in the midst of all this the continuous braying of a donkey arose over all. As for my old friend, Madame Joyeuse, I really could have wept for the poor lady, she appeared so terribly perplexed. All she did, however, was to stand up in a corner, by the fireplace, and sing out incessantly at the top of her voice, "Cock-a-doodle-de-dooooooh!"

And now came the climax, the catastrophe of the drama. As no resistance, beyond whooping and yelling and cock-a-doodling, was offered to the encroachments of the party without, the ten windows were very speedily and almost simultaneously broken in. But I shall never forget the emotions of wonder and horror with which I gazed, when, leaping through these windows, and down among us, *pêle-mêle*, fighting, stamping, scratching, and howling, there rushed a perfect army of what I took to be chimpanzees, ourang-outangs, or big black baboons of the Cape of Good Hope.

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I received a terrible beating, after which I rolled under a sofa and lay still. After lying there some fifteen minutes, however, during which time I listened with all my ears to what was going on in the room, I came to some satisfactory *dénouement* of this tragedy. Monsieur Maillard, it appeared, in giving me the account of the lunatic who had excited his fellows to rebellion, had been merely relating his own exploits. This gentleman had, indeed, some two or three years before, been the superintendent of the establishment; but grew crazy himself, and so became a patient. This fact was unknown to the travelling companion who introduced me. The keepers, ten in number, having been suddenly overpowered, were first well tarred, then carefully feathered, and then shut up in underground cells. They had been so imprisoned for more than a month, during which period Monsieur Maillard had generously allowed them not only the tar and feathers (which constituted his "system"), but some bread and abundance of water. The latter was pumped on them daily. At length one, escaping through a sewer, gave freedom to all the rest.

The "soothing system," with important modifications, has been resumed at the chateau; yet I cannot help agreeing with Monsieur Maillard that his own "treatment" was a very capital one of its kind. As he justly observed, it was "simple, neat, and gave no trouble at all, not the least."

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I have only to add that, although I have searched every library in Europe for the works of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether, I have, up to the present day, utterly failed in my endeavors to procure a copy.





The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar



OF course I shall not pretend to consider it any matter for wonder, that the extraordinary case of M. Valdemar has excited discussion.

It would have been a miracle had it not, especially under the circumstances. Through the desire of all parties concerned to keep the affair from the public, at least for the present, or until we had further opportunities for investigation,—through our endeavors to effect this, a garbled or exaggerated account made its way into society, and became the source of many unpleasant misrepresentations, and, very naturally, of a great deal of disbelief.

It is now rendered necessary that I give the facts as far as I comprehend them myself. They are, succinctly, these:

My attention, for the last three years, had been repeatedly drawn to the subject of Mesmerism; and

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about nine months ago it occurred to me, quite suddenly, that in the series of experiments made hitherto, there had been a very remarkable and most unaccountable omission,—no person had as yet been mesmerized *in artículo mortis*. It remained to be seen, first, whether, in such condition, there existed in the patient any susceptibility to the magnetic influence; secondly, whether, if any existed, it was impaired or increased by the condition; thirdly, to what extent, or for how long a period, the encroachments of death might be arrested by the process. There were other points to be ascertained, but these most excited my curiosity, the last in especial, from the immensely important character of its consequences.

In looking around me for some subject by whose means I might test these particulars, I was brought to think of my friend, M. Ernest Valdemar, the well-known compiler of the *Bibliotheca Forensica*, and author (under the *nom de plume* of Issachar Marx) of the Polish versions of *Wallenstein* and *Gargantua*. M. Valdemar, who has resided principally at Harlem, N. Y., since the year 1839, is (or was) particularly noticeable for the extreme sparseness of his person, his lower limbs much resembling those of John Randolph; and also for the whiteness of his whiskers, in violent contrast to the blackness of his hair, the latter, in consequence, being very generally mistaken for a wig. His temperament was markedly nervous, and rendered

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him a good subject for mesmeric experiment. On two or three occasions I had put him to sleep with little difficulty, but was disappointed in other results which his peculiar constitution had naturally led me to anticipate. His will was at no period positively or thoroughly under my control, and in regard to clairvoyance, I could accomplish with him nothing to be relied upon. I always attributed my failure at these points to the disordered state of his health. For some months previous to my becoming acquainted with him, his physicians had declared him in a confirmed phthisis. It was his custom, indeed, to speak calmly of his approaching dissolution, as of a matter neither to be avoided nor regretted.

When the ideas to which I have alluded first occurred to me, it was of course very natural that I should think of M. Valdemar. I knew the steady philosophy of the man too well to apprehend any scruples from him; and he had no relatives in America who would be likely to interfere. I spoke to him frankly upon the subject; and, to my surprise, his interest seemed vividly excited. I say "to my surprise"; for, although he had always yielded his person freely to my experiments, he had never before given me any tokens of sympathy with what I did. His disease was of that character which would admit of exact calculation in respect to the epoch of its termination in death; and it was finally arranged between us that he would

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send for me about twenty-four hours before the period announced by his physicians as that of his decease.

It is now rather more than seven months since I received, from M. Valdemar himself, the subjoined note:

“ My dear P——,

“ You may as well come now. D—— and F—— are agreed that I cannot hold out beyond to-morrow midnight; and I think they have hit the time very nearly.

“ VALDEMAR.”

I received this note within half an hour after it was written, and in fifteen minutes more I was in the dying man's chamber. I had not seen him for ten days, and was appalled by the fearful alteration which the brief interval had wrought in him. His face wore a leaden hue; the eyes were utterly lustreless; and the emaciation was so extreme that the skin had been broken through by the cheek-bones. His expectoration was excessive. The pulse was barely perceptible. He retained, nevertheless, in a very remarkable manner, both his mental power and a certain degree of physical strength. He spoke with distinctness, took some palliative medicines without aid, and, when I entered the room, was occupied in pencilling memoranda in a pocket-book. He was propped up in the bed by pillows. Doctors D—— and F—— were in attendance.

After pressing Valdemar's hand, I took these gentlemen aside, and obtained from them a minute account

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of the patient's condition. The left lung had been for eighteen months in a semi-osseous or cartilaginous state, and was, of course, entirely useless for all purposes of vitality. The right, in its upper portion, was also partially, if not thoroughly, ossified, while the lower region was merely a mass of purulent tubercles, running one into another. Several extensive perforations existed; and, at one point, permanent adhesion to the ribs had taken place. These appearances in the right lobe were of comparatively recent date. The ossification had proceeded with very unusual rapidity; no sign of it having been discovered a month before, and the adhesion had only been observed during the three previous days. Independently of the phthisis, the patient was suspected of aneurism of the aorta; but on this point the osseous symptoms rendered an exact diagnosis impossible. It was the opinion of both physicians that M. Valdemar would die about midnight on the morrow (Sunday). It was then seven o'clock on Saturday evening.

On quitting the invalid's bedside to hold conversation with myself, Doctors D—— and F—— had bidden him a final farewell. It had not been their intention to return; but, at my request, they agreed to look in upon the patient about ten the next night.

When they had gone, I spoke freely with M. Valdemar on the subject of his approaching dissolution, as well as, more particularly, of the experiment proposed.

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He still professed himself quite willing and even anxious to have it made, and urged me to commence it at once. A male and a female nurse were in attendance; but I did not feel myself altogether at liberty to engage in a task of this character with no more reliable witnesses than these people, in case of sudden accident, might prove. I therefore postponed operations until about eight the next night, when the arrival of a medical student, with whom I had some acquaintance (Mr. Theodore L——l), relieved me from further embarrassment. It had been my design, originally, to wait for the physicians; but I was induced to proceed, first, by the urgent entreaties of M. Valdemar, and, secondly, by my conviction that I had not a moment to lose, as he was evidently sinking fast.

Mr. L——l was so kind as to accede to my desire that he would take notes of all that occurred; and it is from his memoranda that what I now have to relate is, for the most part, either condensed or copied verbatim.

It wanted about five minutes of eight when, taking the patient's hand, I begged him to state, as distinctly as he could, to Mr. L——l, whether he (M. Valdemar) was entirely willing that I should make the experiment of mesmerizing him in his then condition.

He replied feebly, yet quite audibly: "Yes, I wish to be mesmerized," adding immediately afterward: "I fear you have deferred it too long."

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While he spoke thus, I commenced the passes which I had already found most effectual in subduing him. He was evidently influenced with the first lateral stroke of my hand across his forehead; but, although I exerted all my powers, no further perceptible effect was induced until some minutes after ten o'clock, when Doctors D—— and F—— called, according to appointment. I explained to them, in a few words, what I designed, and as they opposed no objection, saying that the patient was already in the death-agony, I proceeded without hesitation, exchanging, however, the lateral passes for downward ones, and directing my gaze entirely into the right eye of the sufferer.

By this time his pulse was imperceptible, and his breathing was stertorious, and at intervals of half a minute.

This condition was nearly unaltered for a quarter of an hour. At the expiration of this period, however, a natural although a very deep sigh escaped from the bosom of the dying man, and the stertorious breathing ceased; that is to say, its stertoriousness was no longer apparent; the intervals were undiminished. The patient's extremities were of an icy coldness.

At five minutes before eleven, I perceived unequivocal signs of the mesmeric influence. The glassy roll of the eye was changed for that expression of uneasy inward examination which is never seen except in cases of sleep-waking, and which it is quite impossible

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to mistake. With a few rapid lateral passes I made the lids quiver, as in incipient sleep, and with a few more I closed them altogether. I was not satisfied, however, with this, but continued the manipulations vigorously, and with the fullest exertion of the will, until I had completely stiffened the limbs of the slumberer, after placing them in a seemingly easy position. The legs were at full length; the arms were nearly so, and reposed on the bed at a moderate distance from the loins. The head was very slightly elevated.

When I had accomplished this, it was fully midnight, and I requested the gentlemen present to examine M. Valdemar's condition. After a few experiments, they admitted him to be in an unusually perfect state of mesmeric trance. The curiosity of both the physicians was greatly excited. Dr. D—— resolved at once to remain with the patient all night, while Dr. F—— took leave with a promise to return at daybreak. Mr. L——l and the nurses remained.

We left M. Valdemar entirely undisturbed until about three o'clock in the morning, when I approached him and found him in precisely the same condition as when Dr. F—— went away; that is to say, he lay in the same position; the pulse was imperceptible; the breathing was gentle,—scarcely noticeable, unless through the application of a mirror to the lips; the eyes were closed naturally; and the limbs were as

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rigid and as cold as marble. Still, the general appearance was certainly not that of death.

As I approached M. Valdemar I made a kind of half effort to influence his right arm into pursuit of my own, as I passed the latter gently to and fro above his person. In such experiments with this patient I had never perfectly succeeded before, and assuredly I had little thought of succeeding now; but to my astonishment his arm very readily, although feebly, followed every direction I assigned it with mine. I determined to hazard a few words of conversation.

"M. Valdemar," I said, "are you asleep?" He made no answer, but I perceived a tremor about the lips, and was thus induced to repeat the question, again and again. At its third repetition, his whole frame was agitated by a very slight shivering; the eyelids unclosed themselves so far as to display a white line of the ball; the lips moved sluggishly, and from between them, in a barely audible whisper, issued the words:

"Yes;—asleep now. Do not wake me!—let me die so!"

I here felt the limbs, and found them as rigid as ever. The right arm, as before, obeyed the direction of my hand. I questioned the sleep-waker again:

"Do you still feel pain in the breast, M. Valdemar?"

The answer now was immediate, but even less audible than before:

"No pain; I am dying!"

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I did not think it advisable to disturb him further just then, and nothing more was said or done until the arrival of Dr. F——, who came a little before sunrise, and expressed unbounded astonishment at finding the patient still alive. After feeling the pulse and applying a mirror to the lips, he requested me to speak to the sleep-waker again. I did so, saying,

“ M. Valdemar, do you still sleep ? ”

As before, some minutes elapsed ere a reply was made; and during the interval the dying man seemed to be collecting his energies to speak. At my fourth repetition of the question, he said very faintly, almost inaudibly:

“ Yes; still asleep—dying.”

It was now the opinion, or rather the wish, of the physicians that M. Valdemar should be suffered to remain undisturbed in his present apparently tranquil condition, until death should supervene; and this, it was generally agreed, must now take place within a few minutes. I concluded, however, to speak to him once more, and merely repeated my previous question.

While I spoke there came a marked change over the countenance of the sleep-waker. The eyes rolled themselves slowly open, the pupils disappearing upwardly; the skin generally assumed a cadaverous hue, resembling not so much parchment as white paper; and the circular hectic spots which hitherto had been strongly defined in the centre of each cheek went out

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at once. I use this expression, because the suddenness of their departure put me in mind of nothing so much as the extinguishment of a candle by a puff of the breath. The upper lip, at the same time, writhed itself away from the teeth, which it had previously covered completely; while the lower jaw fell with an audible jerk, leaving the mouth widely extended, and disclosing in full view the swollen and blackened tongue. I presume that no member of the party then present had been unaccustomed to death-bed horrors; but so hideous beyond conception was the appearance of M. Valdemar at this moment, that there was a general shrinking back from the region of the bed.

I now feel that I have reached a point of this narrative at which every reader will be startled into positive disbelief. It is my business, however, simply to proceed.

There was no longer the faintest sign of vitality in M. Valdemar; and, concluding him to be dead, we were consigning him to the charge of the nurses, when a strong vibratory motion was observable in the tongue. This continued for perhaps a minute. At the expiration of this period, there issued from the distended and motionless jaws a voice such as it would be madness in me to attempt describing. There are, indeed, two or three epithets which might be considered as applicable to it in part: I might say, for example, that the sound was harsh and broken and hollow; but the

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hideous whole is indescribable, for the simple reason that no similar sounds have ever jarred upon the ear of humanity. There were two particulars, nevertheless, which I thought then, and still think, might fairly be stated as characteristic of the intonation, as well adapted to convey some idea of its unearthly peculiarity. In the first place, the voice seemed to reach our ears, at least mine, from a vast distance, or from some deep cavern within the earth. In the second place, it impressed me (I fear, indeed, that it will be impossible to make myself comprehended) as gelatinous or glutinous matters impress the sense of touch.

I have spoken both of "sound" and of "voice." I mean to say that the sound was one of distinct, of even wonderfully, thrillingly distinct, syllabification. M. Valdemar spoke, obviously in reply to the question I had propounded to him a few minutes before. I had asked him, it will be remembered, if he still slept. He now said:

"Yes;—no;—I have been sleeping—and now—now—I am dead."

No person present even affected to deny, or attempted to repress, the unutterable, shuddering horror which these few words, thus uttered, were so well calculated to convey. Mr. L——l (the student) swooned. The nurses immediately left the chamber, and could not be induced to return. My own impressions I would not pretend to render intelligible to the reader. For

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nearly an hour we busied ourselves, silently, without the utterance of a word, in endeavors to revive Mr. L——1. When he came to himself, we addressed ourselves again to an investigation of M. Valdemar's condition.

It remained in all respects as I have last described it, with the exception that the mirror no longer afforded evidence of respiration. An attempt to draw blood from the arm failed. I should mention, too, that this limb was no further subject to my will. I endeavored in vain to make it follow the direction of my hand. The only real indication, indeed, of the mesmeric influence was now found in the vibratory movement of the tongue, whenever I addressed M. Valdemar a question. He seemed to be making an effort to reply, but had no longer sufficient volition. To queries put to him by any other person than myself he seemed utterly insensible, although I endeavored to place each member of the company in mesmeric rapport with him. I believe that I have now related all that is necessary to an understanding of the sleep-waker's state at this epoch. Other nurses were procured; and at ten o'clock I left the house in company with the two physicians and Mr. L——1.

In the afternoon we all called again to see the patient. His condition remained precisely the same. We had now some discussion as to the propriety and feasibility of awakening him; but we had little diffi-

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culty in agreeing that no good purpose would be served by so doing. It was evident that, so far, death (or what is usually termed death) had been arrested by the mesmeric process. It seemed clear to us all that to awaken M. Valdemar would be merely to insure his instant, or at least his speedy, dissolution.

From this period until the close of last week, an interval of nearly seven months, we continued to make daily calls at M. Valdemar's house, accompanied, now and then, by medical and other friends. All this time the sleep-waker remained exactly as I have last described him. The nurses' attentions were continual.

It was on Friday last that we finally resolved to make the experiment of awakening, or attempting to awaken him; and it is the (perhaps) unfortunate result of this latter experiment which has given rise to so much discussion in private circles; to so much of what I cannot help thinking unwarranted popular feeling.

For the purpose of relieving M. Valdemar from the mesmeric trance, I made use of the customary passes. These for a time were unsuccessful. The first indication of revival was afforded by a partial descent of the iris. It was observed, as especially remarkable, that this lowering of the pupil was accompanied by the profuse outflowing of a yellowish ichor (from beneath the lids) of a pungent and highly offensive odor.

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It was now suggested that I should attempt to influence the patient's arm as heretofore. I made the attempt and failed. Dr. F—— then intimated a desire to have me put a question. I did so, as follows:

“ M. Valdemar, can you explain to us what are your feelings or wishes now ? ”

There was an instant return of the hectic circles on the cheeks; the tongue quivered, or rather rolled violently in the mouth, although the jaws and lips remained rigid as before, and at length the same hideous voice which I have already described broke forth:

“ For God's sake! quick! quick! put me to sleep; or, quick! waken me! quick! I say to you that I am dead! ”

I was thoroughly unnerved, and for an instant remained undecided what to do. At first I made an endeavor to recompose the patient; but, failing in this through total abeyance of the will, I retraced my steps and as earnestly struggled to awaken him. In this attempt I soon saw that I should be successful, or at least I soon fancied that my success would be complete, and I am sure that all in the room were prepared to see the patient awaken.

For what really occurred, however, it is quite impossible that any human being could have been prepared.

As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of “ Dead! dead! ” absolutely bursting from

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the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once, within the space of a single minute, or less, shrunk, crumbled, absolutely rotted away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome, of detestable putrescence.





The Cask of Amontillado

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled; but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

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He had a weak point, this Fortunato, although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack; but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk one evening, during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him: "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without

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consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me——"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi——"

"I have no engagement; come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish sherry from Amontillado."

