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## THE VILLAGE COMMON.

In the parish of Woodfield there is a spot of peculiar beauty, called Bird's-eye Green. Its name is not derived, as some of my readers may have imagined, from the extensive prospect which it commands, but from the profusion of that lovely little turf flower, the minor Forget-me-not, termed by the unlettered East Anglian naturalist the *bird's-eye*, with which the emerald sward is in the merry month of May so gaily enamelled, that, when you glance downwards, it gleams like a bright blue carpeting beneath the spiral blades of grass.

Bird's-eye Green, when first I knew it, was a little world within itself, distinct and separate from the rest of the village. It was one of those beautiful park-like commons which, before the rage of arable enclosures deprived the peasantry of agricultural districts of a sure stimulus for industry and economy, might be seen studded with groups of cattle, or families of pigs and poultry, affording a smiling picture of the prosperity of the rich, and the independence of the laboring classes. It was, in fact, a real commonwealth to all the inhabitants of that parish, where the cow or pig of the humble laborer was free to share the right of pasturage with the flocks and herds of the substantial yeoman. Every cottage then sent forth its proportion of live stock to the green, under the care of some trusty urchin of the family. It was a pretty sight on sweet spring days to watch the rosy curly-pated little cotters, each presiding over the conduct of a cow, a pig, a pet-lamb, a train of downy goslings, or a brood of turkey chicks, whichever it might chance to be, or perhaps a weanling calf just turned out to graze, yet retaining sufficient of its lactivorous propensities to render it

an object of jealous suspicion to the proprietors or guardians of all the recently bereaved cows on the green. Bird's-eye Green, although so picturesque and peaceful in its appearance, that to the eye of the casual traveller from busy noisy towns it bore the semblance of a perfect Arcadia or fairy land, inhabited by juvenile shepherds and shepherdesses, who were not unfrequently seen garlanded with flowers, and dancing or sporting in jocund groups, was nevertheless a spot abounding in strife, jealousy, and in short, teeming with all the evil passions on a small scale that are to be found agitating the great world, and arming nation against nation. The proprietors of the flocks and herds, pigs and poultry, and more especially the youthful guardians to whose keeping they were consigned, had separate interests and petty jealousies, which broke out frequently in open acts of anger and violence. Those blooming picturesque groups of children fought and scratched somewhat oftener than they danced, and scolded more than they sang. The attendant of a cow sometimes quarrelled with the guardian of the goslings, and the protector of a sow and pigs invaded the quiet corner where some junior maiden of the green kept watch over her darling brood of turkey chicks, or enjoyed the company of her beloved pet lamb; and fierce were the clamours and contentions that would follow such aggressions on the positive but undefined rights of the pre-occupants of favourite spots. It was a complete sample of the state of society that would exist in a genuine republic under the law of nature, every one doing that which was right in their own eyes, or wrong if they had the inclination, and at the same time the power of accomplishing their desires without fear of punishment.

Robert Rowe and Sophy Flaxman were two of the most determined foes on the green. Sophy Flaxman was a fat, fair, blue-eyed, little vixen of thirteen, when her parents first came to live on the green. They were considered very respectable persons in their degree, and made a great deal of money by rearing and fattening poultry for market, and selling eggs. Sophy was chiefly employed in attending to this department, and every fine day was to be seen sitting on a little turf hillock, which she called her throne, surrounded by a numerous family of dependents, hens, turkeys, ducks, and goslings—that is, I should say, whenever she was sufficiently early in the field to obtain possession of this favorite eminence, which was an object of contention among several of the children; and Sophy having neither brothers nor cousins to championise her, was often driven from her position by the uncivilised natives of the soil, who regarded her as a stranger and interloper on the green. Sophy was better dressed and better mannered than any of her juvenile neighbours, and she evidently cherished ideas of her own superiority that gave universal offence. Her mother, when she first sent her forth on her daily vocation, strictly charged her “to form no acquaintances, much less intimacies, among them, but to take her knitting and her book in her bag, and keep herself to herself.”

This was prudent advice, but its observance rendered the damsel very unpopular on the green, and was the means of exposing her to a variety of annoyances from the other young people, but more especially from Robert Rowe, a sturdy sunburned imp, remarkable for his roguish black eyes and ragged gaberdine, who, more out of mischief than malice perhaps, took great delight in teasing Sophy, and disarranging all her plans for the day. Robert was the eldest of a family of eight brothers and sisters, all as rude and ragged as himself. His parents had neither cow, pig, nor poultry. They were indifferent managers, as many of the peasantry are, and for want of a little prudence and forethought lost the advantage of improving their means by availing themselves of the free keep which Bird’s-eye Green afforded for live stock of various kinds. Threepence a-week, scrupulously set aside

for half a year, would have purchased a pig, and this pig, if a young sow, would, in the course of two years, have brought a most profitable increase; but the family of the Rowes were short-sighted people, who never provided for the future.

Robert Rowe, their first-born son, was the hired keeper of a whole herd of swine belonging to a substantial farmer on the green, and with these the youthful hog-herd lived on terms of almost brotherly affection and intimacy, and, greatly to Sophy Flaxman’s indignation, he daily led them to the spot which it was her pleasure to occupy, for the pleasure of putting her and her feathered followers to the rout.

Sophy did not put up with this injurious treatment tamely. She had vituperated Robert and his master’s pigs by every term of contemptuous meaning which might be permitted to pass lips feminine, and, seconded by a pair of very potent allies, the gander and the turkey-cock, she had defended her position with the intrepidity of a Thracian amazon, and sometimes worsted her antagonists. As for Robert’s occasional overtures for a cessation of hostilities on terms of peace and good-will, she always rejected them with the most unqualified expressions of scorn. “His enmity might be endured,” she said, or as much as said, “but his friendship was inadmissible.”

Robert attributed this lofty language to pride, and redoubled his persecutions with the view of rendering himself a person of greater importance in her sight. Sophy would have proved a match in her retaliations for any of the provocations with which her rustic foe assailed her, but, unfortunately, her friend the turkey-cock came in for a mortal injury in one of these diurnal encounters; and the luckless damsel, after the loss of this auxiliary, could no longer maintain her ground against Robert and his grunting attendants, who were daily becoming more formidable: so she now deemed it most prudent, after suffering a complete defeat in two or three pitched battles, to retire from the contested spot whenever Robert Rowe and his master’s herd made an advance. This she did, however, with the most unequivocal gestures of disdain, commencing with one of those silent but expressive declarations of hostility and contempt,

indicated by a scornful elevation of the lips and nostrils, which a Suffolk girl calls sneering (pronounced *snaaring*) at a person. Now, it is a well-known fact, that no Suffolk lad, from the age of three years old and upwards, can tamely brook being sneered at, as a sneer is by them considered as the most offensive of all insults. The first time Sophy began to practise this feminine art of war, Robert was more deeply hurt than if she had twitched out a handful of his chestnut curls; and he actually fled home to his mother, out of breath, and with tears in his eyes, exclaimed,

"Mother, what do you think? Sophy Flaxman has sneered at me!" To which his mother, who was in the critical act of turning the heel of a stocking, dropped a dozen stitches from her knitting-pin at once in her surprise, as she replied, in a tone of lively indignation, "Why, you don't say so, Robert?" "Yes, but I do, mother," responded Robert; "and she is always stoning me, and calling me out of my name. I have hid her once or twice, but it arn't of no manner of use, for she is such a serpent, nobody can ever get the master of her; but I wouldn't have minded her pulling my hair, nor stoning master's pigs, nor nothing else that she has done, if she had not sneered at me." "Well, but, Bobby dear," responded the mother, affectionately stroking down the injured curls, which truth to tell, bore some marks of recent rough usage, "I'll tell you what I would do if I were in your place." "What would you do, mother?" asked he, eagerly. "Why, I would sneer at her again." "It is no use, mother, for I couldn't sneer like her if I tried ever so. She sneers up her mouth, and nose, and eyes, and chin, all at once in a way that nobody else can do, 'specially a boy." "Well, then, I wouldn't look at her." "No more I won't," replied the indignant hog-herd, with an air of deep determination.

