

much an heirloom as any of the paintings, which he frequently introduced to the notice of his guests as portraits of his ancestors. I felt heartily indignant that my venerable appearance should cause me thus to be trepanned into countenancing my owner's claims to honorable descent, but was consoled under the indignity by an expectation of the speedy extinction of all his absurd pretensions. I was glad to see bailiffs in the house; I rejoiced to see little tickets stuck on every article, to find myself marked Lot 34, and at length to behold a crowd of people assembled, and the whole sold off. When Lot 34 was put up, I heard one of the friends of my late owner remark in a tolerably loud tone, and with an indifferently good imitation of the voice and manner of the late proprietor, "An heirloom;" "Been in the family since the flood almost," added a second; "Made of the wood of the original ark," said another; "His arms," suggested a fourth, pointing, not to my heraldic ornaments, but to those side-pieces which in chairs of my construction obtain the name of arms or elbows. The badinage having ceased, the sale proceeded, and again I changed owners.

My history draws to a close. I was bought by the landlord of the Burley Arms, and placed in this room, where the bustle and change of occupants have made the portion of my time spent here the most agreeable I have known. Sometimes, when none of those for whose especial accommodation the room is intended, are in the house, I am pleased with the society and conversation of some of the inhabitants of the town; and I have been particularly amused by the contrast between the opinions of the active men of business, and those of the quiet elderly men who have spent their whole lives in the retirement of this their native place. Most of the great social questions have I heard discussed in this room with an impartiality and mildness proportionate to their importance. Two old cronies, in particular, have often interested me by their fierce invectives against the numerous innovations which they are fated to witness. Even I can discover that they approve only of improvements which took place when themselves were improving, and of progress which was made while they were advancing; that, unchanging (at least for good) themselves, they can relish no change in other persons or things. They cordially and bitterly deprecate all the alterations in their town and neighbourhood, and sigh for good old times, when they should rather honestly depreciate their own increasing infirmities, and sigh for youth again. Their most intense hatred and contempt are reserved for the railroad recently opened, which they predict, will eventually plunge the town into poverty, and destroy all its inhabitants by fearful accidents. In proof how reasonable are such forebodings, they instance the dismissal of one drunken coachman from his situation, and a casualty which deprived another "hearty good fellow" of an arm. They contend that the town would have been ruined already, had there not been a large influx of strangers coming to reside, and a great increase of building, since the opening of the line, but so contradictory are their anticipations of evil—one dreading the removal of inhabitants and business, and the other seeming rather to dread the sudden influx of them—that, chair as I am, I have no fear of the town being materially

injured by the new mode of transit. Of course, the gloomy prospect is not bounded by the limits of this town; it takes in the length and breadth of Great Britain and Ireland, and extends to our remotest colonies.

I agree with them perfectly in thinking that Britain's glory is fast departing, will soon have fled; but I differ from them wholly as to the causes of her decay. They think that literature and art will soon fall away; they dream that railways and telegraphs will prove her destruction. I share in their anxiety; I am sometimes melancholy when I contemplate the future; but my solicitude proceeds from very different grounds to theirs. I can perceive the folly of their apprehensions, and smile at them; but, when I see how perversely the present generation prefers foreign timber to our native oak, I am filled with disquietude. Oak and oaken chairs are inseparably associated with our national greatness, and I hope none will suspect me of judging partially and under the influence of personal feeling, when I express my opinion, that unless the use of mahogany and rosewood be restrained by the legislature, England is a lost country. Yes, I own I am deeply concerned when I witness the reckless contempt of national interests which, under the specious names of liberality and refinement, is substituting these imported vanities for our own homegrown material. Let this continue unchecked, and the consequence is inevitable. It needs no wisdom of declining age to foresee, that if oak is not required for arm-chairs, it will soon cease to be grown; and then, when it is no longer attainable, what is to become of our navy? I feel a patriotic frenzy thrilling through my limbs when I hear the strain, "Hearts of oak are our ships;" but, I ask, what is to become of our navy, when we have ceased to grow oak? Shall we have mahogany ships—rosewood frigates? Thus, by the most logical process of reasoning, have I furnished ground for fear, that, in the course of seven or eight hundred years, my country may have fallen from her proud position.

But I must not indulge this proneness to moralize. More generally in my present situation I am pleased with statements of the progress of arts and sciences—of education and information for the people being provided in profuse abundance. As I before said, the cheerful conversation and anticipations of the bustling travellers who frequent the room present an agreeable contrast to the stereotyped trains of thought and dismal forebodings of those who view the future only through the beclouded and fast-failing vision of declining age.

Fine company, excellent good fellows, assemble around me even yet. Snug whist parties, cozy supper spreads, have we yet; and when Eddowes clears his pipes, and sings—

"I love it, I love it, and oh, who shall dare  
To chide me for loving that old arm-chair?"

and points sentimentally to me, and then every glass rings in the room with the vibration of "loud and prolonged applause," I only wish I may retain my quiet corner, while generations yet to come meet here to discuss future political questions, crack new jokes, and sing old songs.

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The manuscript ended here; and as the reader