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Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaire* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and, giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe?" said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white webwork which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned toward me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

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“ Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh! ”

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

“ It is nothing,” he said, at last.

“ Come,” I said, with decision, “ we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi——”

“ Enough,” he said; “ the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.”

“ True—true,” I replied; “ and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily; but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp.”

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

“ Drink,” I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

“ I drink,” he said, “ to the buried that repose around us.”

“ And I to your long life.”

He again took my arm and we proceeded.

“ These vaults,” he said, “ are extensive.”

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"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d' or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough——"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upward with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

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"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my *roquelaire*.

"You jest!" he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces.

"But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming

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at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi——"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and, finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you

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cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No ? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low, moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and and seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and, holding the

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flambeaux over the masonwork, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs and felt satisfied. I re-approached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamor grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said:

“Ha! ha! ha!—he! he!—a very good joke indeed, an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” I said.

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"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo,—the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud:

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again.

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor.—I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*





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The garden like a lady fair was cut,
That lay as if she slumbered in delight,
And to the open skies her eyes did shut;
The azure fields of heaven were 'sembled right
In a large round set with the flowers of light:
The flowers-de-luce, and the round sparks of dew
That hung upon their azure leaves, did shew
Like twinkling stars, that sparkle in the evening blue.

GILES FLETCHER.

FROM his cradle to his grave a gale of prosperity bore my friend Ellison along. Nor do I use the word "prosperity" in its mere worldly sense. I mean it as synonymous with happiness. The person of whom I speak seemed born for the purpose of foreshadowing the doctrines of Turgot, Price, Priestley, and Condorcet, of exemplifying by individual instance what has been deemed the chimera of the perfectionists. In the brief existence of Ellison I fancy that I have seen refuted the dogma that in man's very nature lies some hidden principle, the

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antagonist of bliss. An anxious examination of his career has given me to understand that, in general, from the violation of a few simple laws of humanity arises the wretchedness of mankind; that as a species we have in our possession the as yet unwrought elements of content; and that, even now in the present darkness and madness of all thought on the great question of the social condition, it is not impossible that man, the individual, under certain unusual and highly fortuitous conditions, may be happy.

With opinions such as these my young friend, too, was fully imbued, and thus it is worthy of observation that the uninterrupted enjoyment which distinguished his life was, in great measure, the result of preconcert. It is indeed evident that with less of the instinctive philosophy which, now and then, stands so well in the stead of experience, Mr. Ellison would have found himself precipitated, by the very extraordinary success of his life, into the common vortex of unhappiness which yawns for those of pre-eminent endowments. But it is by no means my object to pen an essay on happiness. The ideas of my friend may be summed up in a few words. He admitted but four elementary principles, or, more strictly, conditions, of bliss. That which he considered chief was, strange to say, the simple and purely physical one of free exercise in the open air. "The health," he said, "attainable by

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other means is scarcely worth the name." He instanced the ecstasies of the fox-hunter, and pointed to the tillers of the earth, the only people who, as a class, can be fairly considered happier than others. His second condition was the love of woman. His third, and most difficult of realization, was the contempt of ambition. His fourth was an object of unceasing pursuit; and he held that, other things being equal, the extent of attainable happiness was in proportion to the spirituality of this object.

Ellison was remarkable in the continuous profusion of good gifts lavished upon him by fortune. In personal grace and beauty he exceeded all men. His intellect was of that order to which the acquisition of knowledge is less a labor than an intuition and a necessity. His family was one of the most illustrious of the empire. His bride was the loveliest and most devoted of women. His possessions had been always ample; but on the attainment of his majority it was discovered that one of those extraordinary freaks of fate had been played in his behalf, which startle the whole social world amid which they occur, and seldom fail radically to alter the moral constitution of those who are their objects.

It appears that about a hundred years before Mr. Ellison's coming of age, there had died, in a remote province, one Mr. Seabright Ellison. This gentleman had amassed a princely fortune, and, having no

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immediate connections, conceived the whim of suffering his wealth to accumulate for a century after his decease. Minutely and sagaciously directing the various modes of investment, he bequeathed the aggregate amount to the nearest of blood, bearing the name of Ellison, who should be alive at the end of the hundred years. Many attempts had been made to set aside this singular bequest; their *ex post facto* character rendered them abortive; but the attention of a jealous government was aroused, and a legislative act finally obtained, forbidding all similar accumulations. This act, however, did not prevent young Ellison from entering into possession, on his twenty-first birthday, as the heir of his ancestor Seabright, of a fortune of four hundred and fifty millions of dollars! ¹

When it had become known that such was the enormous wealth inherited, there were, of course, many speculations as to the mode of its disposal. The magnitude and the immediate availability of the sum bewildered all who thought on the topic. The possessor of any appreciable amount of money might have been

¹ An incident, similar in outline to the one here imagined, occurred, not very long ago, in England. The name of the fortunate heir was Thelluson. I first saw an account of this matter in the *Tour* of Prince Pückler-Muskau, who makes the sum inherited ninety millions of pounds, and justly observes that "in the contemplation of so vast a sum, and of the services to which it might be applied, there is something even of the sublime." To suit the views of this article I have followed the Prince's statement, although a grossly exaggerated one. The germ, and, in fact, the commencement of the present paper was published many years ago—previous to the issue of the first number of Sue's admirable *Juif Errant*, which may possibly have been suggested to him by Muskau's account.

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imagined to perform any one of a thousand things. With riches merely surpassing those of any citizen, it would have been easy to suppose him engaging to supreme excess in the fashionable extravagances of his time, or busying himself with political intrigue, or aiming at ministerial power, or purchasing increase of nobility, or collecting large museums of *virtù*, or playing the munificent patron of letters, of science, of art, or endowing, and bestowing his name upon extensive institutions of charity. But, for the inconceivable wealth in the actual possession of the heir, these objects and all ordinary objects were felt to afford too limited a field. Recourse was had to figures, and these but sufficed to confound. It was seen that, even at three per cent., the annual income of the inheritance amounted to no less than thirteen millions and five hundred thousand dollars; which was one million and one hundred and twenty-five thousand per month; or thirty-six thousand nine hundred and eighty-six per day; or one thousand five hundred and forty-one per hour; or six-and-twenty dollars for every minute that flew. Thus the usual track of supposition was thoroughly broken up. Men knew not what to imagine. There were some who even conceived that Mr. Ellison would divest himself of at least one half of his fortune as of utterly superfluous opulence, enriching whole troops of his relatives by division of his superabundance. To the nearest of these he did, in fact, abandon

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the very unusual wealth which was his own before the inheritance.

I was not surprised, however, to perceive that he had long made up his mind on a point which had occasioned so much discussion to his friends. Nor was I greatly astonished at the nature of his decision. In regard to individual charities he had satisfied his conscience. In the possibility of any improvement, properly so called, being effected by man himself in the general condition of man, he had (I am sorry to confess it) little faith. Upon the whole, whether happily or unhappily, he was thrown back, in very great measure, upon self.

In the widest and noblest sense he was a poet. He comprehended, moreover, the true character, the august aims, the supreme majesty and dignity of the poetic sentiment. The fullest, if not the sole proper satisfaction of this sentiment he instinctively felt to lie in the creation of novel forms of beauty. Some peculiarities, either in his early education, or in the nature of his intellect, had tinged with what is termed materialism all his ethical speculations; and it was this bias, perhaps, which led him to believe that the most advantageous, at least, if not the sole legitimate field for the poetic exercise, lies in the creation of novel moods of purely physical loveliness. Thus it happened he became neither musician nor poet, if we use this latter term in its every-day acceptation. Or it

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might have been that he neglected to become either, merely in pursuance of his idea that in contempt of ambition is to be found one of the essential principles of happiness on earth. Is it not indeed possible that, while a high order of genius is necessarily ambitious, the highest is above that which is termed ambition? And may it not thus happen that many far greater than Milton have contentedly remained "mute and inglorious"? I believe that the world has never seen, and that, unless through some series of accidents goading the noblest order of mind into distasteful exertion, the world will never see, that full extent of triumphant execution in the richer domains of art, of which the human nature is absolutely capable.

Ellison became neither musician nor poet; although no man lived more profoundly enamored of music and poetry. Under other circumstances than those which invested him, it is not impossible that he would have become a painter. Sculpture, although in its nature rigorously poetical, was too limited in its extent and consequences to have occupied, at any time, much of his attention. And I have now mentioned all the provinces in which the common understanding of the poetic sentiment has declared it capable of expatiating. But Ellison maintained that the richest, the truest, and most natural, if not altogether the most extensive province, had been unaccountably neglected. No definition had spoken of the landscape-gardener as of

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the poet; yet it seemed to my friend that the creation of the landscape-garden offered to the proper Muse the most magnificent of opportunities. Here, indeed, was the fairest field for the display of imagination in the endless combining of forms of novel beauty, the elements to enter into combination being, by a vast superiority, the most glorious which the earth could afford. In the multiform and multicolor of the flowers and the trees, he recognized the most direct and energetic efforts of nature at physical loveliness. And in the direction or concentration of this effort, or, more properly, in its adaptation to the eyes which were to behold it on earth, he perceived that he should be employing the best means, laboring to the greatest advantage, in the fulfilment, not only of his own destiny as poet, but of the august purposes for which the Deity had implanted the poetic sentiment in man.

“Its adaptation to the eyes which were to behold it on earth.” In his explanation of this phraseology, Mr. Ellison did much toward solving what has always seemed to me an enigma: I mean the fact, which none but the ignorant dispute, that no such combination of scenery exists in nature as the painter of genius may produce. No such paradises are to be found in reality as have glowed on the canvas of Claude. In the most enchanting of natural landscapes, there will always be found a defect or an excess—many excesses and defects. While the component parts may defy, indi-

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vidually, the highest skill of the artist, the arrangement of these parts will always be susceptible of improvement. In short, no position can be attained on the wide surface of the natural earth, from which an artistical eye, looking steadily, will not find matter of offence in what is termed the "composition" of the landscape. And yet how unintelligible is this! In all other matters we are justly instructed to regard nature as supreme. With her details we shrink from competition. Who shall presume to imitate the colors of the tulip, or to improve the proportions of the lily of the valley? The criticism which says, of sculpture or portraiture, that here nature is to be exalted or idealized rather than imitated, is in error. No pictorial or sculptural combinations of points of human loveliness do more than approach the living and breathing beauty. In landscape alone is the principle of the critic true; and, having felt its truth here, it is but the headlong spirit of generalization which has led him to pronounce it true throughout all the domains of art. Having, I say, felt its truth here; for the feeling is no affectation or chimera. The mathematics afford no more absolute demonstrations than the sentiment of his art yields the artist. He not only believes, but positively knows, that such and such apparently arbitrary arrangements of matter constitute, and alone constitute, the true beauty. His reasons, however, have not yet been matured into expression. It remains

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for a more profound analysis than the world has yet seen, fully to investigate and express them. Nevertheless he is confirmed in his instinctive opinions by the voice of all his brethren. Let a "composition" be defective; let an emendation be wrought in its mere arrangement of form; let this emendation be submitted to every artist in the world; by each will its necessity be admitted. And even far more than this; in remedy of the defective composition, each insulated member of the fraternity would have suggested the identical emendation.

I repeat that in landscape arrangements alone is the physical nature susceptible of exaltation, and that, therefore, her susceptibility of improvement at this one point was a mystery I had been unable to solve. My own thoughts on the subject had rested in the idea that the primitive intention of nature would have so arranged the earth's surface as to have fulfilled at all points man's sense of perfection in the beautiful, the sublime, or the picturesque; but that this primitive intention had been frustrated by the known geological disturbances—disturbances of form and color-grouping, in the correction or allaying of which lies the soul of art. The force of this idea was much weakened, however, by the necessity which it involved of considering the disturbances abnormal and unadapted to any purpose. It was Ellison who suggested that they were prognostic of death. He thus explained: Admit

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the earthly immortality of man to have been the first intention. We have, then, the primitive arrangement of the earth's surface adapted to his blissful estate, as not existent but designed. The disturbances were the preparations for his subsequently conceived deathful condition.

"Now," said my friend, "what we regard as exaltation of the landscape may be really such, as respects only the moral or human point of view. Each alteration of the natural scenery may possibly effect a blemish in the picture, if we can suppose this picture viewed at large, in mass, from some point distant from the earth's surface, although not beyond the limits of its atmosphere. It is easily understood that what might improve a closely scrutinized detail may at the same time injure a general or more distinctly observed effect. There may be a class of beings, human once, but now invisible to humanity, to whom, from afar, our disorder may seem order, our unpicturesqueness picturesque; in a word, the earth-angels, for whose scrutiny more especially than our own, and for whose death-refined appreciation of the beautiful, may have been set in array by God the wide landscape-gardens of the hemispheres."

In the course of discussion, my friend quoted some passages from a writer on landscape-gardening, who has been supposed to have well treated his theme:

"There are properly but two styles of landscape-

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gardening, the natural and the artificial. One seeks to recall the original beauty of the country by adapting its means to the surrounding scenery; cultivating trees in harmony with the hills or plains of the neighboring land; detecting and bringing into practice those nice relations of size, proportion, and color which, hid from the common observer, are revealed everywhere to the experienced student of nature. The result of the natural style of gardening is seen rather in the absence of all defects and incongruities, in the prevalence of a healthy harmony and order, than in the creation of any special wonders or miracles. The artificial style has as many varieties as there are different tastes to gratify. It has a certain general relation to the various styles of building. There are the stately avenues and retirements of Versailles; Italian terraces; and a various mixed old English style, which bears some relation to the domestic Gothic or English Elizabethan architecture. Whatever may be said against the abuses of the artificial landscape-gardening, a mixture of pure art in the garden scene adds to it a great beauty. This is partly pleasing to the eye, by the show of order and design, and partly moral. A terrace, with an old moss-covered balustrade, calls up at once to the eye the fair forms that have passed there in other days. The slightest exhibition of art is an evidence of care and human interest."

"From what I have already observed," said Ellison,

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“you will understand that I reject the idea, here expressed, of recalling the original beauty of the country. The original beauty is never so great as that which may be introduced. Of course, everything depends on the selection of a spot with capabilities. What is said about detecting and bringing into practice nice relations of size, proportion, and color, is one of those mere vaguenesses of speech which serve to veil inaccuracy of thought. The phrase quoted may mean anything or nothing, and guides in no degree. That the true result of the natural style of gardening is seen rather in the absence of all defects and incongruities than in the creation of any special wonders or miracles is a proposition better suited to the grovelling apprehension of the herd than to the fervid dreams of the man of genius. The negative merit suggested appertains to that hobbling criticism which, in letters, would elevate Addison into apotheosis. In truth, while that virtue which consists in the mere avoidance of vice appeals directly to the understanding, and can thus be circumscribed in rule, the loftier virtue, which flames in creation, can be apprehended in its results alone. Rule applies but to the merits of denial, to the excellencies which refrain. Beyond these, the critical art can but suggest. We may be instructed to build a “Cato,” but we are in vain told how to conceive a Parthenon or an “Inferno.” The thing done, however, the wonder accomplished, and the capacity for

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apprehension becomes universal. The sophists of the negative school who, through inability to create, have scoffed at creation, are now found the loudest in applause. What, in its chrysalis condition of principle, affronted their demure reason, never fails, in its maturity of accomplishment, to extort admiration from their instinct of beauty.

“The author’s observations on the artificial style,” continued Ellison, “are less objectionable. A mixture of pure art in a garden scene adds to it a great beauty. This is just; as also is the reference to the sense of human interest. The principle expressed is incontrovertible, but there may be something beyond it. There may be an object in keeping with the principle, an object unattainable by the means ordinarily possessed by individuals, yet which, if attained, would lend a charm to the landscape-garden far surpassing that which a sense of merely human interest could bestow. A poet, having very unusual pecuniary resources, might, while retaining the necessary idea of art or culture, or, as our author expresses it, of interest, so imbue his designs at once with extent and novelty of beauty as to convey the sentiment of spiritual interference. It will be seen that, in bringing about such result, he secures all the advantages of interest or design, while relieving his work of the harshness or technicality of the worldly art. In the most rugged of wildernesses, in the most savage of the scenes of pure

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nature, there is apparent the art of a creator; yet this art is apparent to reflection only; in no respect has it the obvious force of a feeling. Now let us suppose this sense of the Almighty design to be one step depressed, to be brought into something like harmony or consistency with the sense of human art, to form an intermedium between the two: let us imagine, for example, a landscape whose combined vastness and definitiveness, whose united beauty, magnificence, and strangeness, shall convey the idea of care, or culture, or superintendence on the part of beings superior yet akin to humanity,—then the sentiment of interest is preserved, while the art interinvolved is made to assume the air of an intermediate or secondary nature; a nature which is not God, nor an emanation from God, but which still is nature in the sense of the handiwork of the angels that hover between man and God."

It was in devoting his enormous wealth to the embodiment of a vision such as this; in the free exercise in the open air ensured by the personal superintendence of his plans; in the unceasing object which these plans afforded; in the high spirituality of the object; in the contempt of ambition which it enabled him truly to feel; in the perennial springs with which it gratified, without possibility of satiating, that one master passion of his soul, the thirst for beauty; above all, it was in the sympathy of a woman, not unwomanly,

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whose loveliness and love enveloped his existence in the purple atmosphere of paradise, that Ellison thought to find, and found, exemption from the ordinary cares of humanity, with a far greater amount of positive happiness than ever glowed in the rapt day-dreams of De Staël.

I despair of conveying to the reader any distinct conception of the marvels which my friend did actually accomplish. I wish to describe, but am disheartened by the difficulty of description, and hesitate between detail and generality. Perhaps the better course will be to unite the two in their extremes.

Mr. Ellison's first step regarded, of course, the choice of a locality; and scarcely had he commenced thinking on this point when the luxuriant nature of the Pacific Islands arrested his attention. In fact, he had made up his mind for a voyage to the South Seas, when a night's reflection induced him to abandon the idea. "Were I misanthropic," he said, "such a *locale* would suit me. The thoroughness of its insulation and seclusion, and the difficulty of ingress and egress, would in such case be the charm of charms; but as yet I am not Timon. I wish the composure, but not the depression of solitude. There must remain with me a certain control over the extent and duration of my repose. There will be frequent hours in which I shall need, too, the sympathy of the poetic in what I have done. Let me seek, then, a spot not far from a

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populous city, whose vicinity, also, will best enable me to execute my plans."