This resolution was made on a Saturday evening, and on the Sunday noon he communicated to his sympathising mother the mortifying fact, that Sophy had sneered at him all church-time. "Why did you look at her, Robert?" asked Goody Rowe. "'Cause I couldn't help it," responded Robert, with infinite *nai-vete*. "I looked to see if she meant to

sneer at me, and she did sneer worse than ever every time I caught her eye, even when the parson was giving out his text. And oh, dear mother, that text seemed as if it was meant on purpose for me, for it was, 'See ye fall not out by the way;' and while I was thinking how well it seemed to suit Sophy Flaxman, she sneered again, with the whole church looking on." "Her mother makes a proper fool of herself by keeping that girl at home," observed the sagacious Goody Rowe, with infinite indignation; "but I suppose these Flaxmans think themselves above their neighbours, as they have such lots of eggs and fowls to carry to market every week, and we shall see that their girl, instead of going to service like other folk's children, will be kept dawdling on the green with her turkeys and geese till she gets the name of the green goose herself, and you may go and tell her I say so."

Robert took the earliest opportunity of repeating his mother's witticism to his fair adversary, in the hope of provoking something in the way of conversation, but all the reply he received from Sophy was—another sneer. Robert felt greatly annoyed at the continuation of this system of silent hostility. "You shall have your own little hill all to yourself, Sophy," said he one day, "and I wont drive master's hogs among your fowls any more, nor yet upset your turkey's pan, nor kick your work-basket over, nor do nothing else to spite you, if you will leave off sneering at me, and be friends; but Sophy would not accept the terms of pacification. In fact, the list of outrages which Robert enumerated, and which had been of daily occurrence for many weeks, had left a feeling of deep resentment on the little maiden's mind. When Robert found he could not succeed in mollifying her by submissions, he once more resorted to open acts of aggression, which were met by Sophy with the same indications of silent contempt.

Sophy was growing a tall womanly girl; having rosy cheeks, blue eyes, and flaxen ringlets, set off as they were by the extreme neatness of her dress, and the demureness of her general behaviour began to attract the admiration of some of the pastoral swains of her own age, and, instead of persecutions from youthful shepherds and swine-herds, she became

the object of general attention and respect. She was complimented with offerings of wild strawberries, pig-nuts, dormice, squirrels and young linnets, besides flowers in abundance, and strings of birds' eggs, to the infinite envy and vexation of her female compeers; but Sophy rejected all these sylvan tributes with the same degree of feminine pride and reserve which she had exhibited at an earlier period on the green. She had now undisputed possession of her favorite hillock; and if her only adversary, Robert Rowe, had presumed to molest her or her poultry there, he would have received condign punishment from half a dozen self-elected champions, who were contending to win her regard. All this became very painful to the feelings of Robert Rowe; his merry shout and careless whistle was no longer heard on Bird's-eye Green, and one day Sophy observed that farmer Mill's hogs were under the care of another boy. The reason of this change was not long in reaching her. Robert Rowe was not happy at home, and had gone to sea, because he did not like to stay on the green to be sneered at by a girl, he said. Sophy Flaxman's proud heart was somewhat touched at this intelligence, and she experienced some compunctious visitings of conscience for having manifested such determined obduracy at different times, when Robert had made overtures of peace. Goody Rowe told her "that Robert had gone to the South Seas, a long way farther than the Indies, and it was all because she behaved so *ugly* to him; and now, if poor Robert were to be drowned, or swallowed by a whale, it would be her fault, for Robert thought she despised him on account of his ragged slop (frock), and he had gone to sea, that he might have clothes she could not sneer at, if so he lived to come home, but that, perhaps, he never would," and then the mother lifted up her voice and wept.

Sophy went home sorrowful and self-accused that day. She wished that she had not been quite so hard-hearted as to go on sneering at Robert after he had ceased to tease and annoy her. The same night she dreamed that Robert was drowned at sea, and awoke crying. A few weeks after Robert's father was killed by a fall from a stack, and the widow and family were reduced to great distress.

Sophy had saved five shillings from some of the little perquisites of office as mistress of the poultry, and this sum, which was destined for the purchase of a new bonnet, she carried to the widow Rowe, and entreated her to accept. There was, however, an angry degree of excitement in the mind of Goody Rowe, that proved more powerful than either sorrow or poverty; and, though five shillings was at that moment like a mine of wealth, she sullenly rejected the donation from one whom she regarded as the enemy of her darling boy. "It was all along of you that my Robert went to sea," said she, "and I would rather die of hunger than be beholden to your charity, Sophy Flaxman." "But," said Sophy, "I am so very sorrowful for your misfortune, neighbour Rowe, and it would make me quite happy if you would take this money." "It is a fine thing to have so much money to spare, I dare say," returned Goody Rowe. "We are very poor folks, it is true, but we can live without the pity of those who sneered at our poor Robin, because, poor rogue, he had'n't such good clothes as some of his neighbours." "Indeed," said Sophy, bursting into tears, "I am very sorry that your son and I had any quarrels, but it was he that would not let me be at peace, and every one knows how he killed our turkey cock last May only, for taking my part." "It may be so," replied the mother, "but it is the first time I ever heard any one speak against my poor Robert; he was the kindest-hearted best-natured boy that ever I knew, and I shall never see him no more. He might have stayed at home to be a comfort to us all, if you had not made him weary of the green by such ill-becoming airs."

Sophy was deeply hurt at these upbraids, especially when she had come on so kind a motive; however, she made too much allowance for the state of mind in which she saw her unfortunate neighbour, to think of taking umbrage at what she said; but laying the money on the table before her, she said, "I am very sorry for your distress, neighbour Rowe, and also for the matter in which you think I have been to blame, and so I have no doubt in part; and if I can do any thing for you at any time, I hope you will let me know." She then withdrew,

certainly greatly mortified at the reception with which her friendly and benevolent attempts at offering comfort and assistance had been met, yet feeling better satisfied with herself than she had been for some time past. Soon after these events, Sophy's mother died, just as her father had saved up money enough to take a little farm on the green; and Sophy, instead of going to service, had to keep her father's house, and superintend a dairy of five cows, and a great increase of pigs and poultry. She had now such full occupation for her time and thoughts that she seldom went out except to church and market. She was a most careful and thrifty manager, and her father bestowed a fine young heifer upon her, by way of encouragement. The milk of this cow Sophy devoted to the nourishment of the widow Rowe's destitute family, instead of laying out the produce in finery for her own personal adornment. This she did as a matter of conscience, for she received no thanks from Goody Rowe, who never saw her without upbraiding her with the absence of Robert; and the worst of it was, year after year passed away, and Robert did not return. Meantime every thing prospered in farmer Flaxman's fields and homestead. It was a time of great agricultural prosperity, and the neighbours talked of his growing rich and leaving Sophy a fortune. Some of her former compeers began to call her Miss Sophy, and wondered at her continuing to dress just the same as she did when she first came to the green, in a dark stuff gown and close cottage straw-bonnet, with a plain ribbon crossed over it. Sophy had many admirers and some lovers; but she preferred her father's house to any change that was offered to her, for she was perfectly happy in her home duties, and the opportunities that were permitted to her of conducing to the comforts of her parent, and alleviating the distresses of some of her poor neighbours; but for her assistance, the widow Rowe and her younger children must have gone to the workhouse.

Sophy kindly took first one of the little girls and then another in turn into the house to fit them for service, by instructing them in household work and the business of the dairy and poultry yard.

Any girl who understands these departments is sure to get a place in the country, and to receive good wages; but the pride and folly of mothers of poor families not unfrequently lead them to despise the place of a dairy-maid for their daughters, and to aim at bringing them up for house-maids and ladies'-maids, because such persons are more showily dressed. This is a great error; for such situations are already overstocked by the daughters of mechanics and small farmers, who possess better manners, and enjoy opportunities of acquainting themselves with the things requisite to be understood by upper servants.

