

THE SUMMER IS DEAD.

BY ROSA VETNER JEFFREY.

"The summer is dead!"
A soaring lark said—
Singing up in the blue afar,
"I'm chanting her dirge
Where golden clouds surge
In the wake of the morning star."

"The summer is dead!"
A damask rose said—
"In the light of her smiles I grew,
And warm with the bliss
Of her parting kiss
I shall glory in dying, too."

"The summer is dead!"
A honey-bee said—
To the red roses still aglow,
"But her honey is mine.
I need not repine
When your beauty lies under the snow."

"The summer is dead!"
A butterfly said—
Let the honey-bees hive—I suppose
They are prudent and wise,
But work I despise:
Let me die on the heart of the rose."

"The summer is dead!"
A fair maiden said—
As she bled to the trysting tree,
"But where autumn leaves lie
Cometh one, by and by,
Whose love is life's summer to me."

"The summer is dead!"
A sad woman said—
"Yet I mourn not its vanished glow,
For time cannot bring
The joy of youth's spring
Or the summers of long ago!"

"The summer is dead!"
An aged man said—
"But what is one summer to me?
A shining drop, cast
In the stream of the past,
While I stand by Eternity's sea."

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS
AND COMMERCIAL
TRAVELLING.

To give the genesis of that species of the genus *homo* known as the Commercial Traveller, would be to go back almost to prehistoric times. In Herodotus we find little or nothing of the ways of trade, but must turn for the earliest mention of travelling traders to the "Midianites, merchant-men," who drew Joseph from the pit into which his brethren had cast him and sold him to the Ishmaelites from Gilead, who bore "spicery and balm and myrrh," with which they were "going down into Egypt."

From the "merchant-men" we clearly evolve our subject. The Midianites and Ishmaelites were travelling merchants, and, of course, commercial travellers; thus we may claim that, in one sense, the technical "Commercial Traveller" is his own ancestor.

Commerce—the *commutatio mercimonii*, exchange of goods—is coeval with the formation of social neighborhoods, and found its origin in the interchange of the surpluses of one produce for whatever he required from the superabundance of another. This barter, carried on in rude communities between the producers in person, each seeking those who wanted what he had, and those who had what he wanted, sufficed until varying tastes, dispositions, and natural skill brought about the devotion of individuals to some preferred occupation, thus causing a subdivision of labor among tillers of the soil, herdsmen, artificers and manufacturers. Soon the production of grain and fruits, sheep and cattle, weapons and tools, utensils and woven fabrics, increased beyond the point where the producer could spare the time to seek a purchaser for his own wares or a vender of the wares he needed.

This condition of affairs necessitated another specific occupation,—some one to devote his efforts to collecting the excess of products in any given localities, and finding elsewhere those who needed them. Hence arose the mercantile class, who passed from their homes to other regions, bartering, buying and selling as they went, and returning laden with foreign products in demand among their own people.

It is assumed that barter, the exchange of commodities on an accepted basis of value, was, of course, the earliest form of trading, or merchandising, as it was often called; but no long time could have elapsed before a representative of values was found in the precious metals (replacing the rude local "cowrie" of the African, or the "wampum" of the American Indian), which, formed into fixed shapes and weights, constituted a "circulating medium," which greatly facilitated mercantile transactions. We find such a circulating medium in the silver shekels, "current money of the merchant," coeval in mention with the Midianites and Ishmaelites above cited. And even more advanced trade facilities, equal almost to those of our own day, are found among the prehistoric Chinese, as we shall see from the interesting and amusing travels of Messieurs Huc and Gabet.

The early mercantile class, carrying with them their entire stock of merchandise, which increased in value in rapid ratio with each league of distance from its centre of production, were literally as well as technically "on the road"; travelling merchants, the predecessors of their future employes, known since on sea and land as roadmen, travelling clerks (*Fr.—commis-voyageurs*), supercargoes, travelling salesmen,

bagmen, and now more dignifiedly and euphoniously as "Commercial Travellers."

This final designation stands a little ahead of the polished *commis-voyageur* with which polite France surpassed the bluff English "bagman," a bit of rough Saxon which did not convey to unpracticed ears either the character or importance of the functions exercised by its bearer.

