

waters beneath, or in anything around me. The ship was a prison—its nausea intolerable. It pitched, it rolled, it creaked, calling up as many melancholy ideas as would the gibbet of a highwayman, swinging on a windy night, on Bagshot heath. The passage was, to crown my misery, a most tempestuous one. Every second day, at the most moderate computation, produced a gale, and there was no rest for the aching, throbbing head that would have given all the champagne "to which it was heir," for one week of uninterrupted repose. Nor indeed would this have been any very serious sacrifice, inasmuch as for three weeks, I never sat down to the dinner table; and when eventually I did summon courage to approach it, there was no enjoyment for me of the really excellent repasts which had been prepared; for if one eye was upon the table, the other most industriously measured the distance from the cabin door, while the whole system was pre-disposed much more to one description of bolt than the other. In fine, this punishment (I presume for my sins) was literally a slow and lingering death, involving the utter prostration of every energy, physical and moral. The only consolation I had was, that my infinite misery could be indulged in without my being subjected to the unfeeling scrutiny—the provoking remarks of those who have never known the horrors of that most incomprehensible of all physical weaknesses—sea-sickness. There were only four passengers on board, and the captain, as gallant and considerate a fellow as ever had the misfortune to bustle about in a tarpaulin hat and pea jacket, having given us up the ladies cabin, I could there be as miserable as I pleased, without being teased by the affectation of a sympathy which professed to pity what it could not, by any possibility, comprehend. However, as there is a limit to human happiness, so is there a term to human misery. On the morning of the forty-fifth day from our departure, and after forty-eight hours of the only calm we had experienced during the voyage, we made Sandy Hook, and I confess that I could scarcely have felt more pleasure than I did when this first met my view, had the veritable Theodore himself, of that name, stood before me.

And apropos, or mal-apropos if the reader chooses, to the introduction of this distinguished writer, who has, since my departure from England, paid the great debt exacted alike from kings and beggars—from wits and fools. I had been engaged, during the few months which intervened between my return from Spain and departure for Canada, in the continuation of the adventures of his celebrated hero "Jack Brag," who, it will be recollected, was transferred by him at the close of his third volume to a fitting theatre for his future action—the Commissariat Staff of Sir DeLacy Evans, in Spain. Mr. Brag, as the readers of that humorous yet justly severe production, which is meant to decry and put down vulgar assumption, must be aware, is made by the witty author, to join the British Legion in the important capacity of Acting Assistant Deputy-Deputy Assistant Commissary General, but one so eminently versed in the nicer proprieties of life, could not long be expected to continue in that somewhat inactive station. His worth and peculiar talents having attracted the notice of the great Hero of Arlaban, Mr. Brag is made to figure on the personal Staff of the immortal Evans, and under circumstances which well sustain his former character. Hook was delighted with this continuation of his own satire, and after an attentive perusal, declared it ought to secure to me, at least, five hundred pounds. He promised to use all his influence with Colburn (or, failing with him, with Bentley) to cause that sum to be paid to me for the copy-right. Now for some reason or other, which I never could comprehend, neither of these "crack" publishers had, since their publication of my "Ecarté," evinced much inclination to en-

* There is a curious anecdote connected with this work which, showing as it does, that the humor or caprice of a critic should be consulted quite as religiously as the ancients were wont to consult the stars before offering their oblations, may be here advantageously inserted for the benefit of young authors. A few days before "Ecarté" made its appearance before the London public, Jerdan, the Leviathan of the *Literary Gazette*, had some disagreement with Colburn, and wrote to him to say that whatever he next published he would cut up in his *Review*. "Ecarté" was the fated next book, and no sooner had it issued from the counter of the publisher, when Jerdan, throwing all his acrimony into his pen, sought to annihilate it in a few brief sentences, which Colburn, who showed me the *impartial critic's* note, subsequently declared to me had had a most pernicious effect upon the sale of the book. And it was in this spirit that he, who lauded "Deazley's *Rome*" to the skies, pronounced "Ecarté" (a book which others have said ought to be in the hands of every young man designing to visit Paris) a publication fit only for the stews of London. But the best part of the story is to be told. On the very next day after the ill-natured and threatened critique had gone forth to the public, there was an evening reunion of literary people at Mr. Redding's—the author of the "Bechford Papers" &c.—at which were present Harrison Ainsworth, Thomas Campbell, Silk Buckingham the author of "Tremaine," Charles Ollier, and a number of other distinguished writers of the day whose names I do not recollect. Late in the evening and after coffee had been served, Jerdan made his appearance flushed, as was his wont, with the fumes of the "Tuscan grape." After conversing a short time with those who were most intimate with him, he came up to me, a personal stranger, and said "he should be very happy to have the pleasure of taking wine with me." Most of those in the room had been aware of the severity—nay, bitter personality—of the critic's remarks the preceding day, and they naturally felt some surprise at his movement. It was soon, however, evident that the *Solon* of the *Literary Gazette* did not know whom he was thus honoring, and their wonder gave place to amusement. I rose from a tabouret on which I had been sitting near the feet of the mistress of the house, and exchanging a significant glance with her, observed that Mr. Jerdan did the author of "Ecarté" too much honor in inviting him to drink wine with him, but that nevertheless I should be most happy to accept his proposal. Jerdan stared, drew up his eyebrows, seemed for the first time conscious of a *mal entendu*, bowed stiffly, sipped his wine, and then turned to converse with somebody else.

