

wide, straight and strong, that traversed Italy, connecting other countries and cities, that outrivalled any of the present, by crossing valleys on arches, penetrating mountains, through tunnels, with posts all along the way. Now let us look at our railroads and the iron horse carrying destruction and death. At the present day when one starts on a journey, they take their life in their hands, not knowing that they will reach the end of it alive, or that their friends will ever find their decimated bodies, should they not, although an account is given of a traveller who had spent some time in an Eastern country, and having noticed its lack of railroad accidents, expressed his astonishment to one of the civil officials. Oh! he replied, we never have any here. Why! what would you do with them, should you have one? enquired our wanderer. We should hang them, president and all, was the *sang froid* rejoinder, showing that even a despotism has its advantages. There certainly will not be many of the population left if they keep on applying the new electrical inventions to daily and domestic uses, unless shorn of the destructive elements. The telegraph, telephone and some mechanical and agricultural implements are our greatest inventions, because safer. The sewing machine has been a curse to womankind, it has been a source of wealth to the fiends luxuriating on its victims, for the best physicians denounce it as the cause of many of the diseases from which women suffer. As to the literature of our own times, among those above the mediocrity in England have been Macaulay, Carlyle, Thackeray, Dickens, and some books, like "Under two flags," "Laura Doone," and others that will never die. The best American writers have been Irving, Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson and Lord. Both in England and here there are reformers in literature as well as in other things. The milk and water simplicity of style that is affected now, is more suited to the capacity of their intellects. What taste could they have for the old Norman names and words, that gave richness and strength to our language. Some of them could understand Bryant's "Water-fowl," but could not appreciate Byron's "Corsair." They could improve upon Shakespeare, criticize Scott, the most heroic, ennobling writer of his age, immortalizing his country with his pen more than conquerors have done with their swords, and the new songs of the day are as flat as the literature—set to music without tunes. It really does one good to hear an old-fashioned melody, but this age has been unrivalled in the dramatic art, with such names as Salvini, Irving, Rachel, Janauschek, Ristori and Bernhardt, and as an encourager and promoter of the drama, Augustine Daly of New York

stands pre-eminent; although instruction is more general than in the early part of the century, it is more superficial, our institutions for learning are more numerous, though the educational system for girls in the United States is not as beneficial and pleasing for social life, or for intelligent travelling companions as that of the English girls. From the way ours are put through mathematics one would suppose they were in training for civil engineers. They rush through all the sciences to the exclusion of history, belles lettres and the languages. Those who finish at some fashionable school learn to dance and drum classical music, but find on going abroad that they, like Miss Killmonkegg, have learned a French not spoken in France. In fact, scarcely any of our public officials can speak any language besides their own, unless it be now and then a foreign minister or officers in the navy. Half of these girls visit the classic shores of Greece, the vine-clad hills of Spain with its Moorish architecture, the historic monuments of France and Italy, like so many owls, their appreciative capacities beginning and ending with Worth, and the Paris fashions. We have made some progress in scientific discoveries, have some good painters and writers of fiction, though the general tone is light and trashy. Our style of architecture it would be impossible to define, as it is a combination of so many. The Capitol at Albany is a specimen and although filling space in design, would seem more suitable for a fruit cake, which it has proved to be for politicians and contractors.

The villas and miniature chateaus are an improvement on the square white and green habitations that shocked the eye, in our suburban and rural districts, though missing the large halls and low roomy parlors of our grandfathers, we have had the good taste to imitate their style of furniture. The ascetic craze for blue china, bilious greens, peacock blues and yellow browns in draperies, wall papers and carpets was an improvement on the glaring combinations of thirty years ago.

The United States has certainly surpassed other countries in the number and greatness of her inventions. They appear to supply the necessities of our vast territories and increasing population, but we should remember that although Europe has room for many reforms, we have much to learn from her past, enough to suppress egotism and self-conceit. These few pages are but a compilation of facts taken from the best authorities and some personal knowledge, but as they are not served as agreeably as they would be in comic newspapers or sensational stories, I shall be called a pessimist.

[THE END.]

John H. I. Jones
TOLD IN THE HALL.

With sweet flushed face upturned to mine, she stood
A question shining in her soft brown eyes—
Those eyes whose glance had never failed to charm,
And whose great power most willingly I own,
Since in them such a tender love-light lies.
She stood beside me, gentle, pure and sweet,
And laid her hand detaining on my arm,
Half hesitating, as if loth to speak,
And yet as if compelled to voice her mind.
Her rounded figure, full of supple grace,

Her soft, dark hair, low on her gentle brow,
Her fair, flushed cheeks, her dainty morning gown,
Impressed me with her girlish loveliness.
Swayed by her charm, into her eyes I gazed,
As if to read the secret half disclosed,
Which yet she was reluctant to reveal.
Silent, she stood a moment, then with voice
As sweet as rippling music from a flute,
With gentle dignity, she said: "My dear,
Five dollars, please; the children need some shoes."