

LETTER BAG OF THE GREAT WESTERN.

This work, by the author of "Sam Slick," our celebrated fellow-countryman, Judge Halliburton, has just appeared. From extracts furnished by American papers we take the following scraps.

From the Journal of an Actress.

GOING DOWN THE AVON FROM BRISTOL. — At one point we passed the site of the intended aerial bridge, a bold conception—too bold and too grand ever to have sprung from the muddy heads of the Cranes and Bitterns of Bristol. A rope waved gracefully across the yawning chasm, so slender and so small as to resemble the silken thread of the spider, who is the first and best of Nature's great architects and bridge builders. It was almost an ideal line, it was so tiny. It would have passed for a mathematical one if it had been straight, it was so imaginary; but slight as it was, it afforded a secure support for a basket containing two passengers, who were thus conveyed with the rapidity of birds from one of the precipitous banks to the other. It was Ariel and his companion descending on a sunbeam.

My attention was attracted by the sudden stoppage of this little mimic balloon in midway, when a cheer was given from the winged chariot of the sky, and a musket was discharged, the quick, sharp report of which was echoed and reverberated for some minutes among the rocks and caverns of this stupendous gorge. When the last sounds faded on our ears, a deafening cheer was returned from our steamer with hearty good will, and we passed on. How animating is this cheer, so different from the vile clapping of hands of the odious theatre! oh that my ears may never again be profaned by that gas-light, heartless, unmeaning welcome!

SHIRTS AT SEA.—26th.—Rose, toiletied, and went on deck: what a lovely sight! The sea lay like a mirror, reflecting the heavens on its smooth and polished surface. Light clouds far away in the horizon looked like the snow-capt summits of the everlasting hills, placed there to confine this sea of molten glass within its own dominion, while the distant vessels with their spiral masts and silvery drapery rise from its surface, like spirits of the deep, come to look upon and woo the gentle Zephyrs. Sea-nymphs spreading their wings and disporting on their liquid meadows after their recent terror and affright. They seem like ideal beings—thoughts traversing the mind—shadows or rather bright lights—emanations perhaps rather than self-existences—immaterialities—essences—spirits in the moonlight. Wrote journal—mended a pair of silk stockings, hemmed a pocket handkerchief, night-capped, and went to bed—to dream—to idealize—to build aerial castles, to get the hysterics, and to sleep.

A WATER SPOUT.—29th. A shout on deck, all hands rushed up, what a strange perversion of terms is this. It is a waterspout: how awful! The thirsty cloud stooping to invigorate itself with a draught of the sea; opening its huge mouth and drinking, yet not even deigning to wait for it, but gulping as it goes—we fire into it and vanishes, its watery load is returned, and "like the baseless fabric of a vision, it leaves no wreck behind." It is one of the wonders of the great deep. That rude shock has dispelled it. Thus is it in life. The sensitive mind releases its grasp of the ideal when it comes in contact with grossness. It shrinks within itself. It retreats in terror. Yet what a wonderful sight it is! how nearly were we engulfed, swallowed up, and carried to the sky to be broken to pieces in our fall, as the sew-mew feeds on a shell-fish by dashing it to pieces on a rock.

From a letter of Cato Mignonette, the colored steward, to Mr. Lavender.

JUDGES OF WINE.—As to de men passengers, I always let him shift for demselves, for dere isn't very few ob dem is real superfine gentlemen, but jist refidge a leetle warnished ober de surface, like all pretence. Dey all make him believe dat dey know wine, when, dere isn't hardly none ob em know him by name even. One buccra says, 'Steward, I can't drink dis wine; it is werry poor stuff. What de deuce do you mean by gibbin me sich trash as dis? he no fit to drink at all: change him directly, and gib me some dat is fit for a gentleman.' Well, I takes up de wine, and looks at him werry knowin, and den whisper in his ear, not to speak so loud, lest every body hear; and I put de finger on my nose and nods; and I goes and brings him anoder bottle ob de werry identical same wine, and he taste him, smack his lip, and say, 'Ah! dat is de wine, steward! Always bring me dat wine, and I remember you when I leah de ship.' Hush! I say, massa; not so loud, sir if you please, for dere is only a werry few bottles ob dat are wine, and I keep him for you; for I sees you knows de good wine when you sees him, which is more nor most gentlemen does. Dey is cussed stupid is, dem whites, and werry conceited, too, Mr. Labender; but dere is nothing like him lettin him hab his own way.