In search of a suitable place, so situated, Ellison travelled for several years, and I was permitted to accompany him. A thousand spots with which I was enraptured he rejected without hesitation, for reasons which satisfied me, in the end, that he was right. We came at length to an elevated tableland of wonderful fertility and beauty, affording a panoramic prospect very little less in extent than that of *Ætna*, and, in Ellison's opinion as well as my own, surpassing the far-famed view from that mountain in all the true elements of the picturesque.

"I am aware," said the traveller, as he drew a sigh of deep delight after gazing on this scene, entranced, for nearly an hour, "I know that here, in my circumstances, nine tenths of the most fastidious of men would rest content. This panorama is indeed glorious, and I should rejoice in it but for the excess of its glory. The taste of all the architects I have ever known leads them, for the sake of 'prospect,' to put up buildings on hill-tops. The error is obvious. Grandeur in any of its moods, but especially in that of extent, startles, excites, and then fatigues, depresses. For the occasional scene nothing can be better, for the constant view nothing worse. And, in the constant view, the most objectionable phase of grandeur is that of extent; the worst phase of extent, that of distance.

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It is at war with the sentiment and with the sense of seclusion—the sentiment and sense which we seek to humor in ‘retiring to the country.’ In looking from the summit of a mountain we cannot help feeling abroad in the world. The heart-sick avoid distant prospects as a pestilence.”

It was not until toward the close of the fourth year of our search that we found a locality with which Ellison professed himself satisfied. It is, of course, needless to say where was the locality. The late death of my friend, in causing his domain to be thrown open to certain classes of visitors, has given to Arnheim a species of secret and subdued if not solemn celebrity, similar in kind, although infinitely superior in degree, to that which so long distinguished Fonthill.

The usual approach to Arnheim was by the river. The visitor left the city in the early morning. During the forenoon he passed between shores of a tranquil and domestic beauty, on which grazed innumerable sheep, their white fleeces spotting the vivid green of rolling meadows. By degrees the idea of cultivation subsided into that of merely pastoral care. This slowly became merged in a sense of retirement, this, again, in a consciousness of solitude. As the evening approached, the channel grew more narrow; the banks more and more precipitous; and these latter were clothed in richer, more profuse, and more sombre foliage. The water increased in transparency. The

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stream took a thousand turns, so that at no moment could its gleaming surface be seen for a greater distance than a furlong. At every instant the vessel seemed imprisoned within an enchanted circle, having insuperable and impenetrable walls of foliage, a roof of ultramarine satin, and no floor, the keel balancing itself with admirable nicety on that of a phantom bark which, by some accident having been turned upside down, floated in constant company with the substantial one for the purpose of sustaining it. The channel now became a gorge, although the term is somewhat inapplicable, and I employ it merely because the language has no word which better represents the most striking, not the most distinctive, feature of the scene. The character of gorge was maintained only in the height and parallelism of the shores; it was lost altogether in their other traits. The walls of the ravine, through which the clear water still tranquilly flowed, arose to an elevation of a hundred, and, occasionally, of a hundred and fifty feet, and inclined so much toward each other as, in a great measure, to shut out the light of day; while the long, plume-like moss which depended densely from the intertwining shrubberies overhead gave the whole chasm an air of funereal gloom. The windings became more frequent and intricate, and seemed often as if returning in upon themselves, so that the voyager had long lost all idea of direction. He was, moreover, enwrap in an exquisite sense of

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the strange. The thought of nature still remained, but her character seemed to have undergone modification, there was a weird symmetry, a thrilling uniformity, a wizard propriety in these her works. Not a dead branch, not a withered leaf, not a stray pebble, not a patch of the brown earth was anywhere visible. The crystal water welled up against the clean granite, or the unblemished moss, with a sharpness of outline that delighted while it bewildered the eye.

Having threaded the mazes of this channel for some hours, the gloom deepening every moment, a sharp and unexpected turn of the vessel brought it suddenly, as if dropped from heaven, into a circular basin of very considerable extent when compared with the width of the gorge. It was about two hundred yards in diameter, and girt in at all points but one—that immediately fronting the vessel as it entered—by hills equal in general height to the walls of the chasm, although of a thoroughly different character. Their sides sloped from the water's edge at an angle of some forty-five degrees, and they were clothed from base to summit, not a perceptible point escaping, in a drapery of the most gorgeous flower-blossoms, scarcely a green leaf being visible among the sea of odorous and fluctuating color. This basin was of great depth, but so transparent was the water that the bottom, which seemed to consist of a thick mass of small round alabaster pebbles, was distinctly visible by glimpses, that is to

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say, whenever the eye could permit itself not to see, far down in the inverted heaven, the duplicate blooming of the hills. On these latter there were no trees nor even shrubs of any size. The impressions wrought on the observer were those of richness, warmth, color, quietude, uniformity, softness, delicacy, daintiness, voluptuousness, and a miraculous extremeness of culture that suggested dreams of a new race of fairies, laborious, tasteful, magnificent, and fastidious; but as the eye traced upward the myriad-tinted slope, from its sharp junction with the water to its vague termination amid the folds of overhanging cloud, it became, indeed, difficult not to fancy a panoramic cataract of rubies, sapphires, opals, and golden onyxes, rolling silently out of the sky.

The visitor, shooting suddenly into this bay from out the gloom of the ravine, is delighted but astounded by the full orb of the declining sun, which he had supposed to be already far below the horizon, but which now confronts him, and forms the sole termination of an otherwise limitless vista seen through another chasm-like rift in the hills.

But here the voyager quits the vessel which has borne him so far, and descends into a light canoe of ivory, stained with arabesque devices in vivid scarlet, both within and without. The poop and beak of this boat arise high above the water, with sharp points, so that the general form is that of an irregular crescent.

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It lies on the surface of the bay with the proud grace of a swan. On its ermined floor reposes a single feathery paddle of satinwood; but no oarsman or attendant is to be seen. The guest is bidden to be of good cheer, that the fates will take care of him. The larger vessel disappears, and he is left alone in the canoe, which lies apparently motionless in the middle of the lake. While he considers what course to pursue, however, he becomes aware of a gentle movement in the fairy bark. It slowly swings itself around until its prow points toward the sun. It advances with a gentle but gradually accelerated velocity, while the slight ripples it creates seem to break about the ivory side in divinest melody; seem to offer the only possible explanation of the soothing yet melancholy music for whose unseen origin the bewildered voyager looks around him in vain.

The canoe steadily proceeds, and the rocky gate of the vista is approached, so that its depths can be more distinctly seen. To the right arises a chain of lofty hills, rudely and luxuriantly wooded. It is observed, however, that the trait of exquisite cleanness where the bank dips into the water, still prevails. There is not one token of the usual river debris. To the left the character of the scene is softer and more obviously artificial. Here the bank slopes upward from the stream in a very gentle ascent, forming a broad sward of grass of a texture resembling nothing so much as

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velvet, and of a brilliancy of green which would bear comparison with the tint of the purest emerald. This plateau varies in width from ten to three hundred yards, reaching from the river-bank to a wall, fifty feet high, which extends, in an infinity of curves, but following the general direction of the river, until lost in the distance to the westward. This wall is of one continuous rock, and has been formed by cutting perpendicularly the once rugged precipice of the stream's southern bank; but no trace of the labor has been suffered to remain. The chiselled stone has the hue of ages, and is profusely overhung and overspread with the ivy, the coral honeysuckle, the eglantine, and the clematis. The uniformity of the top and bottom lines of the wall is fully relieved by occasional trees of gigantic height, growing singly or in small groups, both along the plateau and in the domain behind the wall, but in close proximity to it; so that frequent limbs (of the black walnut especially) reach over and dip their pendent extremities into the water. Farther back within the domain, the vision is impeded by an impenetrable screen of foliage.

These things are observed during the canoe's gradual approach to what I have called the gate of the vista. On drawing nearer to this, however, its chasm-like appearance vanishes; a new outlet from the bay is discovered to the left, in which direction the wall is also seen to sweep, still following the general course of

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the stream. Down this new opening the eye cannot penetrate very far; for the stream, accompanied by the wall, still bends to the left, until both are swallowed up by the leaves.

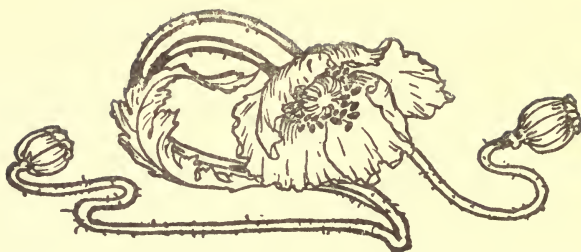
The boat, nevertheless, glides magically into the winding channel; and here the shore opposite the wall is found to resemble that opposite the wall in the straight vista. Lofty hills, rising occasionally into mountains, and covered with vegetation in wild luxuriance, still shut in the scene.

Floating gently onward, but with a velocity slightly augmented, the voyager, after many short turns, finds his progress apparently barred by a gigantic gate, or rather door, of burnished gold, elaborately carved and fretted, and reflecting the direct rays of the now fast-sinking sun with an effulgence that seems to wreath the whole surrounding forest in flames. This gate is inserted in the lofty wall, which here appears to cross the river at right angles. In a few moments, however, it is seen that the main body of the water still sweeps in a gentle and extensive curve to the left, the wall following it as before, while a stream of considerable volume, diverging from the principal one, makes its way, with a slight ripple, under the door, and is thus hidden from sight. The canoe falls into the lesser channel and approaches the gate. Its ponderous wings are slowly and musically expanded. The boat glides between them, and commences a rapid descent

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into a vast amphitheatre entirely begirt with purple mountains, whose bases are laved by a gleaming river throughout the full extent of their circuit. Meantime the whole paradise of Arnheim bursts upon the view. There is a gush of entrancing melody; there is an oppressive sense of strange, sweet odor; there is a dream-like intermingling to the eye of tall, slender Eastern trees, bosky shrubberies, flocks of golden and crimson birds, lily-fringed lakes, meadows of violets, tulips, poppies, hyacinths, and tuberoses, long, inter-tangled lines of silver streamlets, and, upspringing confusedly from amid all, a mass of semi-Gothic, semi-Saracenic architecture, sustaining itself by miracle in mid-air; glittering in the red sunlight with a hundred oriels, minarets, and pinnacles; and seeming the phantom handiwork, conjointly, of the sylphs, of the fairies, of the genii, and of the gnomes.





Hop-Frog



NEVER knew any one so keenly alive to a joke as the king was. He seemed to live only for joking. To tell a good story of the joke kind, and to tell it well, was the surest road to his favor. Thus it happened that his seven ministers were all noted for their accomplishments as jokers. They all took after the king, too, in being large, corpulent, oily men, as well as inimitable jokers. Whether people grow fat by joking, or whether there is something in fat itself which predisposes to a joke, I have never been quite able to determine; but certain it is that a lean joker is a *rara avis in terris*.

About the refinements, or, as he has called them, the "ghosts" of wit, the king troubled himself very little. He had an especial admiration for breadth in a jest, and would often put up with length for the sake of it. Over-niceties wearied him. He would have preferred Rabelais's *Gargantua* to the *Zadig* of Vol-

Hop-Frog

taire; and, upon the whole, practical jokes suited his taste far better than verbal ones.

At the date of my narrative, professing jesters had not gone altogether out of fashion at court. Several of the great continental "powers" still retained their "fools," who wore motley, with caps and bells, and who were expected to be always ready with sharp witticisms, at a moment's notice, in consideration of the crumbs that fell from the royal table.

Our king, as a matter of course, retained his "fool." The fact is, he required something in the way of folly, if only to counterbalance the heavy wisdom of the seven wise men who were his ministers, not to mention himself.

His fool, or professional jester, was not only a fool, however. His value was trebled in the eyes of the king by the fact of his being also a dwarf and a cripple. Dwarfs were as common at court, in those days, as fools; and many monarchs would have found it difficult to get through their days (days are rather longer at court than elsewhere) without both a jester to laugh with, and a dwarf to laugh at. But, as I have already observed, your jesters, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, are fat, round, and unwieldy, so that it was no small source of self-gratulation with our king that, in Hop-Frog (this was the fool's name) he possessed a triplicate treasure in one person.

I believe the name "Hop-Frog" was not that given

Hop-Frog

to the dwarf by his sponsors at baptism, but it was conferred upon him, by general consent of the seven ministers, on account of his inability to walk as other men do. In fact, Hop-Frog could only get along by a sort of interjectional gait, something between a leap and a wriggle, a movement that afforded illimitable amusement, and of course consolation, to the king, for, notwithstanding the protuberance of his stomach and a constitutional swelling of the head, the king, by his whole court, was accounted a capital figure.

But although Hop-Frog, through the distortion of his legs, could move only with great pain and difficulty along a road or floor, the prodigious muscular power which nature seemed to have bestowed upon his arms, by way of compensation for deficiency in the lower limbs, enabled him to perform many feats of wonderful dexterity where trees or ropes were in question, or anything else to climb. At such exercises he certainly much more resembled a squirrel, or a small monkey, than a frog.

I am not able to say with precision from what country Hop-Frog originally came. It was from some barbarous region, however, that no person ever heard of, a vast distance from the court of our king. Hop-Frog and a young girl very little less dwarfish than himself, although of exquisite proportions and a marvellous dancer, had been forcibly carried off from their respective homes in adjoining provinces and sent

Hop-Frog

as presents to the king by one of his ever-victorious generals.

Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that a close intimacy arose between the two little captives. Indeed, they soon became sworn friends. Hop-Frog, who, although he made a great deal of sport, was by no means popular, had it not in his power to render Trippetta many services; but she, on account of her grace and exquisite beauty, although a dwarf, was universally admired and petted; so she possessed much influence; and never failed to use it, whenever she could, for the benefit of Hop-Frog.

On some grand state occasion,—I forget what,—the king determined to have a masquerade; and whenever a masquerade or anything of that kind occurred at our court, then the talents both of Hop-Frog and Trippetta were sure to be called into play. Hop-Frog, in especial, was so inventive in the way of getting up pageants, suggesting novel characters, and arranging costume, for masked balls, that nothing could be done, it seems, without his assistance.

The night appointed for the fête had arrived. A gorgeous hall had been fitted up, under Trippetta's eye, with every kind of device which could possibly give *éclat* to a masquerade. The whole court was in a fever of expectation. As for costumes and characters, it might well be supposed that everybody had come to a decision on such points. Many had made up their

Hop-Frog

minds as to what rôles they should assume a week or even a month in advance; and, in fact, there was not a particle of indecision anywhere, except in the case of the king and his seven ministers. Why they hesitated I never could tell, unless they did it by way of a joke. More probably they found it difficult, on account of being so fat, to make up their minds. At all events, time flew; and, as a last resort, they sent for Trippetta and Hop-Frog.

When the two little friends obeyed the summons of the king, they found him sitting at his wine with the seven members of his cabinet council; but the monarch appeared to be in a very ill-humor. He knew that Hop-Frog was not fond of wine; for it excited the poor cripple almost to madness; and madness is no comfortable feeling. But the king loved his practical jokes and took pleasure in forcing Hop-Frog to drink and, as the king called it, "to be merry."

"Come here, Hop-Frog," said he, as the jester and his friend entered the room; "swallow this bumper to the health of your absent friends [here Hop-Frog sighed], and then let us have the benefit of your invention. We want characters,—characters, man, something novel, out of the way. We are wearied with this everlasting sameness. Come, drink! the wine will brighten your wits."

Hop-Frog endeavored, as usual, to get up a jest in reply to these advances from the king; but the effort

Hop-Frog

was too much. It happened to be the poor dwarf's birthday, and the command to drink to his "absent friends" forced the tears to his eyes. Many large, bitter drops fell into the goblet as he took it humbly from the hand of the tyrant.

"Ah! ha! ha! ha!" roared the latter, as the dwarf reluctantly drained the beaker. "See what a glass of good wine can do! Why, your eyes are shining already!"

Poor fellow! his large eyes gleamed rather than shone; for the effect of wine on his excitable brain was not more powerful than instantaneous. He placed the goblet nervously on the table and looked round upon the company with a half-insane stare. They all seemed highly amused at the success of the king's "joke."

"And now to business," said the prime minister, a very fat man.

"Yes," said the king; "come, Hop-Frog, lend us your assistance. Characters, my fine fellow; we stand in need of characters, all of us—ha! ha! ha!" and as this was seriously meant for a joke, his laugh was chorused by the seven.

Hop-Frog also laughed, although feebly and somewhat vacantly.

"Come, come," said the king, impatiently, "have you nothing to suggest?"

"I am endeavoring to think of something novel,"

Hop-Frog

replied the dwarf, abstractedly, for he was quite bewildered by the wine.

“ Endeavoring! ” cried the tyrant, fiercely; “ what do you mean by that? Ah, I perceive. You are sulky and want more wine. Here, drink this! ” and he poured out another goblet full and offered it to the cripple, who merely gazed at it, gasping for breath.

“ Drink, I say! ” shouted the monster, “ or, by the fiends——”

The dwarf hesitated. The king grew purple with rage. The courtiers smirked. Trippetta, pale as a corpse, advanced to the monarch's seat, and, falling on her knees before him, implored him to spare her friend.

The tyrant regarded her for some moments in evident wonder at her audacity. He seemed quite at a loss what to do or say—how most becomingly to express his indignation. At last, without uttering a syllable, he pushed her violently from him, and threw the contents of the brimming goblet in her face.

The poor girl got up as best she could, and, not daring even to sigh, resumed her position at the foot of the table.

There was a dead silence for about half a minute, during which the falling of a leaf or of a feather might have been heard. It was interrupted by a low but harsh and protracted grating sound, which seemed to come at once from every corner of the room.

Hop-Frog

“What—what—what are you making that noise for?” demanded the king, turning furiously to the dwarf.

The latter seemed to have recovered, in great measure, from his intoxication, and, looking fixedly but quietly into the tyrant’s face, merely ejaculated:

“I—I? How could it have been me?”

“The sound appeared to come from without,” observed one of the courtiers. “I fancy it was the parrot at the window, whetting his bill upon his cage-wires.”