The foremost in rank, however, of all these adjuncts of commerce in latter days was the supercargo, having in charge the largest trust, taking ship-loads of merchandise to far-distant lands, with full powers of sale and purchase; often changing his cargoes more than once; varying his voyages at his discretion, and prolonging his absences to years under favorable conditions. But the utilization of steam and the advent of the electric telegraph have swept him almost out of being. The markets of the antipodes are known to us in six days instead of six months, and the supercargo has become a superfluity.

A less dignified character than any yet named is found in the North of England, in an itinerant dealer in dry goods and groceries. His class are known as "travelling Scotchmen." Not so called, it is said, from their place of nativity, but from the "scot" (or "shot," as we have it), i.e., a share of the reckoning which a gathering of them may incur at an inn. These men are said to handle a large amount of goods, through the middling and lower class, on what we call the "instalment plan."

In Hotten's "Slang Dictionary," "bagman" is defined as "a commercial traveller," but no explanation is given as to the origin or derivation of the word. Cuthbert Bebe, the genial author of the "Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green," suggests that it took its rise in the saddle-bags in which, during the last century, the samples and goods of the commercial traveller were carried. These being larger than those of those of ordinary travellers, their bearer became, *par excellence*, the bagman. His journeys in those pre-railway days were made on horseback, that he might more readily reach remote towns and villages, through lanes and by-roads not always comfortably passable to wheels. Those, too, were the days of highwaymen, gentlemen who were "on the road" for other than purely commercial purposes, and the bagmen were sometimes "bagged" themselves.

Mr. Bede tells a story of one of these early travellers who figured as an unheroic hero in an encounter which may be of interest.

The bagman had turned from the Great North Road (England) and was riding toward Huntingdon, when he was stopped by a highwayman. He escaped by the use of his spurs, but not far on overtook a decent-looking man riding in the same direction as himself. The bagman, not over-bold, and his saddle-bags well filled, thought it prudent to ask leave to ride in his company. The stranger made no answer. The request was repeated with the same result, the stranger eyeing him suspiciously. Again was the request made, when the stranger pulled his horse across the road, arresting the speaker's progress, at the same time thrusting his hand in his pocket. The bagman waited only to catch the gleam of a barrel, when he again struck spurs, dashed past, and galloped on, expecting clattering hoofs and a pistol-shot. Reaching Huntingdon he summoned a posse to go back with him and capture the robber. A strong party formed and started on their errand. Before long the bagman cried, "There he is!" pointing to a horseman approaching at a jog trot. "There he is! that's the highwayman; don't let him escape!"

"That a highwayman? Why, it's our Mayor. The Mayor of Huntingdon."

"Impossible!" said the incredulous bagman. "But it's true," was rejoined as the horseman drew near. "You can ask him yourself."

"Mayor or no mayor, he reined up before me, and without a word drew a pistol on me, and I might have been murdered and robbed if I had not galloped off."

"What sort of a pistol?" said his companions, with a grin.

"Not one to be laughed at. It was a very large one."

"Well, we will ask him to show it to us. Here he is. Good-morning, Mr. Mayor."

The horseman reined up, and without a word drew something from his pocket.

"There's the pistol!" cried the bagman, as he caught sight of it.

A roar of laughter was the reply, as the horseman deliberately raised the formidable weapon and pointed it—into his own ear! The Mayor of Huntingdon was very deaf. The bagman did not stop over in Huntingdon that trip.

An extended discussion, under the head of Commercial Travelling, of not only the means of personal conveyance, but the modes of transporting merchandise,—the facilities of exchange, accommodations at halting places,—and the gradual advance of centuries in the extension and improvement of all these, would exceed the proposed scope of this paper.

But we must be allowed a passing reference, at least, to matters cognate to our general subject, and this not necessarily in historic sequence or chronological order, but noting, here and there, as the points present themselves, adherence to the old and the advent of the new, the small, and often no advance on primitive modes from one point of view, from another the immense strides of human progress.

We may call illustrations of the oldest fashions of travel and trade from the most modern sources; for the crudest methods, as we look the world over, are found coexistent with those re-

sulting from the latest efforts of the highest civilization. In both hemispheres we have still in use (and who shall say in which hemisphere their use began) the human load-carrier, either for traffic or personal travel,—as *cargador* or *palanquin-bearer*; we have the horse, the ass, and the mule, the camel, or his cousin, the llama, and the dog of the Esquimaux and the Kamtschatka.

To-day, the Arab trader, or the scientific explorer, penetrates the recesses of the "Dark Continent" with his merchandise, which is also his circulating medium, borne on the heads of human beasts of burden.

