

moving, unsettled, and migratory crop of *waifs and strays*, about whom nobody dreams, cares, or inquires, save those alone who are directly interested in their presence, patronage or protection. Silent, unobtrusive, and seemingly unimpressible spectators of the events which make up the monotonous journal of Oriental life, their supremacy is, nevertheless, *felt*. It permeates every stratum of the social combination, and seats itself at the basis of institutions which have ran their course and survived the despotism and political convulsions of centuries! It exercises a hidden censorial influence over the manifestations of the popular will, and controls the caprices of public sentiment! Hence it is that the waters of so many diverse national currents recede to make way for the great tidal wave that searches out by the mere force of its own irresistible onward impetus the unguarded approaches to the national instincts; imparting as it runs, health, vigor, and tone to the existing standard of public morals!

[I venture to hazard the suggestion that if the foregoing be not "unworthy the earlier literary traditions, &c.," it may, in justice to R. S., be viewed as "gem" No. 2; and I shall therefore feel much gratified if the reader will do me the favor to note it accordingly—(*Sic itur ad astra!*). One more suggestion—the interchange of these innocent and sportive courtesies gives a pleasing charm to newly-formed friendships, which the writer trusts may never be seriously affected by occasional differences of opinion.]

Although no alien to the amenities of eastern life I was nevertheless a stranger to the glorious halo which surrounds domestic independence; that is to say in having unrestricted freedom of action—free to stand—free to sit—free to laugh—free to talk, and free to let it alone—free to give orders in the autocratic and "don't-come-near-me" style peculiar to the genius of the Anglo-Indian, and which, I may add, was, until recently, typical of a peculiar institution of the Southern States of the American Union.

Yes! I felt *liberty* in all its phases of *freedom of speech, conviviality, and unlimited "weeds;"* and so I settled softly down on the official couch with a calm and tranquil mind, and thus passed the happy hours away, in sweet unconsciousness of the outer worry and responsibilities of life!

And yet I was not wholly free from those perplexities which hang like a forbidding cloud over all human affairs! Snug, happy, and indifferent to the fluctuations of the *Madras Exchange* as we three bachelors certainly were "*pro tem.*" (as my respected confrere "Spiff," used to say), still our chronic tranquility of body was not unfrequently disquieted by certain atmospheric disturbances which are by no means uncommon in Southern India during the advent of what is known as "*The Return Monsoon.*"* I have already hinted at the self-denial exhibited on the part of "Spiff" and "Nosey" in their having so deferentially permitted me to occupy the "superior"

* *THIS "Monsoon,"* PAR EXCELLENCE, is a wind which blows from the S. W. of the Indian Ocean, across the peninsula of Hindostan, between the months of April and October, and is called the "Sou'-West Monsoon." During the remainder of the year it blows in a directly contrary direction, from the N. W. of Asia, and is (in its early phase) termed "*The Return Monsoon.*" The S. W. Monsoon is accompanied by incessant rain and thunder-storms of awful grandeur and magnificence; and is therefore distinguished as the "wet" or "rainy" season, in contradistinction to the N. W. wind, which is dry and bracing except in October and November, when its advent is heralded by copious showers at uncertain intervals.