Goody Rowe "was not," as she honestly said, "a bit obliged to Sophy Flaxman for teaching her girls to drudge after cows and pigs and poultry, for she wished them to get into higher places." Sophy knew from experience that it would be only waste of words to argue with a person so deaf to reason as Goody Rowe; and as the girls themselves were most anxious to profit by her advice and friendly instructions, she persevered in the good part she had taken, without regarding the ingratitude of their mother.

One snowy afternoon, when Sophy and little Anne Rowe, who was at that time her assistant in the household, were arranging the butter baskets for going to market, her father came in and said, "Sophy, dear, I am going to Scrapeton market this afternoon, to receive payment from Merchant Smith for the load of wheat I sold this day week, so I can take your butter with me, and spare you and your little maid a long walk, for it is not so well for us both to be out at the same time."

Sophy assented to the propriety of this observation, and made haste to finish packing her neatly moulded prints of butter in nice order, a duty which was speedily performed.

The afternoon was spent in light household operations, after which, the young mistress and her little maid made up a bright fire, and setting out the supper comfortably in readiness for farmer Flaxman's return, read a chapter in the Bible together, verse by verse alternately, and then employed themselves at useful needle work till the clock struck nine. The time had passed away so quickly that

both started at the sound of the ninth stroke, and Sophy expressed surprise that her father was not home. Anne arose, threw another log on the fire, cleared the grate, and swept the hearth, while Sophy put aside the muslin blind, and opening the casement, looked out at the night. The night was intensely cold, and a young moon labored among the dense masses of broken snow clouds, from which now and then a few feathery flakes silently descended. The ground was mantled over with a white carpeting, and the broken belt of forest trees that had defined the boundary of the ancient park enclosure in the days when Bird's-eye Green had been Woodfield's pleasure and chase, stood forth in their snowy panoply, like an army of giant spectres, against the intense darkness of the shadowing distance beyond.

"I hope no accident has happened to my father," said Sophy, as she closed the casement against the sudden chill drift that blew full into her bosom. "Oh, lauk, miss, I hopes not," responded Anne; "Gypsey be a proper toward dear, and never puts on any parts, and sure she'd carry master steady enough." I wish my father had not troubled himself with the eggs and butter," pursued Sophy. "Surely it was very wrong to let him take two baskets. We could have taken it quite well to-morrow." "Why miss, as you say, we could have carried them right well, only master do think so much of making a penny a pound more for the butter, and p'raps butter might have dropped to-day, for folks at shop do fault the price sorely." "I wish," said Sophy, "we had a man in the house to send to Scrapeton to meet my father." "Miss," said Anne, "I will go and meet master myself, if you will just let Ted, the turnip boy, walk along with me for company.

While Sophy was debating in her own mind whether she would call the tired boy out of his warm bed to send him out into the inclement night, the sound of horses' hoofs was heard pattering on the frozen ground near the stable-door. "There's my father," cried Sophy, running to unbar the door, while Anne hastily followed with the lamp. Both uttered a cry of dismay when they opened the door, for Gypsey had returned without her rider. Sophy, with characteristic

presence of mind, took the lamp from the hand of her pale and trembling little attendant, and examined the knees of the mare to ascertain if there were any marks of her having fallen, but there were none, and she then experienced alarm of another nature. It was known that her father was to receive a sum of money. The road from Scrapeton to Woodfield was very lonely, and particularly dismal on a winter night, and her heart grew cold with terror as the thought occurred to her that he had been robbed—perhaps murdered. "Run dear Anne," said she, "to neighbour Mills, and ask him if he and his men will go with me to Scrapeton with lanterns, to see if we can discover my poor father." "Miss," replied Anne, "I will with all the pleasure in life, if Teddy will get up and go with me, for I am always timourse in the dark, and I do think it be getting for ten o'clock." "Well then, I will go myself." "Oh, Miss Sophy, Miss Sophy," cried Anne, clinging to her garments, "I dursn't be left in the house all alone with only Teddy, and he fast sleep in the garret." "Rouse him up while I am gone, if you are afraid, Anne, for I am in such agony about my dear father," cried Sophy, bursting into tears, "and something must be done." "Oh dear, oh dear!" sobbed Anne, "but you must not go, Miss Sophy, I know my poor master has been robbed and murdered; we shall be robbed and murdered too." "It is of no use thinking of ourselves," cried Sophy, struggling to withdraw her garments from the pertinacious grasp of the terrified child yet reluctant to leave her in a state of such painful excitement.

While she was endeavouring to prevail upon Anne to call the lad up, a heavy footstep was heard approaching the house. Sophy flew to the door. Anne ran to seek the protection of Teddy, the turnip boy, or rather to compel him to rise and to come to the rescue, in the event of an attack. Sophy, not so cautious, flung open the door, without waiting either to make enquiry or to receive a summons, and admitted a tall athletic stranger in a rough shaggy great-coat, and with a formidable bludgeon in his hand. "Have you come to tell me any news of my father?" cried Sophy, filial apprehension mastering every other feeling of

alarm. "Why, if your name be Sophy Flaxman, the same, I suppose, that used to sneer at a poor ragged ne'er-do-well called Robert Rowe, I believe I can, returned the stranger. "Pray tell me," cried Sophy, "if he be safe, and where is he." Why the old gentleman is safe enough, only a little bit disguised, I think you call it, in something that has got above board with him at the market table, and so he couldn't manage to steer his horse on the right track, it seems, but was shipwrecked in a quicksand of snow, where he would have foundered if I had not by good luck chanced to be on my way to the green, d'ye see, when I heard him sing out for help, and found him and his baskets rolling about among the snow like a ship in a storm; so I brought to, and towed him out of the snow drift, and lent him a helping hand till we got to the next cottage, where he made port, and in good time, for his rigging began to freeze, and he was glad to get to the fire, while I scudded on to let you know all about it by his desire, for fear you would be scared by the horse coming home without the old lad."

Sophy was very glad to hear the matter was no worse, and after returning her grateful thanks to the young seaman for the service he had rendered her father, requested him to take a seat by the fire, while she warmed a jug of elder wine for his refreshment. "I don't care if I do," replied the stranger, "as it is the first civil thing you have ever offered to do by me, Miss Sophy." "You speak as if we were old acquaintances, sir," observed Sophy, turning an enquiring scrutiny upon her guest, who, doffing a large fur cap which he had hitherto worn, saluted her with a profound bow, accompanied with a certain droll expression of countenance, which recalled to her mind a confused memory of events and scenes connected with the early drama of life. "Robert Rowe," she exclaimed; "can it really be you?" "Robert Rowe, forsooth," repeated the young seaman, throwing open his rough great-coat and displaying a suit of naval blue; "when did you ever see ragged Robin in such rigging as this, and what should make you think of him after so many long years are gone over both our heads." "I have thought a good deal of

Robert Rowe," replied Sophy; "and it gives me great pleasure to see him once more return to his old friends." "Bless your sweet eyes, if I thought you were in earnest, mayhap I could tell you that I've thought a good deal about one Sophy Flaxman, and wondered whether the first thing she did when she saw me, after eight years' absence would be to sneer at a poor fellow again." "I hope I understand my duty to my neighbour better than to act so foolishly, and Robert, I am very glad to see you home again." "But, I say, Miss Sophy, suppose I had come home without a penny in my locker, and my rigging as bad as it was when I slipped my cable and left all my messmates on the green in the lurch? "Why then, I should be equally glad to see you on your own account, Robert, and perhaps more so on my own, because I should have had the opportunity to make you some amends for my former unkindness." "Thank you, Miss Sophy, thank you very heartily for your good will, but I'm very glad I am in no need of your charity any further than a cup of hot elder wine or so to drink your good health," returned the mariner, taking the cheering potation from the hand of his former adversary with a merry glance. "And so you have left off sneering at your neighbours, Sophy," returned he, after he emptied the mug. "I should be very sorry to boast of my reformation in that way too much," retorted Sophy, with a sly smile, "lest I should relapse into my former bad practices." "I wish you would just for once," said Robert, "that I may be sure, that, for all your pretty words and meek looks, you are the very same little vixen who used to be more than a match for me and my master's pigs." "Not after the murder of my poor turkey-cock, remember." "Ah, Sophy that was well put in. But now you will acknowledge that I am an honest fellow, when I tell you that I have brought you home something to make amends to you for that loss." "A green goose, I suppose?" rejoined Sophy, turning a laughing glance at her former foe. "No," returned Robert with a loving look, "but a beautiful poll parrot, that can sing a dozen tunes, and ask you how you do—that is, if the young uns at mother's cottage don't stop her pipes before you see her."

