



## THE EDITOR'S SHANTY.

SEDERUNT XXVI.

(Major and Doctor seated in front of the Shanty, smoking.)

MAJOR.—What a pity that tobacco had not been discovered in the days of Mahomet!

DOCTOR.—May I crave your most “exquisite reason” for enunciating such a regret?

MAJOR.—If the Prophet had been cognizant of the million charms of the glorious narcotic, he would have replenished his paradise with pipes and cigars, and so invested that mythical clearing with charms far out-climaxing the wishy-washy attractions of honey and milk!

DOCTOR.—Why, you are as enthusiastic an adorer of the weed as Byron himself! With what gusto does the bard celebrate its praises:

“Sublime tobacco! which from east to west  
Cheers the tar’s labour or the Turkman’s rest,  
Which on the Moslem’s ottoman divides  
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides:  
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,  
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand:  
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe.  
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe:  
Like other charmers, wooing the carress  
More dazzlingly when darning in full dress:  
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far  
Thy naked beauties—Give me a cigar!”

MAJOR.—I enter my protest against the doctrine promulgated in the closing couplet of your quotation! Whilst conceding that the cigar is not devoid of charms, they can never compare with the blandishments of a clay tube!

DOCTOR.—Much may be said on both sides, as honest Sir Roger De Coverly hath it; but what

brown study have you now fallen into? Like Guido’s head, you look as if you were looking at something beyond this earth!

MAJOR.—Pardon my abstraction! The surpassing beauty of this twilight scene constrained me to bend in silent homage before the glorious Architect thereof! Do you remember these unrivalled lines of Wordsworth:—

“—————I have seen

A curious child, applying to his ear  
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,  
To which, in silence hush’d, his very soul  
Listened intensely, and his countenance soon  
Brightened with joy: for murmuring from within  
Were heard sonorous cadences! whereby,  
To his belief, the monitor express’d  
Mysterious union with his native sea.  
Even such a shell the universe itself  
Is to the ear of faith: and doth impart  
Authentic tidings of invisible things:  
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power:  
And central peace subsisting at the heart  
Of endless agitation!”

DOCTOR.—How the darkened eye-balls of John Milton would have dilated if he could have heard that magnificent outburst of holy melody!

MAJOR.—I say, Sangrado, what military man is that who is riding up the avenue?

DOCTOR.—Nay, how can I tell? Did you not invite one of our friends from the barracks to share our vesper symposium?

MAJOR.—Not that I remember. But hush! The equestrian, whoever he may be, is uplifting his voice in song. Surely these tones are not unfamiliar to mine ear.