To-day, the *kirvan-bashi* commands the caravan of the Oriental merchant traveller on the plains of Central Asia, and guides over oceans and through tempsts of sand and "the ship of the desert" and his humble companion, Balaam's rebuker.

To-day, if not the trader, at least the Western emigrant, may be found piloting the white-canvased "prairie schooner" toward the setting sun; and to-day, notwithstanding the encroachments of the iron horse on our highways, on our by-ways there is still to be seen the dispenser of "notions," from brooms to bracelets, with his ambulatory storehouse.

One mode of primitive travel (excluding the most primitive pedestrianism) we have thus far overlooked, yet it is also to be found in the Old World and the New; the saddle ox of the Hottentot may still be seen, occasionally at least, in the wilds of Upper North Carolina. Lumbering saddle beast as doubtless he is, we all know, either from reading or experience, his capabilities under the occasional excitement of a stampede, and the suggestion presents itself, that could he be drilled to the sound of the bugle, and subjected to an artificial panic at the word of command, he might, with his naturally armed head, have made a formidable adversary for the heavy Flanders charger of the Middle Ages (not middle-aged) iron-clad knight.

With the sumpter mules of Prior Aylmer of Jorvaulx, and the baggage horses of the haughty Templar, De Bois Guilbert, the pack-horse of the mediæval English trader has long since disappeared, but the *atajo* of the mulatto, common yet throughout Spanish America, still lingers in Western Europe, and the hills and valleys of the Sierra Morena, and the Guadalequivir yet echo the voice of the Spanish *guarda*, as he sings at the head of his mule train of

"The joys of our evening posada,
Where resting at close of the day,
We young muleteers of Granada
Sit and sing the last sunshine away."

And "the mule bell's drowsy twinkle" adds its attraction to this mode of commercial intercommunication, to match the picturesque element and the sense of romantic adventure that attach to the caravans of the Eastern merchant and the overland Santa Fé trader; the latter already swept away, and the former, perhaps, destined to disappear ere long, before the march of the locomotive.

As another branch of our subject, confessedly taking a wide range, let us glance at some of the analogies, coincidences and noteworthy parallels existing between similar methods and usages in antipodal portions of the globe.

Turning to one of the earliest of highways, the natural water way, we find a primitive water carriage (second only, if second, to the rude *balsa* or raft) in the hollowed log, the bent and modeled bark, or the skin-covered frame; the first vessel built to float and carry. And with this canoe, as we call it, we find an etymological coincidence, or at least a lingual similarity, that is worth notice. The Spanish American calls it a *cayuco*; the Turk of the Bosphorus, a *cayik*; the Esquimaux, a *kayak*; and on the classic Oxus, the Khivan of Central Asia paddles his *kayuk*, in which, perhaps, some ancestor may have ferried over Alexander the Great, or Timour the Tartar.

The *palanquin* of the East Indies, oddly enough, connects itself with the *cayuco*, through the root of its own name, the *palanca* (a pole), the "setting pole," by means of which the "forty-niners of California ascended the upper waters of the Chagres River. *Palanca*, a pole; *palanquin*, a pole carriage. In the *palanquin* the Anglo-Indian "travels dawk," and in his pole-hung hammock the Madeira wine-grower goes down to Funchal.

Again, the *palanquin*-bearer of Hindostan solaces himself on the road with his betel-nut and lime, while the Peruvian *cargador*, with banded shoulders and banded head, bears his burden up the slopes of the Andes, maintaining his strength with a mouthful of his beloved *coca* and lime; and what anti-narcotic reformer can appreciate the "solace" the modern commercial traveller finds in his tobacco-box or his cigar-case?

Following what we term the natural ways and means of transportation, the man, the animal, and the beaten path, the boat, and the water way, come the artificial works devised and constructed to facilitate the advance of the grand agents of civilization, war and commerce.

The foot-beaten path becomes the well-made high-road; for the back of the pack-horse we have the wheeled vehicle, and from the irrigating ditch springs the first purely artificial highway, the modern canal.

We say modern, that we may embrace the immense improvements added to that means of intercommunication since the "time immemorial" from which they have existed in the Celestial Empire, in all probability antedating the similar works of Babylonia and Egypt. For these fabricated rivers we Westerners usually hold

ourselves indebted to the nation, which, ages ago, reached a condition of civilization greatly in advance of the rest of the world; and, strangely enough, there stopped and has stood still, until the "outside barbarians" have, in their turn, far surpassed it. Yet to-day, the Imperial canal of the first Tartar Emperor, Kubla Khan, stretching its thousand miles from Peking to Canton, like the Great Wall, stands unrivalled as the most stupendous work of its kind ever constructed.