“True,” replied the monarch, as if much relieved by the suggestion; “but, on the honor of a knight, I could have sworn that it was the gritting of this vagabond’s teeth.”

Hereupon the dwarf laughed (the king was too confirmed a joker to object to any one’s laughing), and displayed a set of large, powerful, and very repulsive teeth. Moreover, he avowed his perfect willingness to swallow as much wine as desired. The monarch was pacified; and, having drained another bumper with no very perceptible ill effect, Hop-Frog entered at once, and with spirit, into the plans for the masquerade.

“I cannot tell what was the association of idea,” observed he, very tranquilly, and as if he had never tasted wine in his life, “but just after your majesty had struck the girl and thrown the wine in her face—just after your majesty had done this, and while the parrot was making that odd noise outside the window,

Hop-Frog

there came into my mind a capital diversion, one of my own country frolics, often enacted among us at our masquerades; but here it will be new altogether. Unfortunately, however, it requires a company of eight persons, and——”

“Here we are!” cried the king, laughing at his acute discovery of the coincidence; “eight to a fraction—I and my seven ministers. Come! what is the diversion?”

“We call it,” replied the cripple, “the Eight Chained Ourang-Outangs, and it really is excellent sport if well enacted.”

“We will enact it,” remarked the king, drawing himself up and lowering his eyelids.

“The beauty of the game,” continued Hop-Frog, “lies in the fright it occasions among the women.”

“Capital!” roared in chorus the monarch and his ministry.

“I will equip you as ourang-outangs,” proceeded the dwarf; “leave all that to me. The resemblance shall be so striking that the company of masqueraders will take you for real beasts, and, of course, they will be as much terrified as astonished.”

“Oh, this is exquisite!” exclaimed the king. “Hop-Frog, I will make a man of you!”

“The chains are for the purpose of increasing the confusion by their jangling. You are supposed to have escaped, *en masse*, from your keepers. Your

Hop-Frog

majesty cannot conceive the effect produced, at a masquerade, by eight chained ourang-outangs, imagined to be real ones by most of the company, and rushing in with savage cries, among the crowd of delicately and gorgeously habited men and women. The contrast is inimitable."

"It must be," said the king; and the council arose hurriedly, as it was growing late, to put in execution the scheme of Hop-Frog.

His mode of equipping the party as ourang-outangs was very simple, but effective enough for his purposes. The animals in question had, at the epoch of my story, very rarely been seen in any part of the civilized world; and as the imitations made by the dwarf were sufficiently beast-like and more than sufficiently hideous, their truthfulness to nature was thus thought to be secured.

The king and his ministers were first encased in tight-fitting stockinet shirts and drawers. They were then saturated with tar. At this stage of the process, some one of the party suggested feathers; but the suggestion was at once overruled by the dwarf, who soon convinced the eight, by ocular demonstration, that the hair of such a brute as the ourang-outang was much more efficiently represented by flax. A thick coating of the latter was accordingly plastered upon the coating of tar. A long chain was now procured. First, it was passed about the waist of the

Hop-Frog

king, and tied; then about another of the party, and also tied; then about all successively, in the same manner. When this chaining arrangement was complete, and the party stood as far apart from each other as possible, they formed a circle; and to make all things appear natural, Hop-Frog passed the residue of the chain, in two diameters, at right angles, across the circle, after the fashion adopted, at the present day, by those who capture chimpanzees, or other large apes, in Borneo.

The grand saloon in which the masquerade was to take place was a circular room, very lofty, and receiving the light of the sun only through a single window at top. At night, the season for which the apartment was especially designed, it was illuminated principally by a large chandelier, depending by a chain from the centre of the skylight, and lowered, or elevated, by means of a counterbalance as usual; but, in order not to look unsightly, this latter passed outside the cupola and over the roof.

The arrangements of the room had been left to Trippetta's superintendence; but in some particulars, it seems, she had been guided by the calmer judgment of her friend the dwarf. At his suggestion it was that, on this occasion, the chandelier was removed. Its waxen drippings, which in weather so warm it was quite impossible to prevent, would have been seriously detrimental to the rich dresses of the guests, who, on

Hop-Frog

account of the crowded state of the saloon, could not all be expected to keep from out its centre, that is to say, from under the chandelier. Additional sconces were set in various parts of the hall, out of the way; and a flambeau, emitting sweet odor, was placed in the right hand of each of the caryatides that stood against the wall, some fifty or sixty altogether.

The eight ourang-outangs, taking Hop-Frog's advice, waited patiently until midnight, when the room was thoroughly filled with masqueraders, before making their appearance. No sooner had the clock ceased striking, however, than they rushed, or rather rolled in, all together, for the impediments of their chains caused most of the party to fall, and all to stumble as they entered.

The excitement among the masqueraders was prodigious and filled the heart of the king with glee. As had been anticipated, there were not a few of the guests who supposed the ferocious-looking creatures to be beasts of some kind in reality, if not precisely ourang-outangs. Many of the women swooned with affright; and had not the king taken the precaution to exclude all weapons from the saloon, his party might soon have expiated their frolic in their blood. As it was, a general rush was made for the doors; but the king had ordered them to be locked immediately upon his entrance; and, at the dwarf's suggestion, the keys had been deposited with him.

Hop-Frog

While the tumult was at its height, and each masquerader attentive only to his own safety (for, in fact, there was much real danger from the pressure of the excited crowd), the chain by which the chandelier ordinarily hung, and which had been drawn up on its removal, might have been seen very gradually to descend, until its hooked extremity came within three feet of the floor.

Soon after this the king and his seven friends, having reeled about the hall in all directions, found themselves at length in its centre, and, of course, in immediate contact with the chain. While they were thus situated, the dwarf, who had followed noiselessly at their heels, inciting them to keep up the commotion, took hold of their own chain at the intersection of the two portions which crossed the circle diametrically and at right angles. Here, with the rapidity of thought, he inserted the hook from which the chandelier had been wont to depend; and in an instant, by some unseen agency, the chandelier-chain was drawn so far upward as to take the hook out of reach, and, as an inevitable consequence, to drag the ourang-outangs together in close connection and face to face.

The masqueraders by this time had recovered, in some measure, from their alarm; and, beginning to regard the whole matter as a well-contrived pleasantry, set up a loud shout of laughter at the predicament of the apes.

Hop-Frog

“Leave them to me!” now screamed Hop-Frog, his shrill voice making itself easily heard through all the din. “Leave them to me. I fancy I know them. If I can only get a good look at them I can soon tell who they are.”

Here, scrambling over the heads of the crowd, he managed to get to the wall; when, seizing a flambeau from one of the caryatides, he returned, as he went, to the centre of the room, leaped with the agility of a monkey upon the king’s head, and thence clambered a few feet up the chain, holding down the torch to examine the group of ourang-outangs, and still screaming, “I shall soon find out who they are!”

And now, while the whole assembly, the apes included, were convulsed with laughter, the jester suddenly uttered a shrill whistle, when the chain flew violently up for about thirty feet, dragging with it the dismayed and struggling ourang-outangs, and leaving them suspended in mid-air between the skylight and the floor. Hop-Frog, clinging to the chain as it rose, still maintained his relative position in respect to the eight maskers, and still, as if nothing were the matter, continued to thrust his torch down toward them, as though endeavoring to discover who they were.

So thoroughly astonished was the whole company at this ascent, that a dead silence of about a minute’s duration ensued. It was broken by just such a low, harsh, grating sound, as had before attracted the atten-

Hop-Frog

tion of the king and his councillors when the former threw the wine in the face of Trippetta. But, on the present occasion, there could be no question as to whence the sound issued. It came from the fang-like teeth of the dwarf, who ground them and gnashed them as he foamed at the mouth, and glared, with an expression of maniacal rage, into the upturned countenances of the king and his seven companions.

“ Ah, ha ! ” said at length the infuriated jester. “ Ah, ha ! I begin to see who these people are, now ! ” Here, pretending to scrutinize the king more closely, he held the flambeau to the flaxen coat which enveloped him, and which instantly burst into a sheet of vivid flame. In less than half a minute the whole eight ourang-outangs were blazing fiercely, amid the shrieks of the multitude who gazed at them from below, horror-stricken, and without the power to render them the slightest assistance.

At length the flames, suddenly increasing in virulence, forced the jester to climb higher up the chain, to be out of their reach ; and, as he made this movement, the crowd again sank, for a brief instant, into silence. The dwarf seized his opportunity and once more spoke :

“ I now see distinctly,” he said, “ what manner of people these maskers are. They are a great king and his seven privy-councillors,—a king who does not scruple to strike a defenceless girl, and his seven

Hop-Frog

councillors who abet him in the outrage. As for myself, I am simply Hop-Frog the jester, and this is my last jest."

Owing to the high combustibility of both the flax and the tar to which it adhered, the dwarf had scarcely made an end of his brief speech before the work of vengeance was complete. The eight corpses swung in their chains, a fetid, blackened, hideous, and indistinguishable mass. The cripple hurled his torch at them, clambered leisurely to the ceiling, and disappeared through the skylight.

It is supposed that Trippetta, stationed on the roof of the saloon, had been the accomplice of her friend in his fiery revenge, and that, together, they effected their escape to their own country, for neither was seen again.





Mellonta Tauta

ON BOARD BALLOON "SKYLARK,"

April 1, 2848.

NOW, my dear friend—now, for your sins, you are to suffer the infliction of a long gossiping letter. I tell you distinctly that I am going to punish you for all your impertinences by being as tedious, as discursive, as incoherent, and as unsatisfactory as possible. Besides, here I am, cooped up in a dirty balloon, with some one or two hundred of the *canaille*, all bound on a pleasure excursion (what a funny idea some people have of pleasure!), and I have no prospect of touching *terra firma* for a month at least. Nobody to talk to. Nothing to do. When one has nothing to do, then is the time to correspond with one's friends. You perceive, then, why it is that I write you this letter; it is on account of my ennui and your sins.

Get ready your spectacles and make up your mind to be annoyed. I mean to write at you every day during this odious voyage.

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Heigho! when will any invention visit the human pericranium? Are we forever to be doomed to the thousand inconveniences of the balloon? Will nobody contrive a more expeditious mode of progress? The jog-trot movement, to my thinking, is little less than positive torture. Upon my word we have not made more than a hundred miles the hour since leaving home! The very birds beat us—at least some of them. I assure you that I do not exaggerate at all. Our motion, no doubt, seems slower than it actually is; this on account of our having no objects about us by which to estimate our velocity, and on account of our going with the wind. To be sure, whenever we meet a balloon we have a chance of perceiving our rate, and then, I admit, things do not appear so very bad. Accustomed as I am to this mode of travelling, I cannot get over a kind of giddiness whenever a balloon passes us in a current directly overhead. It always seems to me like an immense bird of prey about to pounce upon us and carry us off in its claws. One went over us this morning about sunrise, and so nearly overhead that its drag-rope actually brushed the network suspending our car and caused us very serious apprehension. Our captain said that if the material of the bag had been the trumpery varnished “silk” of five hundred or a thousand years ago, we should inevitably have been damaged. This silk, as he explained to me, was a fabric composed of the entrails of a species of

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earthworm. The worm was carefully fed on mulberries (a kind of fruit resembling a watermelon) and, when sufficiently fat, was crushed in a mill. The paste thus arising was called papyrus in its primary state, and went through a variety of processes until it finally became "silk." Singular to relate, it was once much admired as an article of female dress! Balloons were also very generally constructed from it. A better kind of material, it appears, was subsequently found in the down surrounding the seed-vessels of a plant vulgarly called euphorbium, and at that time botanically termed milkweed. This latter kind of silk was designated as silk-buckingham, on account of its superior durability, and was usually prepared for use by being varnished with a solution of gum caoutchouc, a substance which in some respects must have resembled the gutta-percha now in common use. This caoutchouc was occasionally called India rubber or rubber of twist, and was no doubt one of the numerous fungi. Never tell me again that I am not at heart an antiquarian.

Talking of drag-ropes—our own, it seems, has this moment knocked a man overboard from one of the small magnetic propellers that swarm in ocean below us, a boat of about six thousand tons, and, from all accounts, shamefully crowded. These diminutive barques should be prohibited from carrying more than a definite number of passengers. The man, of course,

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was not permitted to get on board again, and was soon out of sight, he and his life-preserver. I rejoice, my dear friend, that we live in an age so enlightened that no such thing as an individual is supposed to exist. It is the mass for which the true humanity cares. By the by, talking of humanity, do you know that our immortal Wiggins is not so original in his views of the social condition and so forth, as his contemporaries are inclined to suppose? Pundit assures me that the same ideas were put nearly in the same way, about a thousand years ago, by an Irish philosopher called Furrier, on account of his keeping a retail shop for cat peltries and other furs. Pundit knows, you know; there can be no mistake about it. How very wonderfully do we see verified every day the profound observation of the Hindoo Aries Tottle, as quoted by Pundit: "Thus must we say that, not once or twice, or a few times, but with almost infinite repetitions, the same opinions come round in a circle among men."

April 2d.—Spoke to-day the magnetic cutter in charge of the middle section of floating telegraph wires. I learn that when this species of telegraph was first put into operation by Horse, it was considered quite impossible to convey the wires oversea, but now we are at a loss to comprehend where the difficulty lay! So wags the world. *Tempora mutantur*—excuse me for quoting the Etruscan. What would we do without the Atalantic telegraph? (Pundit says Atlantic was

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the ancient adjective.) We lay to, a few minutes to ask the cutter some questions, and learned, among other glorious news, that civil war is raging in Africa, while the plague is doing its good work beautifully both in Yurope and Ayesher. Is it not truly remarkable that, before the magnificent light shed upon philosophy by humanity, the world was accustomed to regard war and pestilence as calamities? Do you know that prayers were actually offered up in the ancient temples to the end that these evils (!) might not be visited upon mankind? Is it not really difficult to comprehend upon what principle of interest our forefathers acted? Were they so blind as not to perceive that the destruction of a myriad of individuals is only so much positive advantage to the mass!

April 3d.—It is really a very fine amusement to ascend the rope-ladder leading to the summit of the balloon-bag, and thence survey the surrounding world. From the car below you know the prospect is not so comprehensive—you can see little vertically. But seated here, where I write this, in the luxuriously-cushioned open piazza of the summit, one can see everything that is going on in all directions. Just now there is quite a crowd of balloons in sight, and they present a very animated appearance, while the air is resonant with the hum of so many millions of human voices. I have heard it asserted that when Yellow, or (Pundit will have it) Violet, who is supposed to have

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been the first aeronaut, maintained the practicability of traversing the atmosphere in all directions, by merely ascending or descending until a favorable current was attained, he was scarcely hearkened to at all by his contemporaries, who looked upon him as merely an ingenious sort of madman, because the philosophers (?) of the day declared the thing impossible. Really, now, it does seem to me quite unaccountable how anything so obviously feasible could have escaped the sagacity of the ancient savants. But in all ages the great obstacles to advancement in art have been opposed by the so-called men of science. To be sure, our men of science are not quite so bigoted as those of old:—oh, I have something so queer to tell you on this topic. Do you know that it is not more than a thousand years ago since the metaphysicians consented to relieve the people of the singular fancy that there existed but two possible roads for the attainment of truth! Believe it if you can! It appears that long, long ago, in the night of Time, there lived a Turkish philosopher, or Hindoo possibly, called Aries Tottle. This person introduced, or at all events propagated what was termed the deductive or a *priori* mode of investigation. He started with what he maintained to be axioms or “self-evident truths,” and thence proceeded “logically” to results. His greatest disciples were one Neuclyd and one Cant. Well, Aries Tottle flourished supreme until advent of one Hog, surnamed

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the "Ettrick Shepherd," who preached an entirely different system, which he called the *a posteriori* or *inductive*. His plan referred altogether to sensation. He proceeded by observing, analyzing, and classifying facts—*instantiæ naturæ*, as they were affectedly called—into general laws. Aries Tottle's mode, in a word, was based on *noumena*; Hog's, on *phenomena*. Well, so great was the admiration excited by this latter system that, at its first introduction, Aries Tottle fell into disrepute; but finally he recovered ground and was permitted to divide the realm of truth with his more modern rival. The savants now maintained that the Aristotelian and Baconian roads were the sole possible avenues to knowledge. "Baconian," you must know, was an adjective invented as equivalent to Hog-ian and more euphonious and dignified.

Now, my dear friend, I do assure you, most positively, that I represent this matter fairly, on the soundest authority; and you can easily understand how a notion so absurd on its very face must have operated to retard the progress of all true knowledge, which makes its advances almost invariably by intuitive bounds. The ancient idea confined investigations to crawling; and for hundreds of years so great was the infatuation about Hog especially, that a virtual end was put to all thinking, properly so called. No man dared utter a truth to which he felt himself indebted to his soul alone. It mattered not whether the

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truth was even demonstrably a truth, for the bullet-headed savants of the time regarded only the road by which he had attained it. They would not even look at the end. "Let us see the means," they cried, "the means!" If, upon investigation of the means, it was found to come under neither the category Aries, that is to say, Ram, nor under the category Hog, why then the savants went no farther, but pronounced the "theorist" a fool, and would have nothing to do with him or his truth.

Now, it cannot be maintained, even, that by the crawling system the greatest amount of truth would be attained in any long series of ages, for the repression of imagination was an evil not to be compensated for by any superior certainty in the ancient modes of investigation. The error of these Jurmains, these Vrinch, these Inglitch, and these Amriccans (the latter, by the way, were our own immediate progenitors), was an error quite analogous with that of the wiseacre who fancies that he must necessarily see an object the better the more closely he holds it to his eyes. These people blinded themselves by details. When they proceeded Hoggishly, their "facts" were by no means always facts; a matter of little consequence, had it not been for assuming that they were facts and must be facts because they appeared to be such. When they proceeded on the path of the Ram, their course was scarcely as straight as a ram's horn, for they never had

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an axiom which was an axiom at all. They must have been very blind not to see this, even in their own day; for even in their own day many of the long "established" axioms had been rejected. For example, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; "a body cannot act where it is not;" "there cannot exist antipodes;" "darkness cannot come out of light"—all these and a dozen other similar propositions, formerly admitted without hesitation as axioms, were, even at the period of which I speak, seen to be untenable. How absurd in these people, then, to persist in putting faith in "axioms" as immutable bases of truth! But even out of the mouths of their soundest reasoners it is easy to demonstrate the futility, the impalpability of their axioms in general. Who was the soundest of their logicians? Let me see! I will go and ask Pundit and be back in a minute. . . . Ah, here we have it! Here is a book written nearly a thousand years ago and lately translated from the Inglitch, which, by the way, appears to have been the rudiment of the Amriccan. Pundit says it is decidedly the cleverest ancient work on its topic, logic. The author, who was much thought of in his day, was one Miller, or Mill; and we find it recorded of him, as a point of some importance, that he had a mill-horse called Bentham. But let us glance at the treatise!