DIFFERENCE IN SYSTEMS.—We hab got too many mastere here! Mr. Labender, a great deal too many. Now, when I was been in de line packets, sir, and want um pitcher, I go captain, and say, Captain, I want um pitcher, and he say, werry well, Mr. Mignonette, (he neber call me steward, like de sarce, proud man-o'-war buccras do) werry well, Mr. Mignonette, den buy um; and I buys um for one dollar, and charge him one dollar and half—de half dollar for de trouble, and leetle enough it is too; for crockery be werry brittle—so far, so good. Now when I has occasion, I go captain, and say, I want um pitcher, sir. Werry well, steward, he say, make a report in writing. Den I goes and makes a report for

pitcher in writing for de skipper; and skipper he makes anoder report to de great captain in Bristol; and dat captain, he call togeder de great big directors—plaguy rich men dey is, too, I tell you, and he read my report to de skipper, and skipper report to him, and dey all make speeces round de table, as they does in congress, and if dey is in good humour it is voted—yes, I ab him. Den captain he send for clerk, and clerk he issue order for pitcher to some white fellow or anoder, to Bristol, who send me one worth a dollar, and charge um boat two dollar for him. Well, company lose half dollar, I lose half dollar, and all lose a great deal of time. Werry bad derangement, dat, sir, werry bad, indeed; fore dere is too much cheenery in it to work well. By and by dey find out too many cooks spoil de broth, or else I knows noting—dats all.

JOHN SKINNER'S ACCOUNT OF A STEAM-SHIP.—We travels day and night here, all at the same pace, up hill and down dale, and this I will say, the Cornwall hills are fools to some of the seas we see from the ship; but it's here goes—who's afraid—and down we dashes as hard as hard as we can lay legs to it. They carries the light on the top instead of each side the box, as we do ashore, which makes passing other lines in the night very awkward, for there is no hedge to mark the road, and show you the distance of the drains; but it's like Saulsbury plain in a snow storm, all white as far as you can see, and no mile-stones or lamp-posts; and you can't reign up short, for it takes some time to put the drags on the wheel to bring her to a stand still. How they finds their way in the dark is a puzzle to me, but I suppose they have travelled it so often, they have got it by heart like. I often think if the lynch pin was to cum out, and they to lose a wheel, or the two to cum off, or the axle-tree break, what a pretty mess they'd be in, and yet arter all, as for speed, big as she is, I'd trot her for a treat with master's pony, and not be a bit afraid. But what under the sun could make the Bristol people call her a boat, for I'm positive she's the biggest ship I ever see! They have to hang up two bells in her, one aft, and one in the forepart, for one aint enough to be heard all over her. The bow they call "far west," it is so far off—the stern, "down east," and the sentre, where them black negro-looking fellows, the stokers, live, "Africa." The engines is wonderful, that's sertain.

LES CHEMISIERS DE PARIS.

A shirt-making monomania has lately sprung up in Paris, and whoever will walk down the Rue Richilieu and the Rue Neuve Vivienne will see in gigantic letters, "Les Chemisiers de Paris," solely "consecrated" to that very useful article. The "Charivari" thus illustrates the tribe:

A bourgeois, wearing a flannel waistcoat, and carrying a cotton umbrella, after having remained for a long time contemplating the splendid array of frilled shirts in the chemisier's window, at length decides on purchasing one. A gentleman, wearing an exaggerated shirt, comes forward, and the following dialogue invariably ensues:

Bourgeois. Sir, I wish you would show me some shirts.
Chemisier. At what price? We have them from 50 to 500 francs.
Bourgeois. The dozen?
Chemisier. Oh! dear no. Each shirt.
Bourgeois. This is rather dear.
Chemisier. Not when you consider, sir, that nothing now remains but the shirt to distinguish the gentleman from the vulgar herd. Every one now wears monkey jackets, silk hats, and yellow gloves. But a man who wears a good shirt, *enfin Monsieur*, one of our most celebrated authors has justly said, '*la chemise fait l'homme*.' But what sort of shirt will Monsieur prefer? We have the shirt with large, with small, and without plaits; frilled or without *jabot*; the shirt which buttons in front, at the side, and behind; the shirt which is put over the head; or that which is put on like a pair of trousers.

Bourgeois. Well, make me a sixty franc shirt.
Chemisier. At that low price it will be but a common calico affair. Does Monsieur wish for a summer or winter shirt?
Bourgeois. One that I can wear either summer or winter, to be sure.
Chemisier. A shirt for the four seasons. That will be 15 francs extra (taking the measure). When Monsieur walks with Madame does he give the right or left arm?
Bourgeois. Generally the right, if I remember rightly. But what is that to you?
Chemisier. Why, we make the right sleeve a thought longer than the left, and the wristband button must be sewn so as to support a great strain. Does Monsieur ever sneeze?
Bourgeois. What can a cold in the head have to do with my shirt?
Chemisier. Perhaps Monsieur is not aware that whenever he sneezes his whole frame is shaken by a convulsive movement. The shirt collar must be made so as to allow of this movement, if it ever take place, otherwise an attack of apoplexy might ensue, or, what would be equally important, the shirt button would probably be torn off.
Bourgeois. Make the collar large then.
Chemisier. That will be four francs extra.
Bourgeois. And if I furnish the calico?

