

Well I remember when a child, viewing this barbarous relic of a by-gone age, with the greatest admiration. I had never seen a darkie, and I took the picture for a likeness of his satanic majesty.

How it came there I do not know, or for what purpose it served as a sign, and I have often wondered if it is still hanging in the same place, and teaching the same trite truism to the passers by. I wonder if "Notes and Queries" ever took note of it, or the reverend antiquarian society let it depart in peace.

It was the portrait of a negro, certainly drawn from the dark side of nature, with no flattering pencil, sitting in a tub, making shocking big mouths and wry faces, while a sturdy John Bull, a genuine pup of the old bull dog breed, applied a scrubbing brush with vigorous energy to the bare shoulders of the dark-skinned African, grinning with supreme delight at the chained and helpless victim.

At the base of this odd picture, was appended in red letters, the moral of the benevolent intentions of the operators :

#### LABOR IN VAIN !

Whether the ancient fathers of the city intended this as a reflection upon the whole African race, or meant it to convey a gentle hint to the inmates of the jail, that the task of attempting to whiten characters blackened by years of crime was hopeless or to admonish the gentlemen of the long robe, who assembled in the Court House twice a year, to sit in judgment upon the rebellious weavers,—who were fond of kicking up a row and breaking the windows and heads of the lieges,—not to reverse the picture by turning white into black, we are not aware.

The nearest approach to solving this difficult problem was achieved by a negro lad of twelve years of age. The boy had been taken off the wreck of a slaver near the Guinea coast by a Captain Brown who commanded a merchant vessel, "the John Bull of Portsmouth. The young negro was the only living creature left in the doomed ship. The captain was a friend of Mr. C——, of B——, in the county of S——, England, to whom he recommended the poor lad, who took him into his service, and he soon became an especial favorite with his master.

It was during the time when phrenology was making a great stir in the scientific world, and the writings of Gall and Spurzheim had produced a perfect mania for the new science. Mr. C—— was an enthusiastic advocate of the new theory, and saw no sacrilege in Home disintering the body of his mother, in order to obtain a cast of her head. Mr. C—— had fitted up a large hall for casts and skulls, the latter ranged in ghastly rows, seemed to laugh at death and show their grinning teeth in defiance of decay. This horrid charnel house, which Mr. C—— appropriately termed his *scullery*, was the favorite resort of all the disciples of the marvellous new theory. And rotting bones and casts from living heads were daily consulted to attest its truth. John Bull—for the lad had been named after the vessel that had proved to him an ark of safety.—Mr. C—— considered to have a very finely developed Negro cranium. He must take a cast of his head.

John Bull placed no impediments in the way, he was in ecstasies, and submitted to the unpleasant operation with the meekness of a black sheep.

When the bust was put together, Mr. C—— had it painted black, to make the likeness more apparent. John watched the proceedings with intense disgust, considering them a black injustice, and he expressed his dissent by sullen shakes of the head and low murmurs in his native tongue. John slept in the *scullery*, the keeping of it in order being entrusted to his care. The day after the cast had been placed on the shelf, Mr. C—— brought several gentlemen to look at it.

To his surprise and mortification, the black model was nowhere to be seen. Who had stole it? He rang the bell violently. John's woolly head instantly appeared.

"Vat massa ring for?"

"John, what's become of your head."

"La mass, grins the boy with a look of uncomparable simplicity. "Him war God Almighty put him, on John's neck."

"The cast I mean, the cast I took of you yesterday."

"Ough, dat black ugly nigger."

"The same. Where is it?"