Ah!—"Ability or inability to conceive," says Mr. Mill, very properly, "is in no case to be received as a

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criterion of axiomatic truth." What modern in his senses would ever think of disputing this truism? The only wonder with us must be, how it happened that Mr. Mill conceived it necessary even to hint at anything so obvious. So far good; but let us turn over another paper. What have we here?—"Contradictories cannot both be true, that is, cannot coexist in nature." Here Mr. Mill means, for example, that a tree must be either a tree or not a tree, that it cannot be at the same time a tree and not a tree. Very well; but I ask him why. His reply is this, and never pretends to be anything else than this—"Because it is impossible to conceive that contradictories can both be true." But this is no answer at all, by his own showing; for has he not just admitted as a truism that "ability or inability to conceive is in no case to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth?"

Now, I do not complain of these ancients so much because their logic is, by their own showing, utterly baseless, worthless and fantastic altogether, as because of their pompous and imbecile proscription of all other roads of truth, of all other means for its attainment than the two preposterous paths—the one of creeping and the one of crawling—to which they have dared to confine the soul that loves nothing so well as to soar.

By the by, my dear friend, do you not think it would have puzzled these ancient dogmaticians to have deter-

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mined by which of their two roads it was that the most important and most sublime of all their truths was, in effect, attained? I mean the truth of gravitation. Newton owed it to Kepler. Kepler admitted that his three laws were guessed at,—these three laws of all laws which led the great Inglitch mathematician to his principle, the basis of all physical principle, to go behind which we must enter the kingdom of metaphysics. Kepler guessed, that is to say, imagined. He was essentially a “theorist,” that word now of so much sanctity, formerly an epithet of contempt. Would it not have puzzled these old moles, too, to have explained by which of the two “roads” a cryptographer unriddles a cryptograph of more than usual secrecy, or by which of the two roads Champollion directed mankind to those enduring and almost innumerable truths which resulted from his deciphering the hieroglyphics?

One more word on this topic and I will be done boring you. Is it not passing strange that, with their eternal prattling about roads to truth, these bigoted people missed what we now so clearly perceive to be the great highway—that of consistency? Does it not seem singular how they should have failed to deduce from the works of God the vital fact that a perfect consistency must be an absolute truth! How plain has been our progress since the late announcement of this proposition! Investigation has been

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taken out of the hands of the ground-moles and given, as a task, to the true and only true thinkers, the men of ardent imagination. These latter theorize. Can you not fancy the shout of scorn with which my word would be received by our progenitors were it possible for them to be now looking over my shoulder? These men, I say, theorize; and their theories are simply corrected, reduced, systematized—cleared, little by little, of their dross of inconsistency—until, finally, a perfect consistency stands apparent which even the most stolid admit, because it is a consistency, to be an absolute and an unquestionable truth.

April 4th.—The new gas is doing wonders, in conjunction with the new improvement with gutta percha. How very safe, commodious, manageable, and in every respect convenient are our modern balloons! Here is an immense one approaching us at the rate of at least a hundred and fifty miles an hour. It seems to be crowded with people (perhaps there are three or four hundred passengers), and yet it soars to an elevation of nearly a mile, looking down upon poor us with sovereign contempt. Still a hundred or even two hundred miles an hour is slow travelling, after all. Do you remember our flight on the railroad across the Kanadaw continent?—fully three hundred miles the hour; *that* was travelling. Nothing to be seen though, nothing to be done but flirt, feast, and dance in the magnificent saloons. Do you remember what an odd

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sensation was experienced when, by chance, we caught a glimpse of external objects while the cars were in full flight? Everything seemed unique—in one mass. For my part, I cannot say but that I preferred the travelling by the slow train of a hundred miles the hour. Here we were permitted to have glass windows, even to have them open, and something like a distinct view of the country was attainable.

. . . Pundit says that the route for the great Kanadaw railroad must have been in some measure marked out about nine hundred years ago! In fact, he goes so far as to assert that actual traces of a road are still discernible, traces referable to a period quite as remote as that mentioned. The track, it appears, was double only; ours, you know, has twelve paths, and three or four new ones are in preparation. The ancient rails are very slight, and placed so close together as to be, according to modern notions, quite frivolous, if not dangerous in the extreme. The present width of track, fifty feet, is considered, indeed, scarcely secure enough. For my part, I make no doubt that a track of some sort must have existed in very remote times, as Pundit asserts; for nothing can be clearer, to my mind, than that, at some period, not less than seven centuries ago, certainly, the Northern and Southern Kanadaw continents were united; the Kanawdians, then, would have been driven, by necessity, to a great railroad across the continent.

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April 5th.—I am almost devoured by ennui. Pundit is the only conversible person on board; and he, poor soul! can speak of nothing but antiquities. He has been occupied all the day in the attempt to convince me that the ancient Amriccans governed themselves!—did ever anybody hear of such an absurdity?—that they existed in a sort of every-man-for-himself confederacy, after the fashion of the “prairie dogs” that we read of in fable. He says that they started with the queerest idea conceivable, viz., that all men are born free and equal,—this in the very teeth of the laws of gradation so visibly impressed upon all things both in the moral and physical universe. Every man “voted,” as they called it, that is to say, meddled with public affairs, until, at length, it was discovered that what is everybody’s business is nobody’s, and that the “Republic” (so the absurd thing was called) was without a government at all. It is related, however, that the first circumstance which disturbed, very particularly, the self-complacency of the philosophers who constructed this “Republic,” was the startling discovery that universal suffrage gave opportunity for fraudulent schemes, by means of which any desired number of votes might at any time be polled, without the possibility of prevention or even detection, by any party which should be merely villanous enough not to be ashamed of the fraud. A little reflection upon this discovery sufficed to render evident the consequences,

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which were that rascality must predominate; in a word, that a republican government could never be anything but a rascally one. While the philosophers, however, were busied in blushing at their stupidity in not having foreseen these inevitable evils, and intent upon the invention of new theories, the matter was put to an abrupt issue by a fellow of the name of Mob, who took everything into his own hands and set up a despotism, in comparison with which those of the fabulous Zeros and Hellofagabaluses were respectable and delectable. This Mob (a foreigner, by the by), is said to have been the most odious of all men that ever encumbered the earth. He was a giant in stature, insolent, rapacious, filthy; had the gall of a bullock, with the heart of a hyena and the brains of a peacock. He died, at length, by dint of his own energies, which exhausted him. Nevertheless, he had his uses, as everything has, however vile, and taught mankind a lesson which to this day it is in no danger of forgetting—never to run directly contrary to the natural analogies. As for republicanism, no analogy could be found for it upon the face of the earth, unless we except the case of the “prairie dogs,” an exception which seems to demonstrate, if anything, that democracy is a very admirable form of government—for dogs.

April 6th.—Last night had a fine view of Alpha Lyræ, whose disk, through our captain's spy-glass, subtends an angle of half a degree, looking very much

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as our sun does to the naked eye on a misty day. Alpha Lyræ, although so very much larger than our sun, by the by, resembles him closely as regards its spots, its atmosphere, and in many other particulars. It is only within the last century, Pundit tells me, that the binary relation existing between these two orbs began even to be suspected. The evident motion of our system in the heavens was, strange to say, referred to an orbit about a prodigious star in the centre of the galaxy. About this star, or at all events about a centre of gravity common to all the globes of the Milky Way and supposed to be near Alcyone in the Pleiades, every one of these globes was declared to be revolving, our own performing the circuit in a period of 117,000,000 of years! We, with our present lights, our vast telescopic improvements, and so forth, of course find it difficult to comprehend the ground of an idea such as this. Its first propagator was one Mudler. He was led, we must presume, to this wild hypothesis by mere analogy in the first instance; but, this being the case, he should have at least adhered to analogy in its development. A great central orb was, in fact, suggested; so far Mudler was consistent. This central orb, however, dynamically, should have been greater than all its surrounding orbs taken together. The question might then have been asked, "Why do we not see it?"—we, especially, who occupy the mid-region of the cluster, the very locality near which, at

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least, must be situated this inconceivable central sun. The astronomer, perhaps, at this point, took refuge in the suggestion of non-luminosity; and here analogy was suddenly let fall. But even admitting the central orb non-luminous, how did he manage to explain its failure to be rendered visible by the incalculable host of glorious suns glaring in all directions about it? No doubt what he finally maintained was merely a centre of gravity common to all the revolving orbs, but here, again, analogy must have been let fall. Our system revolves, it is true, about a common centre of gravity, but it does this in connection with, and in consequence of, a material sun whose mass more than counterbalances the rest of the system. The mathematical circle is a curve composed of an infinity of straight lines; but this idea of the circle,—this idea of it which, in regard to all earthly geometry, we consider as merely the mathematical, in contradistinction from the practical, idea,—is, in sober fact, the practical conception which alone we have any right to entertain in respect to those Titanic circles with which we have to deal, at least in fancy, when we suppose our system, with its fellows, revolving about a point in the centre of the galaxy. Let the most vigorous of human imaginations but attempt to take a single step toward the comprehension of a circuit so unutterable! It would scarcely be paradoxical to say that a flash of lightning itself, travelling forever upon the circumference of this

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inconceivable circle, would still forever be travelling in a straight line. That the path of our sun along such a circumference, that the direction of our system in such an orbit, would, to any human perception, deviate in the slightest degree from a straight line even in a million of years, is a proposition not to be entertained; and yet these ancient astronomers were absolutely cajoled, it appears, into believing that a decisive curvature had become apparent during the brief period of their astronomical history, during the mere point, during the utter nothingness of two or three thousand years! How incomprehensible, that considerations such as this did not at once indicate to them the true state of affairs, that of the binary revolution of our sun and Alpha Lyræ around a common centre of gravity!

April 7th.—Continued last night our astronomical amusements. Had a fine view of the five Neptunian asteroids, and watched with much interest the putting up of a huge impost on a couple of lintels in the new temple at Daphnis in the moon. It was amusing to think that creatures so diminutive as the lunarians, and bearing so little resemblance to humanity, yet evinced a mechanical ingenuity so much superior to our own. One finds it difficult, too, to conceive the vast masses which these people handle so easily, to be as light as our own reason tells us they actually are.

April 8th.—Eureka! Pundit is in his glory. A balloon from Kanadaw spoke us to-day and threw on

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board several late papers; they contain some exceedingly curious information relative to Kanawdian, or rather, Amriccan antiquities. You know, I presume, that laborers have for some months been employed in preparing the ground for a new fountain at Paradise, the emperor's principal pleasure garden. Paradise, it appears, has been, literally speaking, an island time out of mind; that is to say, its northern boundary was always, as far back as any record extends, a rivulet, or rather a very narrow arm of the sea. This arm was gradually widened until it attained its present breadth—a mile. The whole length of the island is nine miles; the breadth varies materially. The entire area (so Pundit says) was, about eight hundred years ago, densely packed with houses, some of them twenty stories high, land, for some most unaccountable reason, being considered as especially precious just in this vicinity. The disastrous earthquake, however, of the year 2050, so totally uprooted and overwhelmed the town (for it was almost too large to be called a village) that the most indefatigable of our antiquarians have never yet been able to obtain from the site any sufficient data, in the shape of coins, medals, or inscriptions, wherewith to build up even the ghost of a theory concerning the manners, customs, etc., etc., etc., of the aboriginal inhabitants. Nearly all that we have hitherto known of them is, that they were a portion of the Knickerbocker tribe of savages infesting the

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continent at its first discovery by Recorder Riker, a knight of the Golden Fleece. They were by no means uncivilized, however, but cultivated various arts and even sciences after a fashion of their own. It is related of them that they were acute in many respects, but were oddly afflicted with monomania for building what, in the ancient Amriccan, was denominated "churches,"—a kind of pagoda instituted for the worship of two idols that went by the names of Wealth and Fashion. In the end, it is said, the island became, nine tenths of it, church. The women, too, it appears, were oddly deformed by a natural protuberance of the region just below the small of the back, although, most unaccountably, this deformity was looked upon altogether in the light of a beauty. One or two pictures of these singular women have, in fact, been miraculously preserved. They look very odd, *very*—like something between a turkey-cock and a dromedary.

Well, these few details are nearly all that have descended to us respecting the ancient Knickerbockers. It seems, however, that while digging in the centre of the emperor's garden, which, you know, covers the whole island, some of the workmen unearthed a cubical and evidently chiseled block of granite, weighing several hundred pounds. It was in good preservation, having received, apparently, little injury from the convulsion which entombed it. On one of its surfaces was a marble slab with (only think of it!) an inscrip-

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tion—a legible inscription. Pundit is in ecstasies. Upon detaching the slab a cavity appeared, containing a leaden box filled with various coins, a long scroll of names, several documents which appear to resemble newspapers, with other matters of intense interest to the antiquarian! There can be no doubt that all these are genuine Amriccan relics belonging to the tribe called Knickerbocker. The papers thrown on board our balloon are filled with facsimiles of the coins, MSS., typography, etc., etc. I copy for your amusement the Knickerbocker inscription on the marble slab:

This Corner Stone of a Monument to the
Memory of
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
was laid with appropriate ceremonies on the
19TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1847,
the anniversary of the surrender of
Lord Cornwallis
to General Washington at Yorktown,
A.D. 1781,
under the auspices of the
Washington Monument Association of the
City of New York.

This, as I give it, is a verbatim translation done by Pundit himself, so there can be no mistake about it. From the few words thus preserved, we glean several important items of knowledge, not the least interesting of which is the fact that a thousand years ago actual

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monuments had fallen into disuse, as was all very proper, the people contenting themselves, as we do now, with a mere indication of the design to erect a monument at some future time, a corner-stone being cautiously laid by itself "solitary and alone" (excuse me for quoting the great Amriccan poet Benton!), as a guarantee of the magnanimous intention. We ascertain, too, very distinctly, from this admirable inscription, the how as well as the where and the what, of the great surrender in question. As to the where, it was Yorktown (wherever that was), and as to the what, it was General Cornwallis (no doubt some wealthy dealer in corn). He was surrendered. The inscription commemorates the surrender of—what? why, "of Lord Cornwallis." The only question is, what could the savages wish him surrendered for? But when we remember that these savages were undoubtedly cannibals, we are led to the conclusion that they intended him for sausage. As to the how of the surrender, no language can be more explicit. Lord Cornwallis was surrendered (for sausage) "under the auspices of the Washington Monument Association," no doubt a charitable institution for the depositing of corner-stones.—But, Heaven bless me! what is the matter? Ah, I see—the balloon has collapsed, and we shall have a tumble into the sea. I have, therefore, only time enough to add that, from a hasty inspection of the facsimiles of newspapers, etc., etc., I

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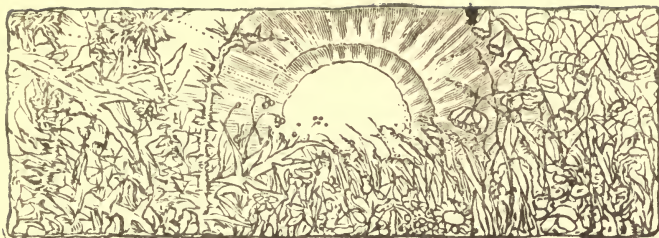
find that the great men in those days among the Americans were one John, a smith, and one Zacchary, a tailor.

Good-bye, until I see you again. Whether you ever get this letter or not is point of little importance, as I write altogether for my own amusement. I shall cork the MS. up in a bottle, however, and throw it into the sea.

Yours everlastingly,

PUNDITA.





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AFTER the very minute and elaborate paper by Arago, to say nothing of the summary in *Silliman's Journal*, with the detailed statement just published by Lieutenant Maury, it will not be supposed, of course, that in offering a few hurried remarks in reference to Von Kempelen's discovery, I have any design to look at the subject from a scientific point of view. My object is simply, in the first place, to say a few words of Von Kempelen himself, with whom, some years ago, I had the honor of a slight personal acquaintance, since everything which concerns him must necessarily, at this moment, be of interest; and, in the second place, to look in a general way, and speculatively, at the results of the discovery.

It may be as well, however, to premise the cursory observations which I have to offer by denying, very

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decidedly, what seems to be a general impression, gleaned, as usual in a case of this kind, from the newspapers, viz., that this discovery, astounding as it unquestionably is, is unanticipated.

By reference to the *Diary of Sir Humphry Davy*, (Cottle & Munroe, London, pp. 150), it will be seen at pp. 53 and 82 that this illustrious chemist had not only conceived the idea now in question, but had actually made no inconsiderable progress, experimentally, in the very identical analysis now so triumphantly brought to an issue by Von Kempelen, who, although he makes not the slightest allusion to it, is, without doubt (I say it unhesitatingly, and can prove it, if required), indebted to the *Diary* for at least the first hint of his own undertaking. Although a little technical I cannot refrain from appending two passages from the *Diary*, with one of Sir Humphry's equations. [As we have not the algebraic signs necessary, and as the *Diary* is to be found at the Athenæum Library, we omit here a small portion of Mr. Poe's manuscript. —ED.]