"Then you have seen your mother?" the young mariner blushed. "It's all your fault if I have not," said he. "Mine," exclaimed Sophy. "Yes, for making me so happy with you that I could not make up my mind to tack about and leave such a snug port. You must know that I came by the Scrapeton mail which should have got in at twelve, but the deep snow have put us all aback, and we did not make our moorings at the Scrapeton Angel till past eight at night; and then I hired a horse and cart, and shipped all my luggage aboard, and sent one of my 'prentices down with it to mother's cot. Poll in her gilded cage is perched at the top of the load, with a blanket thrown over all, so I hope she'll take no hurt."

Here the entrance of Sophy's father, quite sobered, and greatly ashamed of the circumstance that led to the accident, put an end to the conversation; and Robert Rowe, after shaking hands with the farmer, and receiving the delighted greetings of little Anne, whom Sophy summoned to welcome the long absent truant, wished all parties good night, and departed in high spirits.

The next day he brought the promised token of his remembrance to Sophy Flaxman, and received a general invitation from the farmer "to come as often as he pleased to see him and his old friend Sophy." Robert cast one of his droll glances at the damsel at this, and received a dimpling smile in reply, with something like an attempt at one of those comical pursing-up of lips and nostrils which her young neighbor was wont to take so deeply to heart.

"Ah, Sophy, Sophy, that was the making of my fortune," cried he, shaking his head at her. "If you had not taken it into your saucy little head to sneer at me so scornfully, I should have been keeping farmer Mill's swine to this day, or tilling the land like another Cain, instead of going into the world to seek for better fortune than the grinding lot of poverty to which I was born. I am now, through patience, perseverance, and some determination, the captain of a South Sea vessel, and the next voyage will make me rich enough, if it please God to prosper me as he has done, to stock a farm, and mayhap, if I can persuade

some good girl to wait so long for me, to marry a wife and settle myself happily among my old friends for life."

Sophy Flaxman felt thoroughly ashamed of blushing in reply to this declaration of Mr. Rowe's intentions, especially as he did not think proper to point his allusion more explicitly to her than by one of his droll looks; and he actually made the projected voyage without a more express acknowledgment of the state of his affections. Sophy consoled herself as well as she could for his departure in the active performance of her duties. I will not take upon me to say that she regarded the green parrot in the light of a pledge of his love, but it was certainly a great pet with her and little Anne, who was now so indispensable to her as a help in the house, that she declared "it was impossible to part with her." Two long years at last wore away, and then—who does not anticipate the sequel?—Robert Rowe returned, if not a rich man, yet rich enough to maintain his mother comfortably, as well as his wife; and finding Sophy Flaxman loved him well enough to forgive the trial he had made of the strength of her affection, he persuaded her to become his bride. They now occupy the finest dairy farm on Bird's-eye Green.—*Miss Agnes Strickland.*

#### PEARLS AND PEARL-FISHING OF CEYLON.

A very extensive variety of beautiful shells is found in the waters of Ceylon, but those most esteemed are found at Trincomalee, and may be met with for sale at Colombo, put up in satin-wood cases of different sizes, fitted with trays, setting one on the top of the other. But the most prized of all the sub-marine productions, by princes, by orientals, and particularly by ladies, from the most ancient times, is the pearl, found in a shell, which, according to Lamark, is named *Meleagrina Margaritifera*, and which inhabits the Persian Gulf, the shores of Ceylon, the Gulf of Mexico, the Bay of Panama, and the Gulf of California. According to the nomenclature of conchology, it is a bivalve or is composed of two halves, and has at the posterior base a byssus or beard, for the accommodation of which there is a notch between the two shells. By this byssus and a glutinous matter which it secretes, the animal attaches itself to rocks, stones, dead shells, &c., and it is also perhaps an adjuvant to its motions. The size of the pearl oyster varies in the different localities of its abode; but those of the same place do not differ much in this respect from each other: those of California,



Panama, and Barhein in the Persian Gulf, are large when compared with those taken from the pearl-banks of Ceylon, which measure at the hinge, which is linear, from two to two and a half inches, and rectangularly to this base, from two and a half to three inches. These shells are thin and diaphanous; internally nacre or pearly, and externally rough, bearing the marks of the habitations of other animals, as sponges and some species of vermes, that penetrate the outside covering, or epidermis, and therein construct their dwellings. Those of the Persian Gulf are thicker and of twice the above dimensions: they are smoother externally, covered with a greenish epidermis, and marked by dark-coloured rays of from a quarter to half an inch in breadth. Again; those found at Panama and those of California, particularly the latter, are very large, and the nacre is thick, forming what is termed 'mother-of-pearl.' A very considerable profit is derived from carrying these shells from California to China, where they are manufactured into a variety of ornamental and fancy articles.

Pearl oysters, the natives of Ceylon think, descend from the clouds in showers of rain. After escaping from the egg, or embryo state, pearl oysters are seen in immense clusters, floating about the sea; at this time they are so very small, that a casual observer would pass the floating masses, believing them to be some kind of fish spawn, but never supposing them to be oysters. In this state, the sport of wind and current, they are driven round the coasts of Ceylon, until increased size causes them to sink to the bottom. They then attach themselves to rocks, generally of coral, or to any heavy substance, by means of the beard, similar to that of the common muscle, with which nature has furnished them, or they adhere to each other in clusters. On removing a wooden buoy that had been attached to an anchor about six weeks, in the port of Colombo, it was brought on shore covered with pearl oysters nearly as large as a shilling. The finest pearl in the possession of the Maricaire of Killecarre is said to have been obtained from a bank off Chilaw; but it appears that oysters very seldom arrive at perfection on any banks except on those off Arippe. The coral-banks off the coasts of this island lie from one to six or eight miles from the shore, generally exposed to the strength of the monsoons and currents; those near Arippe appear to be the least exposed.

Near Muscat, I have found pearl oysters from the size of a dime to twice that of those of Arippe, adhering by their beards in crevices of rocks left bare by the tide; and the very small ones, to the under side of masses of rock, lying in water two or three feet deep, many of which I turned over. They were mingled with other shells and sponges, and some were even hidden by them; and one could not avoid the impression that the young oysters had selected such retreats, to be secure from the attacks of larger and more active animals. But their number was insignificant, when compared with

the thousands fished up from what are termed pearl-banks.

"The last three fisheries on the Arippe banks have been in from five and a half to seven fathoms water, protected on the west and south-west by a ridge of sand and coral, extending from the north point of an Island called Caredivan. Coming from seaward over this ridge, in two and three-quarters or three fathoms water, you rapidly deepen to seven fathoms in the immediate neighbourhood of the oyster-beds: besides this peculiar protection from the violence of the south-west monsoon, the coral-banks to the northward of the pearl-banks are in many parts nearly level with the surface of the sea, and may form an essential protection to the oysters from the currents of the north-east monsoon.

"Thus secure in deep water, lie the quiescent oysters, adhering to their coral homes until age has enfeebled the fibres of their beards, and then, most of them breaking from their hold, are found in perfection on a sandy bottom near the coral-beds. Two-thirds of the oysters taken up last fishery were from a sandy bottom.

"One of the most intelligent pearl-divers I have met, fixes the age of the oyster at six and a half years when it breaks from the rock: he does not think it can forsake the rock at its own pleasure; but when separated it has the power of moving on a sandy bottom, generally with the hinge directly in advance. When I first sounded on the ridge which runs from the Caredivan island, I was struck with its importance as a guide to the particular spots of oysters, and was surprised that I had never heard of its existence. I caused inquiry to be made, and after some time was informed that the natives of that part of the country have a wild notion of a powerful queen having resided at Kodremalle, and that the dead from the city were placed on an island in the sea, which has disappeared; nevertheless, I am inclined to believe the ridge to be rising coral and sand.