I allude to this anecdote particularly, because it tends to show how completely the fame of a writer is at the mercy and in the power of the critic. Here is a man professing to guide the public taste, who without any personal feeling towards myself, not even knowing me, when he wrote his *Review*, denounces a book he has eagerly devoured, not for the purpose of seeking food for commendation, but with the avowed object of collecting materials for disparage. And wherefore? Simply to gratify a low and unworthy feeling of pique, to which a man of letters should be immeasurably superior. Had Mr. Jerdan not given

courage my literary efforts, so that I have had little hope of any other success than what the promised influence, which I knew to be great, might command. Hook took some trouble in the matter, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Both publishers, he said, considered the dramatis personæ in the book to be too faithfully sketched to be mistaken, and the strictures on the radicals of Westminster too severe. The following was his last note to me on the subject, announcing the failure of his negotiation with Colburn:—

"ATHENEUM, Saturday.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am obliged to leave for the Grove this afternoon, but shall be back to call on you on Thursday about one. Colburn finally declines the *Brag*, although it has been submitted to another reader, of, as I conclude, a similar radical mode of thinking as the former. When I call on Thursday, I shall bring the *Brag* complete, and from you take it to Bentley, with my opinion. I wish I was not obliged to go so soon, as I would have called to-day, because as time presses with you, I am the more anxious for the success of the book.

"Till Thursday, believe me yours faithfully,

"———, Brompton."

"THEOD. HOOK."

The negotiation with Bentley was not more fortunate, and the manuscript, the concluding chapters of which were not completed when I commenced my arrangements for leaving England, was returned to me by the warm-hearted and gifted individual who had, as he himself expressed it, acted as my ambassador on the occasion. Still I do not despair of having the book published yet; nor this by reason of any merit that may be discovered in the work itself, as from the fact of its being an *apanage* to one of the most popular and sarcastic of the many publications that have emanated from the fertile imagination of the lamented author for whom Colburn & Bentley have almost exclusively published. But to return.

On Sunday, the 25th of March, we entered the fine harbour of New York, the approach to which, bounded by the magnificent scenery of Brooklyn on the one hand, and by the picturesque shores of Staten Island on the other, was exceedingly beautiful. The day was fine, the atmosphere serene and clear. The sun shone brightly, even warmly for the season of the year, and the numbers of small boats that glided about in the offing, spreading their white lateen sails to the breeze, afforded a perceptible and pleasing contrast to the arrival of the stranger near the gloomy English metropolis, where nothing meets the eye and ear but dense and seemingly interminable rows of filthy colliers, a lowering and misty atmosphere, the ho-heave-ho of fellows naked to the waist, and dark with soot as their own coal, discharging their cargo from the lighters, the din of noisy fish women, slang dogs'-meat-men, and all the thousand-and-one vulgarities to which the Eastern portion of the city of London is heir, and which renders any approach to it by water, and in this direction, a matter of melancholy, and certainly not of pleasure. As soon as we were moored at the quai, a well-dressed and civil custom-house officer came on board, requested us to point out what baggage we wished to have set apart for our immediate use, and without any other demand than our simple assurance that there was nothing liable to duty in what was selected, suffered it to be conveyed to the neat hackney coaches taken from the number of those waiting to receive us.

We alighted at the Carleton, a large new hôtel in a central part of the Broadway, and found it, what an American gentleman in London assured me I should, abounding in comfort and accommodation. There was a very large ordinary, or table d'hôte, at which nearly two hundred persons sat down every day at five o'clock. The table was exceedingly well supplied with every description of viands, and I certainly could not observe any of that indecent haste in the despatch of the meal, which had been ascribed to the Americans of a better condition, by Captain Hamilton and subsequent writers. At an earlier hour of the day, there was a dinner served at the same table, principally for young men, clerks in the different shops of the city, who "boarded," that is to say, ate their meals there; and as there was a limit to the time when they could be spared from their several avocations, there was necessarily a corresponding celerity of despatch in the process of mastication. This rule applies to every hôtel in every city of America; but it must be confessed the same practice prevails in Canada. The moment the last morsel of food has been swallowed, a clerk in a Canadian store (of course there are a few exceptions) draws back his chair, and rushes out of the room as rapidly as he entered it. This eternal shuffling, rising, and hurrying off, often before the last course is placed upon the table, (operations not of course performed simultaneously, but by the feeders in succession,) produces a discord and inconvenience which constitute any thing but the agreeable either in sound or appearance to those who remain behind. Nay, there is something even offensive in the practice. While an Englishman, accustomed to any thing like decent society, would as soon think of getting into bed with his boots on as of rising from a table before the cloth has been removed, most business people, both in the States and in Canada, seem to make it a matter of rivalry to swallow their food in the least possible space of time. In both countries it seems to be a fruit of that "go-ahead" system which lays so emphatic a value upon time, and in all probability will not be discontinued until ease and luxury

indulgence to this paltry and ungenerous spirit. I should have written many more words than I have. These might not have greatly benefited the public it is true, but they would at least have profited me, and that is no mean consideration. Of course, I am prepared to expect, that should the *impartial critic* of the *Literary Gazette* notice these remarks, he will do so in the same spirit in which he reviewed "Ecarté."