The paragraph from the *Courier and Enquirer*, which is now going the rounds of the press, and which purports to claim the invention for a Mr. Kissam, of Brunswick, Maine, appears to me, I confess, a little apocryphal, for several reasons; although there is nothing either impossible or very improbable in the statement made. I need not go into details. My

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opinion of the paragraph is founded principally upon its manner. It does not look true. Persons who are narrating facts are seldom so particular as Mr. Kissam seems to be about day and date and precise location. Besides, if Mr. Kissam actually did come upon the discovery he says he did, at the period designated,—nearly eight years ago,—how happens it that he took no steps, on the instant, to reap the immense benefits which the merest bumpkin must have known would have resulted to him individually, if not to the world at large, from the discovery? It seems to me quite incredible that any man of common understanding could have discovered what Mr. Kissam says he did, and yet have subsequently acted so like a baby, so like an owl, as Mr. Kissam admits that he did. By the way, who is Mr. Kissam? and is not the whole paragraph in the *Courier and Enquirer* a fabrication got up to “make a talk”? It must be confessed that it has an amazingly moon-hoax-y air. Very little dependence is to be placed upon it, in my humble opinion; and if I were not well aware, from experience, how very easily men of science are mystified on points out of their usual range of inquiry, I should be profoundly astonished at finding so eminent a chemist as Professor Draper discussing Mr. Kissam’s (or is it Mr. Quizzem’s?) pretensions to the discovery, in so serious a tone.

But to return to the *Diary of Sir Humphry Davy*

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This pamphlet was not designed for the public eye, even upon the decease of the writer, as any person at all conversant with authorship may satisfy himself at once by the slightest inspection of the style. At page 13, for example, near the middle, we read, in reference to his researches about the protoxide of azote: "In less than half a minute the respiration being continued, diminished gradually and were succeeded by analogous to gentle pressure on all the muscles." That the respiration was not "diminished" is not only clear by the subsequent context, but by the use of the plural, "were." The sentence, no doubt, was thus intended: "In less than half a minute, the respiration being continued [these feelings] diminished gradually, and were succeeded by [a sensation] analogous to gentle pressure on all the muscles." A hundred similar instances go to show that the MS. so inconsiderately published was merely a rough note-book, meant only for the writer's own eye; but an inspection of the pamphlet will convince almost any thinking person of the truth of my suggestion. The fact is, Sir Humphry Davy was about the last man in the world to commit himself on scientific topics. Not only had he a more than ordinary dislike to quackery, but he was morbidly afraid of appearing empirical; so that, however fully he might have been convinced that he was on the right track in the matter now in question, he would never have spoken out until he had everything ready for the most

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practical demonstration. I verily believe that his last moments would have been rendered wretched, could he have suspected that his wishes in regard to burning this *Diary* (full of crude speculations) would have been unattended to; as, it seems, they were. I say "his wishes," for that he meant to include this notebook among the miscellaneous papers directed "to be burnt" I think there can be no manner of doubt. Whether it escaped the flames by good fortune or by bad yet remains to be seen. That the passages quoted above, with the other similar ones referred to, gave Von Kempelen the hint, I do not in the slightest degree question; but, I repeat, it yet remains to be seen whether this momentous discovery itself (momentous under any circumstances) will be of service or disservice to mankind at large. That Von Kempelen and his immediate friends will reap a rich harvest it would be folly to doubt for a moment. They will scarcely be so weak as not to "realize," in time, by large purchases of houses and land, with other property of intrinsic value.

In the brief account of Von Kempelen which appeared in the *Home Journal*, and has since been extensively copied, several misapprehensions of the German original seem to have been made by the translator, who professes to have taken the passage from a late number of the Presburg *Schnellpost*. *Viele* has evidently been misconceived (as it often is), and what

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the translator renders by "sorrows," is probably *leiden*, which, in its true version, "sufferings," would give a totally different complexion to the whole account; but, of course, much of this is merely guess on my part.

Von Kempelen, however, is by no means "a misanthrope" in appearance, at least, whatever he may be in fact. My acquaintance with him was casual altogether; and I am scarcely warranted in saying that I know him at all; but to have seen and conversed with a man of so prodigious a notoriety as he has attained, or will attain in a few days, is not a small matter, as times go.

The *Literary World* speaks of him, confidently, as a native of Presburg (misled, perhaps, by the account in the *Home Journal*), but I am pleased in being able to state positively, since I have it from his own lips, that he was born in Utica, in the State of New York, although both his parents, I believe, are of Presburg descent. The family is connected, in some way, with Mäelzel, of automaton-chess-player memory. [If we are not mistaken, the name of the inventor of the chess-player was either Kempelen, Von Kempelen, or something like it.—ED.] In person he is short and stout, with large, fat, blue eyes, sandy hair and whiskers, a wide but pleasing mouth, fine teeth, and, I think, a Roman nose. There is some defect in one of his feet. His address is frank, and his whole manner

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noticeable for *bonhomie*. Altogether, he looks, speaks, and acts as little like "a misanthrope" as any man I ever saw. We were fellow-sojourners for a week, about six years ago, at Earl's Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island; and I presume that I conversed with him, at various times, for some three or four hours altogether. His principal topics were those of the day; and nothing that fell from him led me to suspect his scientific attainments. He left the hotel before me, intending to go to New York and thence to Bremen; it was in the latter city that his great discovery was first made public; or, rather, it was there that he was first suspected of having made it. This is about all that I personally know of the now immortal Von Kempelen; but I have thought that even these few details would have interest for the public.

There can be little question that most of the marvellous rumors afloat about this affair are pure inventions, entitled to about as much credit as the story of Aladdin's lamp; and yet, in a case of this kind, as in the case of the discoveries in California, it is clear that the truth may be stranger than fiction. The following anecdote, at least, is so well authenticated that we may receive it implicitly.

Von Kempelen had never been even tolerably well off during his residence at Bremen; and often, it was well known, he had been put to extreme shifts in order to raise trifling sums. When the great excitement

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occurred about the forgery on the house of Gutschuth & Co., suspicion was directed toward Von Kempelen, on account of his having purchased a considerable property in Gasperitch Lane, and his refusing, when questioned, to explain how he became possessed of the purchase money. He was at length arrested, but, nothing decisive appearing against him, was in the end set at liberty. The police, however, kept a strict watch upon his movements, and thus discovered that he left home frequently, taking always the same road, and invariably giving his watchers the slip in the neighborhood of that labyrinth of narrow and crooked passages known by the flash name of the "Dondergat." Finally, by dint of great perseverance, they traced him to a garret in an old house of seven stories, in an alley called Flatzplatz; and, coming upon him suddenly, found him, as they imagined, in the midst of his counterfeiting operations. His agitation is represented as so excessive that the officers had not the slightest doubt of his guilt. After handcuffing him, they searched his room, or rather rooms, for it appears he occupied all the *mansarde*.

Opening into the garret where they caught him was a closet, ten feet by eight, fitted up with some chemical apparatus, of which the object has not yet been ascertained. In one corner of the closet was a very small furnace with a glowing fire in it, and on the fire a kind of duplicate crucible,—two crucibles connected

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by a tube. One of these crucibles was nearly full of lead in a state of fusion, but not reaching up to the aperture of the tube, which was close to the brim. The other crucible had some liquid in it, which, as the officers entered, seemed to be furiously dissipating in vapor. They relate that, on finding himself taken, Von Kempelen seized the crucibles with both hands (which were encased in gloves that afterward turned out to be asbestic), and threw the contents on the tiled floor. It was now that they handcuffed him; and before proceeding to ransack the premises they searched his person, but nothing unusual was found about him excepting a paper parcel in his coat pocket, containing what was afterward ascertained to be a mixture of antimony and some unknown substance in nearly, but not quite, equal proportions. All attempts at analyzing the unknown substance have, so far, failed, but that it will ultimately be analyzed is not to be doubted.

Passing out of the closet with their prisoner, the officers went through a sort of antechamber, in which nothing material was found, to the chemist's sleeping-room. They here rummaged some drawers and boxes, but discovered only a few papers of no importance, and some good coin, silver and gold. At length, looking under the bed, they saw a large, common hair trunk, without hinges, hasp, or lock, and with the top lying carelessly across the bottom portion. Upon attempting to draw this trunk out from under the bed, they

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found that, with their united strength (there were three of them, all powerful men), they "could not stir it one inch." Much astonished at this, one of them crawled under the bed, and, looking into the trunk, said:

"No wonder we could n't move it; why, it's full to the brim of old bits of brass!"

Putting his feet, now, against the wall, so as to get a good purchase, and pushing with all his force, while his companions pulled with all theirs, the trunk, with much difficulty, was slid out from under the bed, and its contents examined. The supposed brass with which it was filled was all in small, smooth pieces, varying from the size of a pea to that of a dollar; but the pieces were irregular in shape, although more or less flat, looking, upon the whole, "very much as lead looks when thrown upon the ground in a molten state, and there suffered to grow cool." Now, not one of these officers for a moment suspected this metal to be anything but brass. The idea of its being gold never entered their brains, of course; how could such a wild fancy have entered it? And their astonishment may be well conceived when next day it became known all over Bremen that the "lot of brass" which they had carted so contemptuously to the police office, without putting themselves to the trouble of pocketing the smallest scrap, was not only gold,—real gold,—but gold far finer than any employed in coinage; gold, in

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fact, absolutely pure, virgin, without the slightest appreciable alloy!

I need not go over the details of Von Kempelen's confession (as far as it went) and release, for these are familiar to the public. That he has actually realized, in spirit and in effect, if not to the letter, the old chimera of the philosopher's stone, no sane person is at liberty to doubt. The opinions of Arago are, of course, entitled to the greatest consideration; but he is by no means infallible; and what he says of bismuth, in his report to the Academy, must be taken *cum grano salis*. The simple truth is, that up to this period all analysis has failed; and until Von Kempelen chooses to let us have the key to his own published enigma, it is more than probable that the matter will remain for years *in statu quo*. All that yet can fairly be said to be known is, that "pure gold can be made at will, and very readily, from lead in connection with certain other substances, in kind and in proportions unknown."

Speculation, of course, is busy as to the immediate and ultimate results of this discovery, a discovery which few thinking persons will hesitate in referring to an increased interest in the matter of gold generally, by the late developments in California; and this reflection brings us inevitably to another—the exceeding inopportuneness of Von Kempelen's analysis. If many were prevented from adventuring to California,

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by the mere apprehension that gold would so materially diminish in value, on account of its plentifulness in the mines there, as to render the speculation of going so far in search of it a doubtful one, what impression will be wrought now, upon the minds of those about to emigrate, and especially upon the minds of those actually in the mineral region, by the announcement of this astounding discovery of Von Kempelen? a discovery which declares, in so many words, that beyond its intrinsic worth for manufacturing purposes (whatever that worth may be), gold now is, or at least soon will be (for it cannot be supposed that Von Kempelen can long retain his secret), of no greater value than lead, and of far inferior value to silver. It is, indeed, exceedingly difficult to speculate prospectively upon the consequences of the discovery; but one thing may be positively maintained—that the announcement of the discovery six months ago would have had material influence in regard to the settlement of California.

In Europe, as yet, the most noticeable results have been a rise of two hundred per cent in the price of lead, and nearly twenty-five per cent in that of silver.





Landor's Cottage

A PENDANT TO "THE DOMAIN OF ARNHEIM"

DURING a pedestrian trip last summer through one or two of the river counties of New York, I found myself, as the day declined, somewhat embarrassed about the road I was pursuing. The land undulated very remarkably; and my path, for the last hour, had wound about and about so confusedly, in its effort to keep in the valleys, that I no longer knew in what direction lay the sweet village of B——, where I had determined to stop for the night. The sun had scarcely shone, strictly speaking, during the day, which, nevertheless, had been unpleasantly warm. A smoky mist, resembling that of the Indian summer, enveloped all things, and of course added to my uncertainty. Not that I cared much about the matter. If I did not hit upon the village before sunset,

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or even before dark, it was more than possible that a little Dutch farmhouse, or something of that kind, would soon make its appearance, although, in fact, the neighborhood, perhaps on account of being more picturesque than fertile, was very sparsely inhabited. At all events, with my knapsack for a pillow and my hound as a sentry, a bivouac in the open air was just the thing which would have amused me. I sauntered on, therefore, quite at ease, Ponto taking charge of my gun, until at length, just as I had begun to consider whether the numerous little glades that led hither and thither were intended to be paths at all, I was conducted by one of them into an unquestionable carriage-track. There could be no mistaking it. The traces of light wheels were evident; and although the tall shrubberies and overgrown undergrowth met overhead, there was no obstruction whatever below, even to the passage of a Virginian mountain wagon, the most aspiring vehicle, I take it, of its kind. The road, however, except in being open through the wood (if wood be not too weighty a name for such an assemblage of light trees), and except in the particulars of evident wheel-tracks, bore no resemblance to any road I had before seen. The tracks of which I speak were but faintly perceptible, having been impressed upon the firm, yet pleasantly moist surface of what looked more like green Genoese velvet than anything else. It was grass, clearly, but grass such as we seldom see

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out of England, so short, so thick, so even, and so vivid in color. Not a single impediment lay in the wheel-route, not even a chip or dead twig. The stones that once obstructed the way had been carefully placed, not thrown, along the sides of the lane, so as to define its boundaries at bottom with a kind of half-precise, half-negligent, and wholly picturesque definition. Clumps of wild flowers grew everywhere, luxuriantly, in the interspaces.

What to make of all this, of course I knew not. Here was art undoubtedly; that did not surprise me—all roads, in the ordinary sense, are works of art; nor can I say that there was much to wonder at in the mere excess of art manifested; all that seemed to have been done might have been done here, with such natural “capabilities” (as they have it in the books on Landscape Gardening)—with very little labor and expense. No; it was not the amount but the character of the art which caused me to take a seat on one of the blossomy stones and gaze up and down this fairy-like avenue for half an hour or more in bewildered admiration. One thing became more and more evident the longer I gazed: an artist, and one with a most scrupulous eye for form, had superintended all these arrangements. The greatest care had been taken to preserve a due medium between the neat and graceful on the one hand, and the *píttresco*, in the true sense of the Italian term, on the other. There

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were few straight, and no long, uninterrupted lines. The same effect of curvature or of color appeared twice, usually, but not oftener, at any one point of view. Everywhere was variety in uniformity. It was a piece of "composition," in which the most fastidiously critical taste could scarcely have suggested an emendation.

I had turned to the right as I entered this road, and now, arising, I continued in the same direction. The path was so serpentine that at no moment could I trace its course for more than two or three paces in advance. Its character did not undergo any material change.

Presently the murmur of water fell gently upon my ear, and in a few moments afterward, as I turned with the road somewhat more abruptly than hitherto, I became aware that a building of some kind lay at the foot of a gentle declivity just before me. I could see nothing distinctly on account of the mist which occupied all the little valley below. A gentle breeze, however, now arose, as the sun was about descending; and while I remained standing on the brow of the slope the fog gradually became dissipated into wreaths and so floated over the scene.

As it came fully into view, thus gradually as I describe it, piece by piece, here a tree, there a glimpse of water, and here, again, the summit of a chimney, I could scarcely help fancying that the whole was one of the ingenious illusions sometimes exhibited under the name of "vanishing pictures."

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By the time, however, that the fog had thoroughly disappeared, the sun had made its way down behind the gentle hills, and thence, as if with a slight *chassez* to the south, had come again fully into sight, glaring with a purplish lustre through a chasm that entered the valley from the west. Suddenly, therefore, and as if by the hand of magic, this whole valley and everything in it became brilliantly visible.

The first *coup d'œil*, as the sun slid into the position described, impressed me very much as I have been impressed, when a boy, by the concluding scene of some well-arranged theatrical spectacle or melodrama. Not even the monstrosity of color was wanting; for the sunlight came out through the chasm, tinted all orange and purple; while the vivid green of the grass in the valley was reflected more or less upon all objects from the curtain of vapor that still hung overhead, as if loath to take its total departure from a scene so enchantingly beautiful.

The little vale into which I thus peered down from under the fog-canopy could not have been more than four hundred yards long; while in breadth it varied from fifty to one hundred and fifty or perhaps two hundred. It was most narrow at its northern extremity, opening out as it tended southwardly, but with no very precise regularity. The widest portion was within eighty yards of the southern extreme. The slopes which encompassed the vale could not fairly be called

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hills, unless at their northern face. Here a precipitous ledge of granite arose to a height of some ninety feet; and, as I have mentioned, the valley at this point was not more than fifty feet wide; but as the visitor proceeded southwardly from this cliff, he found, on his right hand and on his left, declivities at once less high, less precipitous, and less rocky. All, in a word, sloped and softened to the south; and yet the whole vale was engirdled by eminences, more or less high, except at two points. One of these I have already spoken of. It lay considerably to the north of west, and was where the setting sun made its way, as I have before described, into the amphitheatre, through a cleanly cut natural cleft in the granite embankment: this fissure might have been ten yards wide at its widest point, so far as the eye could trace it. It seemed to lead up, up, like a natural causeway, into the recesses of unexplored mountains and forests. The other opening was directly at the southern end of the vale. Here, generally, the slopes were nothing more than gentle inclinations, extending from east to west about one hundred and fifty yards. In the middle of this extent was a depression, level with the ordinary floor of the valley. As regards vegetation, as well as in respect to everything else, the scene softened and sloped to the south. To the north, on the craggy precipice, a few paces from the verge, up sprang the magnificent trunks of numerous hickories, black wal-

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nuts, and chestnuts, interspersed with occasional oak; and the strong lateral branches thrown out by the walnuts, especially, spread far over the edge of the cliff. Proceeding southwardly, the explorer saw, at first, the same class of trees, but less and less lofty and Salvatorish in character; then he saw the gentler elm, succeeded by the sassafras and locust; these, again, by the softer linden, red-bud, catalpa, and maple; these yet again by still more graceful and more modest varieties. The whole face of the southern declivity was covered with wild shrubbery alone, an occasional silver willow or white poplar excepted. In the bottom of the valley itself (for it must be borne in mind that the vegetation hitherto mentioned grew only on the cliffs or hillsides), were to be seen three insulated trees. One was an elm of fine size and exquisite form: it stood guard over the southern gate of the vale. Another was a hickory, much larger than the elm, and altogether a much finer tree, although both were exceedingly beautiful: it seemed to have taken charge of the northwestern entrance, springing from a group of rocks in the very jaws of the ravine, and throwing its graceful body, at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, far out into the sunshine of the amphitheatre. About thirty yards east of this tree stood, however, the pride of the valley, and beyond all question the most magnificent tree I have ever seen, unless, perhaps, among the cypresses of the Itchiatuckanee. It was

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a triple-stemmed tulip-tree, the *Liriodendron Tulipifera*, one of the natural order of magnolias. Its three trunks separated from the parent at about three feet from the soil, and, diverging very slightly and gradually, were not more than four feet apart at the point where the largest stem shot out into foliage: this was at an elevation of about eighty feet. The whole height of the principal division was one hundred and twenty feet. Nothing can surpass in beauty the form, or the glossy, vivid green of the leaves of the tulip-tree. In the present instance they were fully eight inches wide; but their glory was altogether eclipsed by the gorgeous splendor of the profuse blossoms. Conceive, closely congregated, a million of the largest and most resplendent tulips! Only thus can the reader get any idea of the picture I would convey. And then the stately grace of the clean, delicately granulated columnar stems, the largest four feet in diameter, at twenty from the ground. The innumerable blossoms, mingling with those of other trees scarcely less beautiful, although infinitely less majestic, filled the valley with more than Arabian perfumes.