"Before the fibres of the beard break and the oysters separate, they are in immense heaps and clusters. A diver describing how thick they were on the bank, placed his hand to his chin; a more intelligent man estimated the depth of the beds of oysters seldom to exceed eighteen inches, and explained that large rocks at the bottom, when covered with oysters, may be mistaken for heaps of oysters themselves.

"Pearl oysters are said to arrive at perfection in seven years; after attaining this age they soon die. I heard of an attempt being made to remove pearl oysters, as common oysters are removed in Europe, to richer and more secure ground, but without success. I once attempted to convey some alive from Arippe to Colombo by sea, having the water frequently changed, but on the second day they were all dead.

"Persons who may have been in the habit of considering a pearl oyster a treasure, will be astonished to learn that a bushel of them may

be purchased at Arippe during a fishery for a less sum than a bushel of oysters can be bought for at Feversham or Colchester.

"The best pearls are generally found in the most fleshy part of the oyster, near the hinge of the shell, but pearls are found in all parts of the fish and also adhering to the shells. I have known sixty-seven pearls of various sizes taken from one oyster. It is by no means certain that every oyster contains pearls; they are seldom found in those oysters that would be selected as the finest for eating: this favours the opinion that pearls are produced by disease in the fish, and therefore pearl oysters are seldom eaten, being considered unwholesome. If a pearl be cut into two pieces, it will be seen that it is formed of separate coats or layers, similar to those of an onion.

The pearl-banks of Ceylon, which have been celebrated for many a year, are in the Gulf of Manaar, between its north-western coast, and that of the Indian Peninsula, and not far from Arippe. The fishery is a Government monopoly, and, being managed on very just and politic principles, is the only unobjectionable one of which I have any knowledge. The banks are fished on account of the Government; the oysters are sold in lots of one thousand, on the spot, to the highest bidder. As there can be no certainty of the quantity or quality of pearls a heap of oysters may contain, the pearl-fishery must attract many to speculate, from the gamester-like interest thus thrown around it.

In the month of November, between the close of the south-west and commencement of the north-east monsoon, when calms prevail, the banks are examined by the collector of Manaar, who is also the supervisor, attended by the inspector and an interpreter.

"The vessels employed on these examinations, are a Government guard-vessel, two sailing-boats from the Master Attendant's department at Colombo, and about eight native fishing-boats from Manaar and Jaffna. On these occasions the boats are furnished with one diving-stone and two divers. Five or six native headmen, called Adapanaars, also attend and go in the boats, to see that the divers perform their duty, and take notes of the reports given from time to time by the divers for the information of the supervisor.

"Samples of oysters are taken up and forwarded to Colombo with a report on the state of the banks by the supervisor. On these samples depends the decision of Government as to a fishery the following March.

"So many years had passed since the fishery of 1814, without one of any consequence having taken place, that it gave rise to various conjectures as to the cause of failure. Some were of opinion that violent winds and currents buried the oysters in sand, or drove them entirely away; some supposed the Adapanaars and divers employed at examinations gave false reports, and the banks were plundered by boats from the opposite coast. It was also said that former fisheries had been so extensive, as to have injured the oyster-beds. The natives

attributed it to various descriptions of fish, and also to a failure of seasonable rain, which they deem absolutely necessary to bring the oysters to perfection.

"To prevent plunder, a Government vessel has been kept stationed on the banks during the season of the year that boats can visit them. To ensure correct reports, diving-bells have been used to enable Europeans to go down at examinations.

"Without venturing to contradict a pretty general opinion, that the failure of the pearl-fisheries for so many years has been owing to the effect of strong winds and currents, I am by no means ready to admit this as the cause. Too much confidence in the knowledge of the Adapanaars may have led to error, and consequent failure; they are not like the experienced fishermen of Europe: indeed, they are not fishermen; being unable to manage their own boats.

"The pearl-banks of Arippe and Condatchy lie at a considerable distance from the coast, which is very low and presents hardly any objects which might serve as landmarks; the banks are extensive, the masses or beds of oysters being of various ages according to the seasons they may have settled. Very many of these masses or beds are by no means so extensive as has been imagined, and nothing is more easy than to mistake one bed for another, particularly by the Adapanaars, who are guided chiefly by the course they steer from the Doric at Arippe; and that which they call the N.E. chivel to-day may be called S.E., tomorrow.

"I have heard that samples of oysters have frequently been taken up by order, from banks inspected the previous year, and found nowise improved, and sometimes the samples have been younger. This, I venture to say, shows that although there has been no difficulty in finding plenty of oysters on the banks, there has been great difficulty in finding the same spot a second time, and proves that the greatest care and skill are necessary to mark the particular spots, beds, or masses on the bank from whence the samples are taken; and this is not to be expected by mere compass bearings and soundings, or even by astronomical observations, but requires a union of talent and professional tact with alacrity in the pursuit. These necessary qualifications will ensure considerable success in fishing, and a consequent increase of the revenue will be derived from this source."

The Fishery of 1833 yielded a revenue of 25,043*l.* 10*s.*, from three-fourths of the oysters landed: one-fourth, according to custom being the property of the divers. Each bank is calculated to be available for twenty days in seven years; and the annual net revenue from the pearl-fishery is estimated at 14,000*l.* At the Fishing in 1833, twelve hundred and fifty divers were employed, of which number 1100 were from the coast of India, and only 150 from Ceylon.

Notwithstanding the moral of that pretty

story, entitled "The Tale of Cinnamon and Pearls,"\* and in spite of the oblique arguments

\* Miss Harriet Martineau.

based on false data contained therein, it is very evident that without the present, or some similar system in regard to it, the pearl-fishery would soon become profitless; the beds and banks would be destroyed and the oyster itself disappear from the waters of Ceylon; to remove this monopoly, therefore, would be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

"The crew of a boat consists of a tindal or master, ten divers, and thirteen other men, who manage the boat and attend the divers when fishing. Each boat has five diving-stones (the ten divers relieving each other); five divers are constantly at work during the hours of fishing.

"The weight of diving-stones varies from 15 to 25 lbs. according to the size of the diver; some stout men find it necessary to have from 4 to 8 lbs. of stone in a waist-belt, to enable them to keep at the bottom of the sea, to fill their net with oysters. The form of a diving-stone resembles a pine; it is suspended by a double cord.

"The net is of coir-rope yarns, 18 inches deep, fastened to a hoop 18 inches wide, fairly slung to a single cord. On preparing to commence fishing, the diver divests himself of all his clothes except a small piece of cloth; after offering up his devotion, he plunges into the sea and swims to his diving-stone, which his attendants have flung over the side of the boat; he places his right foot or toes between the double-cord on the diving-stone, the bight of the double-cord being passed over a stick projecting from the side of the boat; by grasping all parts of the rope, he is enabled to support himself and the stone, and raise or lower the latter for his own convenience while he remains at the surface: he then puts his left foot on the hoop of the net and presses it against the diving-stone, retaining the cord in his hand. The attendants take care that the cords are clear for running out of the boat.

"The diver being thus prepared, he raises his body as much as he is able; drawing a full breath, he presses his nostrils between his thumb and finger, slips his hold of the bight of the diving-stones, doubles the cord from over the projecting stick, and descends as rapidly as the stone will sink him.

"On reaching the bottom, he abandons the stone (which is hauled up by the attendants ready to take him down again), clings to the ground and commences to fill his net. To accomplish this, he will sometimes creep over a space of eight or ten fathoms, and remain under water a minute; when he wishes to ascend, he checks the cord of the net which is instantly felt by the attendants, who commence pulling up as fast as they are able; the diver remains with the net until it is so far clear of the bottom as to be in no danger of upsetting, and then commences to haul himself up by the cord (hand over hand), which his attendants are likewise pulling. When by these measures his body has acquired an impetus upwards, he

forsakes the cord, places his hands to his thighs, rapidly ascends to the surface, swims to his diving-stone, and by the time the contents of his net have been emptied into the boat, he is ready to go down again. One diver will take up in a day from one thousand to four thousand oysters. They seldom exceed a minute under water, the more common time is from 53 to 57 seconds, but when requested to remain as long as possible, I have timed them from 84 to 87 seconds. They are warned of the time to ascend by a singing noise in the ears, and finally by a sensation similar to hiccup.

