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A PEEP AT ETON.

From royal Windsor to learned Eton is but a mile. As you stand on the Round Tower, or the North Terrace or Castle, you can see both Eton and Harrow-on-the-Hill; but the "distant spires and antique towers" of the first love of King Henry VI, the first of English schools, whose halls cradled so many illustrious Englishmen, and whose playgrounds "won Waterloo," captures the eye by its intrinsic interest, as well as by the loveliness of the panorama which unfolds towards it, and the glimpses of hiding beauty caught through the dense foliage of the slopes.

You cross a bridge over the Thames—which is here about 200 yards wide—and at once pass from the town of Windsor into the one long street like a Lower Canadian village, paved with stone, and grown wise and grey, which goes by the name of Eton Town. The people move and have their being by the grace of the college, and the shop-keepers, like those of Oxford, seem to have inhaled the educational and athletic atmosphere of the place. The barber talks as familiarly of Horace as of hair; the pastry-cook translates Livy as well as bakes buns; the chemist's apprentice tells "college jokes to cure the dumps;" and the very watermen swear, intelligently, "by jove," and sing snatches of very unclassical Latin songs.

Over four hundred years have passed since the scholarship commemorated his nineteenth birthday by laying the foundation stone, yet his memory is as green to Etonians, as that of King Alfred to Oxford; and as you enter the courtyard, the first sight which meets you is the fine bronze statue of the founder in full robes, sceptre in hand, as if presiding with paternal care over the life of the collegers and oppidians in the quadrangle. The buildings form two large quadrangles, and with the exception of the chapel, which is a beautiful Gothic structure, are somewhat disappointing in appearance, being built of brick. Yet, what grandeur of architecture could increase the fame and associations of Eton. One must be prepared in these old schools of the Old World to find that time's tooth has gnawed symmetry away; that the heels and hinds of several generations of boys have worn down stone and wood steps and bannisters into shining shapelessness. Disappointment at Eton's exterior wears away. You stroll through the Upper School, extending the whole length of the quadrangle, and life seems to animate the marble busts of old Etonians. Everywhere in the oak panels the busy sharp knives of the boys have made their mark. Under the bust of Fox I read, within a small space, the names of Wellington, Fox, Chatham, Howe, Canning, Gray and Hallam, cut by themselves when oppidians. The Lower School under the Long Chamber is the "*lacubula* of Eton." Its desks and forms are cut up, as if a school of Vandal's sons had been let loose to imitate their northern sires. The sight recalled to me the remark of a boy in the King's School of rare old Chester. He had just pointed out to me an ancient pulpit in the school room, when spying a much more venerable looking desk near by, I innocently asked him its age. "Oh, that is not ancient, but *we've cut it old looking!*" It is a surprise to me that schoolmasters have not long ago made the carrying of knives at school as illegal as revolvers; but maybe, it is

because of their charity. Perhaps too, they never lose their boyish tastes, and may feel, as one in this Chester school told me he felt—when pointing up at the ceiling, sixty feet high, literally covered with pen and paper arrows, and daubs of inked paper, shot up by the boys—he said he would not for worlds take them down. No doubt the sight kept the lads who were gone, green in his memory.

I was curious to see where the Etonians roost at night. The collegers sleep in the Hall and Long Chamber. The oppidians live out of the college, principally in the master's houses. The one I visited lodged thirty-two boys. Each boy has his own room, where he sleeps and has his meals. The beds fold up out of the way; the washing basins and toilet are also hidden from view; and your idea of the room is that of a snug nest, just such as you dreamed about yourself, before you were in your teens, where cricket-bats and school-books suggest the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and a queer jumble of photographs, cricket caps, belts, bats, school almanacs and nick-knacks adorn the walls.

You pass from the cloisters under an iron covered arch, and enter the playing fields, intersected by the Chalvey stream running into the Thames, and crossed by the old Sheep's Bridge. The rich close-cut grass, shaded by splendid elms and horse-chestnuts, is every here and there dotted with the boys busy at cricket. One of the finest sights in England is the boy devotion to athletics, made more manly and gentlemanly by the sympathy and participation of their masters. After looking at the hundreds of stout built lads who bat and bowl and field in Eton, and thinking that this is only a part of a great institution all over the land, one can laugh in his loyal sleeve at people who talk so flippantly of the degeneracy of England's stock of men. Verily, flippancy never went to Eton for observation.

Even Dunce shares to the full in the honors of the playground. For the nonce, he may be Dunce at his desk, and dull as a beetle, but he crack batsman or oarsman, his cup of joy is filled to overflowing by the very Dominie who despairs in school of teaching *that* young idea how to shoot. There is a something, too, which turns out Etonians gentlemen. No doubt there is a good deal in the blood, and a great deal in the *esprit de corps*, animated by the long muster roll of honorable names, and the rich and regal associations, but I venture the explanation that it is mainly because boys in Eton, as in all England, are talked to like men, not treated like rakes; are trusted and made truth-loving by certain license with wholesome restraints; that the discipline is one in which they are asked from *sense of honour* to share.

I was agreeably impressed here, as elsewhere in England, with their manly-boyish dress, the pretty jacket—fashionable in Montreal in my school days—and the gentlemanly beaver or "stove-pipe" generally worn, and which I think very manly.

Football seemed to have its votaries as hungry as ever, notwithstanding the public feeling against the sport. Eton rivals Rugby in the yearly chapter of accidents. Coming home on the "Moravian," young A.—, fresh from the *Alma Mater* of Tom Brown, thus defended his school: "Our game cannot be so awfully rough after all. At Eton last year, they had four *legs* broken, and we only had *four cellar*