The general floor of the amphitheatre was grass, of the same character as that I had found in the road, if anything, more deliciously soft, thick, velvety, and miraculously green. It was hard to conceive how all this beauty had been attained.

I have spoken of two openings into the vale. From

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the one to the northwest issued a rivulet, which came, gently murmuring and slightly foaming, down the ravine, until it dashed against the group of rocks out of which sprang the insulated hickory. Here, after encircling the tree, it passed on a little to the north of east, leaving the tulip-tree some twenty feet to the south, and making no decided alteration in its course until it came near the midway between the eastern and western boundaries of the valley. At this point, after a series of sweeps, it turned off at right angles and pursued a generally southern direction, meandering as it went, until it became lost in a small lake of irregular figure (although roughly oval) that lay gleaming near the lower extremity of the vale. This lakelet was, perhaps, a hundred yards in diameter at its widest part. No crystal could be clearer than its waters. Its bottom, which could be distinctly seen, consisted altogether of pebbles brilliantly white. Its banks, of the emerald grass already described, rounded, rather than sloped, off into the clear heaven below; and so clear was this heaven, so perfectly, at times, did it reflect all objects above it, that where the true bank ended and where the mimic one commenced it was a point of no little difficulty to determine. The trout and some other varieties of fish, with which this pond seemed to be almost inconveniently crowded, had all the appearance of veritable flying-fish. It was almost impossible to believe that they were not absolutely suspended

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in the air. A light birch canoe that lay placidly on the water was reflected in its minutest fibres with a fidelity unsurpassed by the most exquisitely polished mirror. A small island, fairly laughing with flowers in full bloom, and affording little more space than just enough for a picturesque little building, seemingly a fowl-house, arose from the lake not far from its northern shore, to which it was connected by means of an inconceivably light-looking and yet very primitive bridge. It was formed of a single broad and thick plank of the tulip wood. This was forty feet long and spanned the interval between shore and shore with a slight but very perceptible arch, preventing all oscillation. From the southern extreme of the lake issued a continuation of the rivulet, which, after meandering for, perhaps, thirty yards, finally passed through the "depression," already described, in the middle of the southern declivity, and, tumbling down a sheer precipice of a hundred feet, made its devious and unnoticed way to the Hudson.

The lake was deep, at some points thirty feet, but the rivulet seldom exceeded three, while its greatest width was about eight. Its bottom and banks were as those of the pond; if a defect could have been attributed, in point of picturesqueness, it was that of excessive neatness.

The expanse of the green turf was relieved, here and there, by an occasional showy shrub, such as the hydrangea or the common snowball, or the aromatic

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syringa; or, more frequently, by a clump of geraniums blossoming gorgeously in great varieties. These latter grew in pots which were carefully buried in the soil, so as to give the plants the appearance of being indigenous. Besides all this, the lawn's velvet was exquisitely spotted with sheep, a considerable flock of which roamed about the vale in company with three tamed deer and a vast number of brilliantly-plumed ducks. A very large mastiff seemed to be in vigilant attendance upon these animals, each and all.

Along the eastern and western cliffs, where, toward the upper portion of the amphitheatre, the boundaries were more or less precipitous, grew ivy in great profusion, so that only here and there could even a glimpse of the naked rock be obtained. The northern precipice, in like manner, was almost entirely clothed by grape-vines of rare luxuriance; some springing from the soil at the base of the cliff and others from ledges on its face.

The slight elevation which formed the lower boundary of this little domain was crowned by a neat stone wall, of sufficient height to prevent the escape of the deer. Nothing of the fence kind was observable elsewhere; for nowhere else was an artificial enclosure needed: any stray sheep, for example, which should attempt to make its way out of the vale by means of the ravine would find its progress arrested, after a few yards' advance, by the precipitous ledge of rock over

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which tumbled the cascade that had arrested my attention as I first drew near the domain. In short, the only ingress or egress was through a gate occupying a rocky pass in the road a few paces below the point at which I stopped to reconnoitre the scene.

I have described the brook as meandering very irregularly through the whole of its course. Its two general directions, as I have said, were first from west to east, and then from north to south. At the turn, the stream, sweeping backward, made an almost circular loop, so as to form a peninsula which was very nearly an island, and which included about the sixteenth of an acre. On this peninsula stood a dwelling-house, and when I say that this house, like the infernal terrace seen by Vathek, "était d'une architecture inconnue dans les annales de la terre," I mean, merely, that its *tout ensemble* struck me with the keenest sense of combined novelty and propriety,—in a word, of poetry (for, than in the words just employed I could scarcely give, of poetry in the abstract, a more rigorous definition), and I do not mean that the merely *outré* was perceptible in any respect.

In fact, nothing could well be more simple, more utterly unpretending than this cottage. Its marvellous effect lay altogether in its artistic arrangement as a picture. I could have fancied, while I looked at it, that some eminent landscape-painter had built it with his brush.

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The point of view from which I first saw the valley was not altogether, although it was nearly, the best point from which to survey the house. I will therefore describe it as I afterwards saw it, from a position on the stone wall at the southern extreme of the amphitheatre.

The main building was about twenty-four feet long and sixteen broad—certainly not more. Its total height, from the ground to the apex of the roof, could not have exceeded eighteen feet. To the west end of this structure was attached one about a third smaller in all its proportions, the line of its front standing back about two yards from that of the larger house, and the line of its roof, of course, being considerably depressed below that of the roof adjoining. At right angles to these buildings, and from the rear of the main one, not exactly in the middle, extended a third compartment, very small, being, in general, one third less than the western wing. The roofs of the two larger were very steep, sweeping down from the ridge-beam with a long concave curve, and extending at least four feet beyond the walls in front so as to form the roofs of two piazzas. These latter roofs, of course, needed no support; but, as they had the air of needing it, slight and perfectly plain pillars were inserted at the corners alone. The roof of the northern wing was merely an extension of a portion of the main roof. Between the chief building and western wing arose a

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very tall and rather slender square chimney of hard Dutch bricks, alternately black and red, a slight cornice of projecting bricks at the top. Over the gables the roofs also projected very much, in the main building about four feet to the east and two to the west. The principal door was not exactly in the main division, being a little to the east, while the two windows were to the west. These latter did not extend to the floor, but were much longer and narrower than usual; they had single shutters like doors; the panes were of lozenge form, but quite large. The door itself had its upper half of glass, also in lozenge panes; a movable shutter secured it at night. The door to the west wing was in its gable, and quite simple; a single window looked out to the south. There was no external door to the north wing, and it, also, had only one window to the east.

The blank wall of the eastern gable was relieved by stairs with a balustrade, running diagonally across it, the ascent being from the south. Under cover of the widely projecting eave these steps gave access to a door leading into the garret, or rather loft, for it was lighted only by a single window to the north, and seemed to have been intended as a storeroom.

The piazzas of the main building and western wing had no floors, as is usual; but at the doors and at each window, large, flat, irregular slabs of granite lay imbedded in the delicious turf, affording comfortable

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footing in all weather. Excellent paths of the same material, not nicely adapted, but with the velvety sod filling frequent intervals between the stones, led hither and thither from the house to a crystal spring about five paces off, to the road, or to one or two out-houses that lay to the north, beyond the brook, and were thoroughly concealed by a few locusts and catalpas.

Not more than six steps from the main door of the cottage stood the dead trunk of a fantastic pear tree, so clothed from head to foot in the gorgeous bignonia blossoms that one required no little scrutiny to determine what manner of sweet thing it could be. From various arms of this tree hung cages of different kinds. In one, a large wicker cylinder with a ring at top, revelled a mocking-bird; in another, an oriole; in a third, the impudent bobolink, while three or four more delicate prisons were loudly vocal with canaries.

The pillars of the piazza were enwreathed in jasmine and sweet honeysuckle; while from the angle formed by the main structure and its west wing, in front, sprang a grape-vine of unexampled luxuriance. Scorning all restraint, it had clambered first to the lower roof, then to the higher; and along the ridge of this latter it continued to writhe on, throwing out tendrils to the right and left, until at length it fairly attained the east gable and fell trailing over the stairs.

The whole house, with its wings, was constructed of the old-fashioned Dutch shingles,—broad, and with

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unrounded corners. It is a peculiarity of this material to give houses built of it the appearance of being wider at bottom than at top, after the manner of Egyptian architecture; and in the present instance this exceedingly picturesque effect was aided by numerous pots of gorgeous flowers that almost encompassed the base of the buildings.

The shingles were painted a dull gray; and the happiness with which this neutral tint melted into the vivid green of the tulip-tree leaves that partially overshadowed the cottage can readily be conceived by an artist.

From the position near the stone wall, as described, the buildings were seen at great advantage, for the southeastern angle was thrown forward, so that the eye took in at once the whole of the two fronts, with the picturesque eastern gable, and at the same time obtained just a sufficient glimpse of the northern wing, with parts of a pretty roof to the spring-house and nearly half of a light bridge that spanned the brook in the near vicinity of the main buildings.

I did not remain very long on the brow of the hill, although long enough to make a thorough survey of the scene at my feet. It was clear that I had wandered from the road to the village, and I had thus good travellers' excuse to open the gate before me and inquire my way, at all events; so, without more ado, I proceeded.

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The road, after passing the gate, seemed to lie upon a natural ledge, sloping gradually down along the face of the northeastern cliffs. It led me on to the foot of the northern precipice, and thence over the bridge, round by the eastern gable to the front door. In this progress I took notice that no sight of the out-houses could be obtained.

As I turned the corner of the gable, the mastiff bounded towards me in stern silence, but with the eye and the whole air of a tiger. I held him out my hand, however, in token of amity, and I never yet knew the dog who was proof against such an appeal to his courtesy. He not only shut his mouth and wagged his tail, but absolutely offered me his paw, afterward extending his civilities to Ponto.

As no bell was discernible, I rapped with my stick against the door, which stood half open. Instantly a figure advanced to the threshold,—that of a young woman about twenty-eight years of age, slender, or rather slight, and somewhat above the medium height. As she approached, with a certain modest decision of step altogether indescribable, I said to myself, “Surely here I have found the perfection of natural, in contradistinction from artificial grace.” The second impression which she made on me, but by far the more vivid of the two, was that of enthusiasm. So intense an expression of romance, perhaps I should call it, or of unworldliness, as that which gleamed from her deep-

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set eyes, had never so sunk into my heart of hearts before. I know not how it is, but this peculiar expression of the eye, wreathing itself occasionally into the lips, is the most powerful, if not absolutely the sole, spell which rivets my interest in woman. "Romance," provided my readers fully comprehend what I would here imply by the word,—“romance” and “womanliness” seem to me convertible terms; and, after all, what man truly loves in woman is simply her womanhood. The eyes of Annie (I heard some one from the interior call her “Annie, darling!”) were “spiritual gray”; her hair, a light chestnut; this is all I had time to observe of her.

At her most courteous of invitations, I entered, passing first into a tolerably wide vestibule. Having come mainly to observe, I took notice that to my right as I stepped in was a window, such as those in front of the house; to the left, a door leading into the principal room; while, opposite me, an open door enabled me to see a small apartment, just the size of the vestibule, arranged as a study and having a large bow window looking out to the north.

Passing into the parlor, I found myself with Mr. Landor, for this, I afterwards found, was his name. He was civil, even cordial in his manner; but just then I was more intent on observing the arrangements of the dwelling which had so much interested me than the personal appearance of the tenant.

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The north wing, I now saw, was a bed-chamber; its door opened into the parlor. West of this door was a single window, looking toward the brook. At the west end of the parlor were a fireplace and a door leading into the west wing,—probably a kitchen.

Nothing could be more rigorously simple than the furniture of the parlor. On the floor was an ingrain carpet of excellent texture,—a white ground, spotted with small circular green figures. At the windows were curtains of snowy white jaconet muslin; they were tolerably full, and hung decisively, perhaps rather formally, in sharp, parallel plaits to the floor—just to the floor. The walls were papered with a French paper of great delicacy,—a silver ground, with a faint green cord running zig-zag throughout. Its expanse was relieved merely by three of Julien's exquisite lithographs à *trois crayons*, fastened to the wall without frames. One of these drawings was a scene of Oriental luxury, or rather voluptuousness; another was a "carnival piece," spirited beyond compare; the third was a Greek female head: a face so divinely beautiful, and yet of an expression so provokingly indeterminate, never before arrested my attention.

The more substantial furniture consisted of a round table, a few chairs, including a large rocking-chair, and a sofa, or rather "settee": its material was plain maple painted a creamy white, slightly interstriped with green, the seat of cane. The chairs and

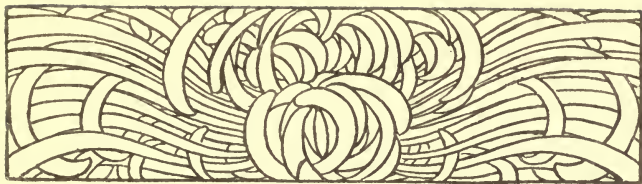
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table were "to match"; but the forms of all had evidently been designed by the same brain which planned "the grounds"; it is impossible to conceive anything more graceful.

On the table were a few books; a large, square, crystal bottle of some novel perfume; a plain, ground glass astral (not solar) lamp, with an Italian shade; and a large vase of resplendently blooming flowers. Flowers, indeed, of gorgeous colors and delicate odor formed the sole mere decoration of the apartment. The fireplace was nearly filled with a vase of brilliant geranium. On a triangular shelf in each angle of the room stood also a similar vase, varied only as to its lovely contents. One or two smaller bouquets adorned the mantel; and late violets clustered about the open windows.

It is not the purpose of this work to do more than give, in detail, a picture of Mr. Landor's residence, as I found it.





X-ing a Paragrab



S it is well known that the "wise men" came "from the East," and as Mr. Touch-and-go Bullet-head came from the East, it follows that Mr. Bullet-head was a wise man; and if collateral proof of the matter be needed, here we have it,—Mr. B. was an editor. Irascibility was his sole foible; for in fact the obstinacy of which men accused him was anything but his foible, since he justly considered it his forte. It was his strong point, his virtue; and it would have required all the logic of a Brownson to convince him that it was "anything else."

I have shown that Touch-and-go Bullet-head was a wise man; and the only occasion on which he did not prove infallible was when, abandoning that legitimate home for all wise men, the East, he migrated to the city of Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis, or some place of a similar title, out West.

I must do him the justice to say, however, that when he made up his mind finally to settle in that town, it

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was under the impression that no newspaper, and consequently no editor, existed in that particular section of the country. In establishing the *Tea-Pot* he expected to have the field all to himself. I feel confident he never would have dreamed of taking up his residence in Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis had he been aware that, in Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis, there lived a gentleman named John Smith (if I rightly remember), who for many years had there quietly grown fat in editing and publishing the *Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis Gazette*. It was solely, therefore, on account of having been misinformed that Mr. Bullet-head found himself in Alex——, suppose we call it Nopolis, for “short,”—but, as he did find himself there, he determined to keep up his character for obst—, for firmness, and remain. So remain he did; and he did more; he unpacked his press, type, etc., etc., rented an office exactly opposite to that of the *Gazette*, and, on the third morning after his arrival, issued the first number of the *Alexan—*, that is to say, of the *Nopolis Tea-Pot*;—as nearly as I can recollect, this was the name of the new paper.

The leading article, I must admit, was brilliant, not to say severe. It was especially bitter about things in general, and as for the editor of the *Gazette*, he was torn all to pieces in particular. Some of Bullet-head’s remarks were really so fiery that I have always since that time been forced to look upon John Smith, who

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is still alive, in the light of a salamander. I cannot pretend to give all the *Tea-Pot's* paragraphs verbatim, but one of them runs thus:

“ Oh, yes! Oh, we perceive! Oh, no doubt! The editor over the way is a genius—O, my! Oh, goodness, gracious!—what is this world coming to? *O tempora!* *O Moses!* ”

A philippic at once so caustic and so classical alighted like a bombshell among the hitherto peaceful citizens of Nopolis. Groups of excited individuals gathered at the corners of the streets. Every one awaited, with heartfelt anxiety, the reply of the dignified Smith. Next morning it appeared as follows:

“ We quote from the *Tea-Pot* of yesterday the subjoined paragraph: ‘ Oh, yes! Oh, we perceive! Oh, no doubt! Oh, my! Oh, goodness! *O tempora!* *O Moses!* ’ Why, the fellow is all O! That accounts for his reasoning in a circle, and explains why there is neither beginning nor end to him, nor to anything he says. We really do not believe the vagabond can write a word that has n’t an O in it. Wonder if this O-ing is a habit of his? By the by, he came away from Down-East in a great hurry. Wonder if he O’s as much there as he does here? ‘ O! it is pitiful.’ ”

The indignation of Mr. Bullet-head at these scandalous insinuations I shall not attempt to describe. On the eel-skinning principle, however, he did not seem

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to be so much incensed at the attack upon his integrity as one might have imagined. It was the sneer at his style that drove him to desperation. What!—he, Touch-and-go Bullet-head!—not able to write a word without an *O* in it! He would soon let the jackanapes see that he was mistaken. Yes! he would let him see how much he was mistaken, the puppy! He, Touch-and-go Bullet-head, of Frogpondium, would let Mr. John Smith perceive that he, Bullet-head, could indite, if it so pleased him, a whole paragraph—ay! a whole article—in which that contemptible vowel should not once, not even once, make its appearance. But no; that would be yielding a point to the said John Smith. He, Bullet-head, would make no alteration in his style to suit the caprices of any Mr. Smith in Christendom. Perish so vile a thought! The *O* forever! He would persist in the *O*. He would be as *O*-wy as *O*-wy could be.