"Many divers will not venture down, until the shark-charmer is on the bank and has secured the mouths of the sharks. Some are provided with a written charm from the priest, which they wrap up in oil-cloth perfectly secure from the water, and dive with it on their person. Others, being Roman Catholics, appear satisfied with an assurance from their priest that they have his prayers for their protection; but I am informed they are all happy to secure the interest of the shark-charmer.

"This worthy man is paid by Government, and is also allowed a perquisite of ten oysters from every boat daily, during the fishery.

"During my first visit to the pearl-banks, the shark-charmer informed me that he had obtained the charm from his father, that the only real power of securing the mouths of the sharks was possessed by his family, and that it would be exceedingly dangerous to trust to any other person; he also gave me to understand that if he were to explain the charm to me, it would lose its virtue in my possession. I requested him to charm a shark to appear alongside the vessel; he said he could do it, but it would not be right, his business being to send them away. At several subsequent visits I renewed my request, without effect.

"During the few days we were employed marking off the ground to be fished last March, a shark was seen and reported to me. I instantly sent for the shark-charmer, and desired him to account for permitting a shark to appear at a time when any alarm might be dangerous to the success of the fishery. He replied that I had frequently requested him to summon a shark to appear, and he had therefore allowed this one, to please me.

During the fishing season, the shores of Arippe are enlivened by crowds of people from all parts of the country; divers, boat-owners, speculators and the curious, all assemble to behold,

"Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-colored shells," while the lapidary attends with his wooden stand and bow, to drill the pearls and fit them to be strung, so soon as they are got out of the oyster; which, according to all accounts, is a tedious and rather disgusting operation. The oysters are put into pens, and there left until the animal matter be softened by putrefaction, when it is subjected to frequent washings, and the pearls shine forth, emblems of purity in the floating mass. Some are of a bluish, some of

a yellowish, and some of a whitish lustre; each class finds a ready market among its admirers; in the East the bluish and yellowish are most prized, but in the eyes of the Christian fair the pure white shines brightest.

The pearl-diver, though obnoxious to many casualties and to severe toil, is said to be longer lived on an average than coolies and other laborers; yet both Mrs. Hemans and Miss Martineau, in commiserating their hard lot, seem to be impressed with the belief that they number fewer days than any other people of similar rank. That they receive a high compensation cannot be doubted, if we take as a criterion the result of the fishing of 1833, when each diver received £3 15s. 4d. for eight days' labour; and it must be borne in mind that able-bodied men do not receive in Ceylon more than sixpence per day.—*Ruschenberger.*

### A STRANGE TALE.

ONE summer evening, in a pretty little village on the pleasant banks of the Tweed, a gentle tap was heard at the door of the schoolmaster's house, which was the first of a line of new buildings at the end of the "Toon," as the natives call it. The schoolmaster, who was quite a young man, and just established in his laborious office, opened the door himself, and was rather surprised to see an elderly woman holding in her hand a very pretty person, at whose breast was an infant.

The old woman begged admittance for her young friend, stating that she was quite exhausted, and would presently expire of fatigue if not assisted. The schoolmaster of course desired them to enter, and taking the child in one arm, gave the other to the young woman, who fainted as he placed her on a chair. The schoolmaster's mother, an old lady who managed the cottage establishment for him, was somewhat surprised to find such a party installed in the house when she returned from visiting a neighbour. But being of the same kindly disposition her as son, she gave the weary strangers a hearty welcome; and although she said she could not give them such good accommodation as they would have found at the inn farther up the street, she and her son would do the best they could for them.

Next morning a curious dilemma arose. The elderly woman had silently taken her departure in the night; and it soon appeared that the young person who with her child had accompanied her, was

both deaf and dumb, no direct means of ascertaining who and what they were presented themselves. The young woman, however, was so pleasing in her manner, so pretty withal, and both she and the child so well dressed, that the schoolmaster and his mother felt an involuntary respect for their mysterious guests, and very soon took such an interest in them, that all thoughts of giving them any hint to retire were out of the question.

The schoolmaster, as part of his business, had learned the art of speaking on his fingers, and as his mother soon acquired it also, there occurred no difficulty in communicating with the young woman. The first request of the stranger was, that she might be asked no questions as to her history; the second was, that she might be permitted to remain where accident had placed her. And as she made this request, she produced a purse, containing, as she explained, an ample sum to discharge her board and lodging for a year.

In a private consultation between the schoolmaster and his mother on this proposal, the prudent old lady strongly objected to such an arrangement, on the plea of its indelicacy, and the hazard in which it might place the respectability of the village school, when it was known that a person of such questionable history had become the schoolmaster's guest.

The young man, on the other hand, warmly advocated the cause of the forlorn wanderer—rendered doubly helpless in consequence of her unfortunate want of speech and hearing. As to the indelicacy, he said that was an idle notion, as his mother's presence would effectually maintain all the proprieties. The truth was, however, the schoolmaster, who was a man of birth considerably above his present station, and who had received a first-rate education, was greatly struck with the beauty of the stranger. Moreover, though he did not confess it, even to himself, he had begun to entertain vague hopes that, in process of time, the mystery might be cleared up. Then, thought he, all the proprieties on which his mother dwelt might be satisfied in a manner which he scarcely ventured to think of.

Month after month passed in this way. The stranger became every day more and more amiable, and the mother

saw, with a feeling of mixed alarm and satisfaction, that while the young people were becoming daily more intimate and attached, the school was more and more neglected, till at length the boys had it all to themselves. It was soon admitted by all parties that this could not be allowed to go on long; and after one more fruitless attempt to gain from the young woman some notion what she was, or who she was, or where she came from, (an attempt which she declared, if repeated, must for ever drive her from them,) it was agreed that a marriage should take place.

Married they were accordingly, and the thousand and one gossips of the village silenced for the time. The school, which had languished in proportion as the courtship of the preceptor had flourished, now revived; and what was very important and satisfactory to the neighbourhood, a female department was added. In this the schoolmaster's wife taught writing, cyphering, and sewing—her usefulness being necessarily limited by the want of the senses of hearing and speech.

Her success, however, was astonishing, and the school gained great celebrity in consequence. The discipline she maintained was perfect, for it received the most exact obedience, while it gained for her the regard as well as the respect of her pupils. The shrewd ones amongst the young folks used often to assert, when alone, that the mistress was only pretending to be deaf, as she appeared to discover, with a kind of intuitive accuracy, all that they said near her. But the numberless experiments which they made to entrap her only tended to establish that it really was no pretence. Finally, all suspicion on their part as well as on the husband's, if indeed any had ever existed, gradually died away.

In the mean time she became the mother of several children, besides the girl who had been with her at the time of her first appearance, and who always called her mamma, and was treated as a daughter by her. I should mention that the old woman who had accompanied her on her arrival paid her and her children a visit of several days once a-year, and on these occasions she always brought with her a purse of money similar to that which the young woman had produced

on the morning after she was received by the schoolmaster.

One or two attempts to win from the old lady some trace of the young person's mysterious history were met by such earnest entreaties not to inquire into the matter, and threatenings of such an alarming nature, that after the second year no further questions were put to her, and every thing fell into a regular, successful, and happy train. No persons could be more attached, no family more flourishing, and no business more satisfactory than the joint school.

The gentry of the neighbourhood were naturally much interested in this strange story, and still more interested in the heroine of it, whose manners, as I have already mentioned, were those of a much higher rank in life. But they tried in vain to induce her to visit them, and she stuck resolutely to her school and cottage duties.