Chemisier. Oh, Monsieur is at liberty to do so if he pleases: we shall charge him nothing extra for that. Your shirt will come to 74 francs, you shall have it in a month, and if you will pass every five days to try it on I should be obliged to you—

"Du chemisier Français tel est le caractère."

Bourgeois. No extra charge for my furnishing the calico—really you are very obliging; and I must try this on every five days. I'm sorry that I ever entered your shop. The common shirts at 6 francs have not the recommendation of being so dear, but then they are much better.

From Cooper's Naval History.

FIRE ON BOARD—GOOD EFFECTS OF COOLNESS.

On the 10th of April, the New York, John Adams and Enterprise sailed. While making the passage, just as the music had been beating to grog, a heavy explosion was heard near the cockpit of the flag ship, and the lower part of the vessel was immediately filled with smoke. It was an appalling moment, for every body on board was aware that a quantity of powder, not far from the magazine, must have exploded—that the fire was necessarily scattered in the passage—that the ship was in danger. Captain Chaucey was passing the drummer when the explosion was heard, and he ordered him to beat to quarters.

The alarm had not been given a moment, when the men were going steadily to their guns, and other stations, under a standing regulation which directed this measure in the event of a cry of fire, as the most certain means of the officers' entire command of the ship, and of preventing confusion. The influence of discipline was well exhibited on this trying occasion; for while there is nothing so fearful to the seamen as the alarm of fire, the people went to their quarters as regularly as in the moment of confidence. The sea being smooth and the weather moderate, the commodore himself now issued an order to hoist out the boats. The command, which had been given under the best feelings of the human heart, was most unfortunately timed. The people had no sooner left the guns to execute it, than the jib-boom, bowsprit, sprit sailyard, night heads, and every spot forward, was lined with men, under the idea of getting as far as possible from the magazine. Some even leaped overboard and swam for the nearest vessel.

The situation of the ship was now exceedingly critical. With a fire known to be kindled near the magazine, and a crew in a great measure disorganized, the chances of escape were much diminished. But Captain Chaucey rallied a few followers, and reminding them that they might as well be blown up, though on deck as there, he led the way below, into passages choked with smoke, where the danger was rapidly increasing. There, by means of wet blankets, taken from the purser store room, and water thrown by hand, he began to contend with the fire, in a spot where a spark scattered even by the efforts made to extinguish the flames might, in an instant, have left nothing of all on board but their names. Mr. David Potter, the first lieutenant, who meets us in so many scenes of trial and danger, had ascended from the ward room, by means of a stern ladder, and he and the other officers seconded the noble efforts of their intrepid commander. The men were got in from the spars forward, water was abundantly supplied, and the ship was saved.

The accident was supposed to have occurred in consequence of a candle having been taken from a lantern, while the gunner was searching for some object in a store room that led from the cockpit. A quantity of marine cartridges, and the powder horns used in priming the guns, and it is thought some meal powder exploded. Two doors leading to the magazine passage were forced open, and nearly all the adjoining bulk heads were thrown down. Nineteen officers and men were injured, of whom fourteen died. The sentinel at the magazine passage was driven quite through the filling-room door.

ANECDOTES OF THE SIEGE OF ACRE.

Though hostilities were carried on with such vigour and apparent rancour in the trenches and on the breach, yet there were frequent suspensions of operations, and the distinguished French Generals, on such occasions, derived much pleasure from visiting Sir Sidney on board the Tigre. On one of these occasions, and after the besieging party had made some progress, Generals Kleber and Junot were, with Sir Sidney Smith, walking the quarter deck of the Tigre, in a very amiable mood of amicability, one on each side the English Commander-in-Chief.

After a few turns in silence, Junot, regarding the battered fortifications that lay before him, and they being dwindled by distance into much insignificance, thus broke out in the spirit of false prophecy:

"Commodore, mark my words! three days hence, by this very hour, the French tri-colour shall be flying on the remains of that miserable town."

Sir Sidney very quickly replied, "My good General, before you shall have that town, I will blow it and you to Jericho."

"*Bien oblige!* very much obliged," Kleber observed, "much obliged indeed—it will be all in our way to India."

"With all my heart," rejoined Sir Sidney, "I shall be most happy to assist you, Bonaparte, and your whole army, forward in that style; and we will commence as soon as you please."

The seamen of the squadron took each their turn for the military