Burning with the chivalry of this determination, the great Touch-and-go, in the next *Tea-Pot*, came out merely with this simple but resolute paragraph in reference to this unhappy affair:

“The editor of the *Tea-Pot* has the honor of advising the editor of the *Gazette* that he (the *Tea-Pot*) will take an opportunity in to-morrow morning’s paper of convincing him (the *Gazette*) that he (the *Tea-Pot*) both can and will be his own master as regards style; he (the *Tea-Pot*) intending to show him (the *Gazette*)

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the supreme, and indeed the withering contempt with which the criticism of him (the *Gazette*) inspires the independent bosom of him (the *Tea-Pot*) by composing for the especial gratification (?) of him (the *Gazette*) a leading article, of some extent, in which the beautiful vowel, the emblem of eternity, yet so offensive to the hyper-exquisite delicacy of him (the *Gazette*) shall most certainly not be avoided by his (the *Gazette's*) most obedient, humble servant, the *Tea-Pot*. 'So much for Buckingham!' "

In fulfilment of the awful threat thus darkly intimated rather than decidedly enunciated, the great Bullet-head, turning a deaf ear to all entreaties for "copy," and simply requesting his foreman to "go to the d——l," when he (the foreman) assured him (the *Tea-Pot*!) that it was high time to "go to press"; turning a deaf ear to everything, I say, the great Bullet-head sat up until daybreak, consuming the mid-night oil, and absorbed in the composition of the really unparalleled paragraph which follows:

"So ho, John! how now? Told you so, you know. Don't crow, another time, before you're out of the woods! Does your mother know you're out? Oh, no, no! so go home at once, now, John, to your odious old woods of Concord! Go home to your woods, old owl, go! You won't? Oh, poh, poh, John, don't do so! You've got to go, you know! So go at once, and don't go slow; for nobody owns you here,

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you know. Oh! John, John, if you don't go you 're no *homo*—no! You 're only a fowl, an owl; a cow, a sow; a doll, a poll; a poor, old, good-for-nothing-to-nobody, log, dog, hog, or frog, come out of a Concord bog. Cool, now—cool! Do be cool, you fool! None of your crowing, old cock! Don't frown so—don't! Don't hollo, nor howl, nor growl, nor bow-wow-wow! Good Lord, John, how you do look! Told you so, you know; but stop rolling your goose of an old poll about so and go and drown your sorrows in a bowl! ”

Exhausted, very naturally, by so stupendous an effort, the great Touch-and-go could attend to nothing further that night. Firmly, composedly, yet with an air of conscious power, he handed his MS. to the devil in waiting, and then, walking leisurely home, retired with ineffable dignity to bed.

Meantime the devil, to whom the copy was entrusted, ran up-stairs to his “ case,” in an unutterable hurry, and forthwith made a commencement at “ setting ” the MS. “ up.”

In the first place, of course,—as the opening word was “ So,”—he made a plunge into the capital *S* hole and came out in triumph with a capital *S*. Elated by this success, he immediately threw himself upon the little-o box with a blindfold impetuosity, but who shall describe his horror when his fingers came up without the anticipated letter in their clutch? who shall paint his astonishment and rage at perceiving, as

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he rubbed his knuckles, that he had been only thumping them to no purpose against the botton of an empty box? Not a single little-o was in the little-o hole; and, glancing fearfully at the capital-O partition, he found that, to his extreme terror, in a precisely similar predicament. Awe-stricken, his first impulse was to rush to the foreman.

"Sir!" said he, gasping for breath, "I can't never set up nothing without no o's."

"What do you mean by that?" growled the foreman, who was in a very ill humor at being kept up so late.

"Why, sir, there beant an o in the office, neither a big un nor a little un!"

"What—what the d——l has become of all that were in the case?"

"I don't know, sir," said the boy, "but one of them ere *G'zette* devils is bin prowling 'bout here all night, and I spect he 's gone and cabbaged 'em every one."

"Dod rot him! I have n't a doubt of it," replied the foreman, getting purple with rage; "but I tell you what you do, Bob, that 's a good boy, you go over the first chance you get and hook every one of their *i's* and (d——n them!) their izzards."

"Jist so," replied Bob, with a wink and a frown; "I 'll be into 'em; I 'll let 'em know a thing or two; but in de meantime. that 'ere paragrab? Mus' go in

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to-night, you know, else there 'll be the d——l to pay, and——”

“And not a bit of pitch hot,” interrupted the foreman, with a deep sigh and an emphasis on the “bit.” “Is it a very long paragrab, Bob?”

“Should n’t call it a wery long paragrab,” said Bob.

“Ah, well, then! do the best you can with it! we must get to press,” said the foreman, who was over head and ears in work; “just stick in some other letter for o, nobody’s going to read the fellow’s trash, anyhow.”

“Wery well,” replied Bob, “here goes it!” and off he hurried to his case, muttering as he went: “Considdeble vell, them ’ere expressions, perticcler for a man as does n’t sw’ar. So I’s to gouge out all their eyes, eh? and d——n all their gizzards! Vell! this here’s the chap as is just able for to do it.” The fact is that although Bob was but twelve years old and four feet high, he was equal to any amount of fight in a small way.

The exigency here described is by no means of rare occurrence in printing-offices; and I cannot tell how to account for it, but the fact is indisputable, that when the exigency does occur, it almost always happens that *x* is adopted as a substitute for the letter deficient. The true reason, perhaps, is that *x* is rather the most superabundant letter in the cases, or at least was so, in the old times, long enough to render the substitution in

X-ing a Paragrab

question an habitual thing with printers. As for Bob, he would have considered it heretical to employ any other character in a case of this kind than the *x* to which he had been accustomed.

"I shell have to *x* this 'ere paragrab," said he to himself, as he read it over in astonishment, "but it's jest about the awfulest o-wy paragrab I ever did see": so *x* it he did, unflinchingly, and to press it went *x-ed*.

Next morning the population of Nopolis were taken all aback by reading in the *Tea-Pot* the following extraordinary leader:

"S*x* h*x*, J*x*h*n*! h*x*w n*x*w? T*x*ld y*x*u s*x*, y*x*u k*n*xw. D*x*n't c*r*xw, a*n*x*th*er time, b*e*f*x*re y*x*u 're xut x*f* the w*x*x*d*s! D*x*es y*x*ur m*x*th*e*r k*n*xw y*x*u 're xut? X*h*, n*x*, n*x*!—s*x* g*x* h*x*m*e* at x*n*c*e*, n*x*w, J*x*h*n*, t*x* y*x*ur x*d*i*x*us x*d* w*x*x*d*s x*f* C*x*n*c*x*r*d! G*x* h*x*m*e* t*x* y*x*ur w*x*x*d*s, x*d* xw*l*, g*x*! Y*x*u w*x*n't? X*h*, p*x*h, p*x*h, J*x*h*n*, d*x*n't d*x* s*x*! Y*x*u 've g*x*t t*x* g*x*, y*x*u k*n*xw! S*x* g*x* at x*n*c*e*, and d*x*n't g*x* s*l*xw; f*x*r n*x*b*x*d*y* xw*n*s y*x*u h*e*re, y*x*u k*n*xw. X*h*, J*x*h*n*, J*x*h*n*, i*f* y*x*u d*x*n't g*x* y*x*u 're n*x* h*x*m*x*—n*x*! Y*x*u 're x*n*l*y* a f*x*w*l*, a*n* xw*l*; a c*x*w, a s*x*w; a d*x*l*l*, a p*x*l*l*; a p*x*x*r* x*d* g*x*x*d*-f*x*r-n*x*t*h*-i*n*g-t*x*-n*x*b*x*d*y* l*x*g, d*x*g, h*x*g, x*r* f*r*x*g*, c*x*m*e* xut x*f* a C*x*n*c*x*r*d b*x*g. C*x*x*l*, n*x*w—c*x*x*l*! D*x* b*e* c*x*x*l*, y*x*u f*x*x*l*! N*x*n*e* x*f* y*x*ur c*r*xw*ing*, x*d* c*x*c*k*! D*x*n't f*r*xw*n* s*x*—d*x*n't! D*x*n't h*x*l*l*x, n*x*r h*x*w*l*, n*x*r g*r*xw*l*, n*x*r b*x*w-w*x*w-w*x*w! G*x*x*d* L*x*r*d*, J*x*h*n*, h*x*w y*x*u d*x* l*x*x*k*! T*x*ld y*x*u s*x*, y*x*u k*n*xw; b*u*t s*t*x*p* r*x*l*l*i*n*g y*x*ur g*x*x*s*e x*f*

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an xld pxll abxut sx, and gx and drxwn yxur sxrrxws in a bxwl! ”

The uproar occasioned by this mystical and cabalistical article is not to be conceived. The first definite idea entertained by the populace was, that some diabolical treason lay concealed in the hieroglyphics; and there was a general rush to Bullet-head's residence for the purpose of riding him on a rail; but that gentleman was nowhere to be found. He had vanished, no one could tell how; and not even the ghost of him has ever been seen since.

Unable to discover its legitimate object, the popular fury at length subsided, leaving behind it, by way of sediment, quite a medley of opinion about this unhappy affair.

One gentleman thought the whole an X-cellent joke.

Another said that, indeed, Bullet-head had shown much X-uberance of fancy.

A third admitted him X-entric, but no more.

A fourth could only suppose it the Yankee's design to X-press, in a general way, his X-asperation.

“ Say, rather, to set an X-ample to posterity,” suggested a fifth.

That Bullet-head had been driven to an extremity was clear to all; and in fact, since that editor could not be found, there was some talk about lynching the other one.

The more common conclusion, however, was that

X-ing a Paragrab

the affair was simply X-traordinary and in-X-plicable. Even the town mathematician confessed that he could make nothing of so dark a problem. X, everybody knew, was an unknown quantity; but in this case, as he properly observed, there was an unknown quantity of X.

The opinion of Bob, the devil, who kept dark about his having "X-ed the paragrab," did not meet with so much attention as I think it deserved, although it was very openly and very fearlessly expressed. He said that, for his part, he had no doubt about the matter at all; that it was a clear case, that Mr. Bullet-head "never could be persvaded fur to drink like other folks, but vas continually a-svigging o' that 'ere blessed XXX ale, and, as a naiteral consequence, it just puffed him up savage and made him X (cross) in the X-treme."





The Sphinx

DURING the dread reign of cholera in New York, I had accepted the invitation of a relative to spend a fortnight with him in the retirement of his cottage *orné* on the banks of the Hudson. We had here around us all the ordinary means of summer amusement; and what with rambling in the woods, sketching, boating, fishing, bathing, music, and books, we should have passed the time pleasantly enough, but for the fearful intelligence which reached us every morning from the populous city. Not a day elapsed which did not bring us news of the decease of some acquaintance. Then, as the fatality increased, we learned to expect daily the loss of some friend. At length we trembled at the approach of every messenger. The very air from the south seemed to us redolent with death. That palsy-ing thought, indeed, took entire possession of my soul. I could neither speak, think, nor dream of anything else. My host was of a less excitable temperament,

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and, although greatly depressed in spirits, exerted himself to sustain my own. His richly philosophical intellect was not at any time affected by unrealities. To the substances of terror he was sufficiently alive, but of its shadows he had no apprehension.

His endeavors to arouse me from the condition of abnormal gloom into which I had fallen were frustrated, in great measure, by certain volumes which I had found in his library. These were of a character to force into germination whatever seeds of hereditary superstition lay latent in my bosom. I had been reading these books without his knowledge, and thus he was often at a loss to account for the forcible impressions which had been made upon my fancy.

A favorite topic with me was the popular belief in omens,—a belief which, at this one epoch of my life, I was almost seriously disposed to defend. On this subject we had long and animated discussions; he maintaining the utter groundlessness of faith in such matters, I contending that a popular sentiment arising with absolute spontaneity, that is to say, without apparent traces of suggestion, had in itself the unmistakable elements of truth and was entitled to much respect.

The fact is, that soon after my arrival at the cottage there had occurred to myself an incident so entirely inexplicable, and which had in it so much of the portentous character, that I might well have been

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excused for regarding it as an omen. It appalled, and at the same time so confounded and bewildered me, that many days elapsed before I could make up my mind to communicate the circumstance to my friend.

Near the close of an exceedingly warm day, I was sitting, book in hand, at an open window, commanding, through a long vista of the river banks, a view of a distant hill, the face of which nearest my position had been denuded, by what is termed a landslide, of the principal portion of its trees. My thoughts had been long wandering from the volume before me to the gloom and desolation of the neighboring city. Uplifting my eyes from the page, they fell upon the naked face of the hill, and upon an object, upon some living monster of hideous conformation, which very rapidly made its way from the summit to the bottom, disappearing finally in the dense forest below. As this creature first came in sight, I doubted my own sanity, or at least the evidence of my own eyes; and many minutes passed before I succeeded in convincing myself that I was neither mad nor in a dream. Yet when I describe the monster, which I distinctly saw, and calmly surveyed through the whole period of its progress, my readers, I fear, will feel more difficulty in being convinced of these points than even I did myself.

Estimating the size of the creature by comparison with the diameter of the large trees near which it passed, the few giants of the forests which had

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escaped the fury of the landslide, I concluded it to be far larger than any ship of the line in existence. I say "ship of the line," because the shape of the monster suggested the idea; the hull of one of our seventy-fours might convey a very tolerable conception of the general outline. The mouth of the animal was situated at the extremity of a proboscis some sixty or seventy feet in length, and about as thick as the body of an ordinary elephant. Near the root of this trunk was an immense quantity of black shaggy hair, more than could have been supplied by the coats of a score of buffaloes; and projecting from this hair downwardly and laterally sprang two gleaming tusks not unlike those of the wild boar, but of infinitely greater dimension. Extending forward, parallel with the proboscis, and on each side of it, was a gigantic staff, thirty or forty feet in length, formed seemingly of pure crystal, and in shape a perfect prism; it reflected in the most gorgeous manner the rays of the declining sun. The trunk was fashioned like a wedge with the apex to the earth. From it there were outspread two pairs of wings, each wing nearly one hundred yards in length, one pair being placed above the other, and all thickly covered with metal scales, each scale apparently some ten or twelve feet in diameter. I observed that the upper and lower tiers of wings were connected by a strong chain. But the chief peculiarity of this horrible thing was the representation of a

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death's head, which covered nearly the whole surface of its breast, and which was as accurately traced in glaring white, upon the dark ground of the body, as if it had been there carefully designed by an artist. While I regarded this terrific animal, and more especially the appearance on its breast, with a feeling of horror and awe, with a sentiment of forthcoming evil, which I found it impossible to quell by any effort of the reason, I perceived the huge jaws at the extremity of the proboscis suddenly expand themselves, and from them there proceeded a sound so loud and so expressive of woe that it struck upon my nerves like a knell, and as the monster disappeared at the foot of the hill I fell at once, fainting, to the floor.

Upon recovering, my first impulse, of course, was to inform my friend of what I had seen and heard, and I can scarcely explain what feeling of repugnance it was which, in the end, operated to prevent me.

At length, one evening, some three or four days after the occurrence, we were sitting together in the room in which I had seen the apparition, I occupying the same seat at the same window, and he lounging on a sofa near at hand. The association of the place and time impelled me to give him an account of the phenomenon. He heard me to the end, at first laughed heartily, and then lapsed into an excessively grave demeanor, as if my insanity was a thing beyond suspicion. At this instant I again had a distinct view of

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the monster, to which, with a shout of absolute terror, I now directed his attention. He looked eagerly, but maintained that he saw nothing, although I designated minutely the course of the creature as it made its way down the naked face of the hill.

I was now immeasurably alarmed, for I considered the vision either as an omen of my death, or, worse, as the forerunner of an attack of mania. I threw myself passionately back in my chair, and for some moments buried my face in my hands. When I uncovered my eyes, the apparition was no longer visible.

My host, however, had in some degree resumed the calmness of his demeanor, and questioned me very rigorously in respect to the conformation of the visionary creature. When I had fully satisfied him on this head, he sighed deeply, as if relieved of some intolerable burden, and went on to talk, with what I thought a cruel calmness, of various points of speculative philosophy, which had heretofore formed subject of discussion between us. I remember his insisting very especially, among other things, upon the idea that the principal source of error in all human investigations lay in the liability of the understanding to underrate or to overvalue the importance of an object, through mere misadmeasurement of its propinquity. "To estimate properly, for example," he said, "the influence to be exercised on mankind at large by the thorough diffusion of democracy, the distance of the epoch

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at which such diffusion may possibly be accomplished should not fail to form an item in the estimate. Yet can you tell me one writer on the subject of government who has ever thought this particular branch of the subject worthy of discussion at all ? ”

He here paused for a moment, stepped to a book-case, and brought forth one of the ordinary synopses of natural history. Requesting me then to exchange seats with him, that he might the better distinguish the fine print of the volume, he took my armchair at the window, and, opening the book, resumed his discourse very much in the same tone as before.

“ But for your exceeding minuteness,” he said, “ in describing the monster, I might never have had it in my power to demonstrate to you what it was. In the first place, let me read to you a school-boy account of the genus *Sphinx*, of the family *Crepuscularia*, of the order *Lepidoptera*, of the class of *Insecta*—or insects. The account runs thus :

“ ‘ Four membranous wings covered with little colored scales of metallic appearance; mouth forming a rolled proboscis, produced by an elongation of the jaws, upon the sides of which are found the rudiments of mandibles and downy palpi; the inferior wings retained to the superior by a stiff hair; antennæ in the form of an elongated club, prismatic; abdomen pointed. The death’s-headed Sphinx has occasioned much terror among the vulgar, at times, by the melancholy kind of

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cry which it utters and the insignia of death which it wears upon its corselet.' "

He here closed the book and leaned forward in the chair, placing himself accurately in the position which I had occupied at the moment of beholding "the monster."

"Ah, here it is," he presently exclaimed; "it is reascending the face of the hill, and a very remarkable looking creature I admit it to be. Still, it is by no means so large or so distant as you imagined it; for the fact is that, as it wriggles its way up this thread, which some spider has wrought along the window-sash, I find it to be about the sixteenth of an inch in its extreme length, and also about the sixteenth of an inch distant from the pupil of my eye."



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