On the fourteenth anniversary of her arrival, when the old woman made her periodical appearance with her purse of gold, the girl who was called, and who probably was, her eldest daughter, chanced to pass unobserved through a room in which this old woman and her mother were. To her astonishment, and even horror, she heard her mother speak. Greatly alarmed and confused, she ran to her father, as she always called the schoolmaster, and communicated the wonderful news to him. He desired the girl to tell no one else, and said nothing himself till the night came, and every one had retired to bed.

He then told his wife of the discovery that had been made, and entreated her to bless him with the sound of her voice.

"You are very wrong," she said, "and you will deeply rue this breach of our solemn contract. You have heard me speak once—you shall never hear me speak again!"

He tried every art—he prayed—he wept—but all in vain—till at length, quite exhausted, he fell asleep.

In the morning his wife was no longer by his side. He rose in alarm: the house was searched—all the grounds—the desolate school—she was no where to be found, and the only thing like a trace was the uncertain report of a peasant who

had seen two females running out of the village at midnight.

This afforded no clue, however, and the poor man was left in despair. As his heart was wellnigh broken, his business no longer prospered. The girls' school, after a few vain attempts at a substitute for the spirit that had fled, was given up. The other branch fell into neglect, and the whole fortunes of the poor man seemed crushed under the weight of this misfortune.

His only consolation was in his family; but this endured not long, for before the year was out, first one and then another fell sick, till, just at the period when the old woman was wont to make her appearance, every member of the young family was laid up with measles or some such complaint, several of them being at the point of death. The utmost anxiety was of course felt to know whether the usual visit would be paid, and great was the joy of all when the old woman appeared. As she entered the door, she held up her bag of money, not knowing the condition of the children.

"Of what use is your base gold?" exclaimed the wretched father. "Look at this sight—look at these motherless, deserted, dying children!"

The old woman, struck with horror, threw down the money, and fled. In less than a week she returned, leading back the mysterious deserter, whose presence and attentions soon restored all the party, young and old, to health and happiness.

But what excited unbounded wonder in the minds of her family, and every one else, was the circumstance of her now speaking and hearing perfectly, and of her no longer refusing to go into society.

The husband, it may well be imagined, after the severe lesson he had received, never again approached the mysterious subject with his wife; and as no other person ventured to take such a liberty with her, the secret was never even guessed at. The nearest approach to it—indeed the only glimmering of light that was ever shed upon it—arose from the circumstance of her accent being slightly Irish; whence it was inferred that she may have belonged to some distinguished family in that country.

After this period—strange to say—the old woman never came back; and as the

lady herself—for such all who knew her admitted she must have been—was carried off by a sudden illness some years afterwards, the seal of permanent mystery has been set upon this singular adventure.

One may perceive in this wild tale not a little of what is called German fancy. It is curious, indeed, to remark, that such had been the effect of her long familiarity with the writings of that imaginative country, that the Countess delighted in such involved and mysterious stories, and, as it were, in spite of her own more sober judgment, gave them credence. She assured us, accordingly, that the above circumstances were well authenticated,—though, it must be confessed, they look more like what might have happened on the banks of the "dark rolling Danube" or the Elbe, than by the side of the merry Tweed, albeit, in times past, not unacquainted with romantic incidents.—*Capt. Basil Hall.*

#### QUEER CHARACTERS.

TATE WILKINSON.—"Come in!"—the young man obeyed. Tate was shuffling about the room with a small ivory-handled brush in one hand, and a silver buckle in the other, in pretended industry, whistling during his employment after the fashion of a groom while currying and rubbing down a horse. It was a minute at least before Tate took the least notice of the new comer, who, in the short interval, had opportunity to observe the ludicrous effect of Tate's appearance, which was indeed irresistibly droll. His coat collar was thrown back upon his shoulders, and his Brown George (a wig so called in compliment, I believe, to King George the Third, who set the fashion) on one side, exposing the ear on the other, and cocked up behind so as to leave the bare nape of his neck open to observation. His hat was put on *side* foremost, and as forward and awry as his wig; both were perked on his head very insecurely, as it seemed to the observer. He presented altogether what might be called an *uncomfortable* appearance. When the young actor entered, he caught the back view of this strange figure, which made no movement either of courtesy or curiosity. Mr. Mathews, after an unsuccessful cough, and a few significant *hems*, which seemed to solicit welcome and attention, ventured at last upon an audible

"Good morning, sir." This had its effect; and the following colloquy ensued. "Good morning, sir," said Mr. Mathews. "Oh! good morning, Mr. Meadows," replied Tate, very doggedly. "My name is Mathews, sir." "Ay, I know," winking his eyes and lifting his brows rapidly up and down—a habit with him when not pleased; then wheeling suddenly round and looking at him for the first time with scrutinizing earnestness, from head to foot, he uttered a long drawn "Ugh!" and exclaimed, "What a maypole! sir, you're too tall for low comedy." "I'm sorry, sir," said the poor disconcerted youth; but Tate did not seem to hear him, for dropping his eyes and resuming the brushing of his buckles, he continued as if in soliloquy; "But I don't know why a tall man shouldn't be a very comical fellow." Then again turning sharply for a reinvestigation of the slender figure before him, he added with glowering discontent, "You're too thin, sir, for anything but the Apothecary in 'Romeo and Juliet;' and you would want stuffing for that." "I am very sorry, sir," rejoined the mortified actor, who was immediately interrupted by the growing distaste and manifest ill-humour of the disappointed manager. "What's the use of being sorry? You speak too quick." The accused anxiously assured him that he would endeavour to mend that habit. "What," said Tate, snappishly, "by speaking quicker, I suppose?" Then, looking at Mr. Mathews, he, as if again in soliloquy, added, "I never saw anybody so thin to be alive!! Why sir, one hiss would blow you off the stage." This remark sounding more like good humour than anything he had uttered, the comedian ventured, with a faint smile, to observe, that he *hoped that he should not get that one*—when Tate, with affected or real anger, replied, "You'll get a great many, sir. Why, sir, I've been hissed—the great Mr. Garrick has been hissed; it's not very modest in you to expect to escape, Mr. Mountain." "Mathews, sir," interposed the hisscalled. "Well, Mathew Mountain." "No, sir." "Have you a quick study, Mr. Maddox?" asked Tate, interrupting him once more. Mathews gave up the ineffectual attempt to preserve his proper name, and replied at once to the last question, "I hope so, sir." "Why, (in a voice of thunder) arn't you sure!"

It must be understood that in Tate's first surprise he had forgotten to offer his visitor a seat; therefore Mr. Mathews had remained standing near the door, relieving his weariness,

after a long journey, by occasionally shifting his position, like a pupil taking his first lesson from a dancing master; and leaning sometimes upon one foot and then upon the other, in awkward embarrassment. Tate, after shuffling for some time up and down the room, suddenly stopped, and inquired if he was a single man? Of course he replied in the negative. "I'm sorry for it, Mr. Montague; a wife's a dead weight without a salary, and I don't choose my actors to run in debt."

JOHN, or JOHNNY WINTER, wardrobe keeper and tailor to Tate Wilkinson's company, was more than pen can do justice to, or living tongue now describe. Amongst his numerous prejudices he hated a new comer, from whom he rationally reckoned on new arrangements, new demands, and a complete change of habits (literally,) which his predecessor had by custom made easy to him; and though the person succeeded had never partaken more liberally either of Johnny's regard or attentions than his successor was likely to do, yet he seemed, now that he was gone, to have been less troublesome than he of the present time, and his name was sure to be dragged forward on every occasion, to the disparagement of the later known.

John Winter detested Leeds. It was a favorite assertion of his, that they never would have had occasion to build a gallows at York except "to hang Leids-folk upon." He entertained the most miserable discontent at his calling; which arose less from the dislike of what he was, than an overweening preference for what he was not. He would say—"Eh! I wish my poor father had been dead and gone before he made a tailor o'me; but, however, there's one thing they never shall say of me, I niver *did* sit cross-legged, and I niver *will*. Eh! Mr. Mathus, I wish I had been summut i' t' horse line. I could like to hunt ivery day of my life." (Johnny had been frequently known to follow the hounds on foot, so fond was he of the sport.) "Eh! I wish I had a horse, Mister Mathus. I've been looking out all my life to the time when I should keep a horse. I've gotten a vary neat bridle and saddle; I want nought but a horse to mak it complete. But what's a poor lazy lopyy tailor to do, with a sick wife and sixteen shillings a week? Eh!" with a sigh, "horses are out o' t' question where there are bairns, I reckon."