It may be of interest to note here a point not generally known, in the device of the Chinese engineers for passing their boats from one level of their canals to another. To us nowadays the lock as we use it seems to be the most natural and simple; but the Chinese lock is a very different affair. Between two firmly built retaining walls, at the point of change they construct a double inclined plane, over which is the passage from level to level, their flat-bottomed craft being raised and lowered over the two sides of the plane by means of hawsers and capstans, worked by human hands. And this rude process may be said to be the type and gauge of the Chinaman's ability in the way of mechanical appliances, while yet with the roughest tools and oddest way of using them, his mechanical execution is in many minor notes unexcelled in neatness, precision and artistic ingenuity. Aside from the natural products of his country, the results of his skill as an artisan enter largely into the commerce of the world.

With his achievements in canals, the Celestial's "march of internal improvement" may be said to have come to a halt. The age of steam and its wonderful strides he ignores. He builds no steam engines, launches no steamships. The mechanical engineer is not a product of his soil or his civilization. Of the high-roads he knows, throughout his vast empire, comparatively little more than serves for the use of the pack-horse; of the wheeled vehicle he has yet but his rude cart, not only ignoring but refusing to make acquaintance with the swiftly flying car, or that iron steed which, with his turn for Oriental hyperbole, he would no doubt have characterized as the "destroyer of distance."

Nevertheless, in another branch of our subject, the facilities of exchange, we have again to recur to the Central Flowery Kingdom, for, as against his own claims to chronological precedence in civilization, supported by external as well as internal evidence, who shall say that it may not be, after all, and despite the "Midianite merchant men" of the Mosaic record, the true fatherland of the commercial traveller and commercial travelling?

Be that as it may, certain it is, that in this land, isolated for ages, from all but a few adjoining dependencies, unknown and unknown to the rest of the world, there was developed an extended commerce, and with it the facilities it requires; many of these in far higher degree than is generally imagined. As in the writings of Marco Polo, so in those of Huc and Gabet, six centuries later, we find abundant mention, not only of stamped ingots of silver and coined copper, but of exchange brokers, bills of exchange, letters of credit, and an authorized paper currency, in effect bank-notes; these being, as one traveller has it, "an invention" of Kubla Khan, the Mongol Emperor, to accommodate the greatly increased commerce of the country with a more convenient kind of money than the small copper coin of the country.

In the interesting and entertaining volumes of the Abbé Huc, "Travels in Tartary, Tibet and China," we have full accounts of the ingots and sapeks (the copper coin we call "cash"), of the money-changers and their dealings, amusing instances of Chinese sharpness and Tartar simplicity in trade intercourse; humorous portraits of the Celestial antitype of our "confidence-man" and "hotel-runner," and cases where the shrewd *Kital*, as the Tartar calls the Chinese, plays the part of "biter bit."

A comical case of foiled knavery, which shows also the polish of manner that has earned for the Chinaman the title of "Frenchman of the East," is worth giving, a little condensed, from the pages of the good Abbé: "At the money-changers', where we went to sell some silver, they essayed to defraud us, according to custom, but were disconcerted. The weight of our ingots by their scales was correct, and the priced named rather above the current rate. The chief clerk took his *sonan pan* (the *abacus* or Chinese calculating frame) and with great show of nicety announced the result of his operation. 'This is an exchange office,' we said, 'you are the buyers, we are the sellers; we will make our calculation; give us a pencil and paper.' 'Nothing can be more just, you have enunciated a fundamental law of commerce.' And they handed us a writing-case. A short calculation showed a difference of a thousand sapeks in our favor."

"Superintendent of the banks, your *sonan pan* is in error by a thousand sapeks."

"Impossible! do you think that I have suddenly forgotten my *sonan pan*? Let me go over it again. Yes! I know I was right. See, brother." And he passed the machine to a colleague, who confirmed his result.

"You see," said the principal, "there is no error. How is it that our calculation does not agree with that which you have written there?"

"It is not important to ask that," we replied; "certainly yours is wrong, ours right. You see these characters on this paper; they are very different from your *sonan pan*; it is impossible for them to be wrong. All the calculators in the world, by this operation, could find no other result than that your statement is wrong by a thousand sapeks."