Mr. Mathews, who by this conversation may be guessed to have advanced in some degree

into Winter's good graces, inquired how his wife really was? "Eh! she's badly, I reckon; vary badly. I suppose she's in t' consumption line. T' doctor says, she mun ha' port wine allowed her. Wha's to pay for it? says I. Nay, nay, Mr. Mathus, when women begin to drink wine, it's time they were out o' t' way."

In the course of his visits to the shop-board, Mr. Mathews one day found Johnny at work upon a pair of Brobdignag "inexpressibles," which evidently were intended for Stephen Kemble, then performing for a few nights in York. John was drawing out his needle with hurried distaste for his job. "What, Winter!" said Mr. Mathews, "you are obliged, I suppose, to make up everything *new* for Mr. Kemble?" "Eh," sighed the tailor, "eh, it's very hard I reckon, to be obliged to work for such a great fat sow as that, just at t' race time, when t' horses are running. I was obliged yesterday to hire six men, to sit round his waistcoat, (one man could not mak' it in time,) and I'm now working at one o' his fat knees mysel'. Eh, it's bad to 'bide! when I've done all *his* work, I reckon I've gotten only another job to match." "And what's that?" "Eh, ha! to make a great-coit (coat) for t' York Minster."

*Mathews' Memoirs.*

#### A PEEP AT THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

Some of the greatest distinctions amongst the people of this country arise from the trade and consequent habits of different districts. The weaving and cotton-spinning swains of Lancashire, the miners of Derbyshire and Cornwall, the mechanics of Sheffield and Birmingham, the carpet-weavers of Kidderminster, and ribbon-weavers of Coventry, the potters of Staffordshire, the keelmen of Newcastle-on-Tyne, the colliers of that neighbourhood, the shepherds of the North and the shepherds of the South Downs, the agricultural peasantry, each and all have their own characteristics of personal aspect, language, tastes and tone of mind, which it would be worth while to trace out and record. It would have the good effect of making the different districts better acquainted with each other, and would present features that would surprise many who imagine themselves pretty familiar with the population of their native land. We will answer for it, that there are few that have any accurate or lively idea of that singular district which furnishes us with the earthenware we are daily using, from the common flower-pot to the most superb table service of porcelain, from the child's plaything of a deer or a lamb resting under a highly verdurous crockery tree, to the richest ornaments for the mantelpiece, or

chaste and beautiful copies of the Portland or Barberini vase. Who has a knowledge of this district? Who is aware that it covers with its houses and its factories a tract of ten miles in length, three or four in width, and that in it a population of upwards of 70,000 persons is totally engaged in making pots, that cooks and scullions all over the world may enjoy the breaking of them? Such, however, is the reputed extent and population of the Staffordshire Potteries.

The general aspect of the Potteries is striking. The great extent of workmen's houses, street after street, all of one size and character, has a singular effect on the stranger. From the vicinity to the moorlands and to the Peak of Derbyshire, the country in which the Potteries are situated is diversified with long ridges of considerable elevation, and intervening vallies, and to those who travel through it by night, presents a remarkable appearance. The whole region appears one of mingled light and darkness. Lights are seen scattered all over a great extent in every direction—some burning steadily, others huge flitting flames, as if vomited from the numerous mouths of furnaces or pits on fire. Some are far below you, some glare aloft as in mountainous holds. The darkness exaggerates the apparent heights and depths at which these flames appear, and you imagine yourself in a much more rugged and wild region than you really are. Daylight undeceives you in this respect, but yet reveals scenery that to the greater number of passengers is strange and new. They see a country which in its natural features is pleasing, bold to a certain degree, and picturesque to a still greater. There is the infant Trent, a small stream winding down from its source in the moorlands towards the lovely grounds of Trentham, the seat of the Duke of Sutherland, through a fine expanded and winding valley, beyond which rises the heathy heads of moorland hills towards Leek. Among and between the pottery towns are scattered well-cultivated fields, and the houses of wealthy potters, in sweet situations, and enveloped in noble trees; but the towns themselves are strange enough. As you overlook them from some height, they appear huge stretches of conglomerated brick houses, chiefly of one size and kind, interspersed with, here and there, a much larger one, with great square manufactories; and tall engine chimnies vomiting black volumes of smoke, with tall conical erections, much like those of glass manufactories, which are the pot-hovels in which they bake their ware in ovens or furnaces. As you advance, new characteristics present themselves at every step.—Except just in the centre of each town—for, to use the lofty language of an historian of the Potteries, they are a *catenation* of several towns, though the dwellings of one reach pretty near to those of the other, as Lane-End, Lane-Delph, Stoke, Shelton, Hanley, Burslem, Tunstal, &c.—you see no good shops, or houses which indicate a middle class, such as, in fact, the majority of common towns are composed of. There are, generally speaking, but two classes of houses



as of people—the thousands of those of the working order, and the fine massy and palace-like abodes of the wealthy employers. In the outskirts, and particularly about Lane-End, you find an odd jumble of houses, gardens, yards, heaps of cinders and scoria from the works, clay-pits, clay-heaps, roads made of broken pots, blacking and soda-water bottles that perished prematurely, not being able to bear “the furnace of affliction,” and so are cast out “to be trodden under the foot of man;” garden walls partly raised of banks of black earth crumbling down again, partly an attempt at a post-and-rail, with some dead gorse thrust under it; but more especially by piles of seggars—that is, a yellowish sort of stone pot, having much the aspect of a bushel measure, in which they bake their pottery ware. Many of these seggars are piled up also into walls of sheds and pig-sties. The prospects which you get as you march along, particularly between one town and another, consists chiefly of coal-pits and huge steam engines to clear them of water, clay-pits, brick yards, ironstone mines, and new roads making and hollows levelling with the inexhaustible material of the place, fragments of stoneware.

As you proceed, you find in the dirtiest places, troops of dirty children, and, if it be during working hours, you will see few people besides. You pass large factory after factory, which are general round a quadrangle with a great archway of approach for people and wagons. You see a chaos of crates and casks in the quadrangle; and in the windows of the factory next the street earthenware of all sorts piled up, cups, saucers, mugs, jugs, teapots, mustard-pots, inkstands, pyramids and basins, painted dishes and beautifully enamelled china dishes and covers, and, ever and anon, a giant jug, filling half a window with its bulk, and fit only to hold the beer of a Brobdingnag monarch. In smaller factories, and house-windows, you see similar displays of wares of a common stamp; copper-lustre jugs and tea-things, as they call them, of tawdry coloring and coarse quality, and heaps of figures of dogs, cats, mice, men, sheep, goats, horses, cows, &c., &c., all painted in flaring tints laid plentifully on; painted pot marbles, and drinking-mugs for Anne, Charlotte and William, with their names upon them in letters of pink or purple, or, where the mugs are of porcelain, in letters of gold.

While you are thus advancing and making your observations, you will generally find your feet on a good footpath, paved with the flat side of a darkish sort of brick; but, ever and anon, you will also find your soles crunching and grinding on others, composed of the fragments of cockspurs, stilts and triangles, or, in other words, of little white sticks of pot, which they put between their wares in the furnace, to prevent them from running together. You pass the large and handsome mansions of master potters, standing amid the ocean of dwellings of their workmen. You meet huge barrels on wheels, white with the overflowing

of their contents, which is slip, or the material for earthenware in a liquid state as it comes from the mills where it is ground; and at the hour of leaving the factories for meals, or for the night, out pour and swarm about you, men in long white aprons, all whitened themselves as if they had been working among pipe-clay, young women in troops, and boys without number. All this time imagine yourself walking beneath great clouds of smoke, and breathing various vapours of arsenic, muriatic acid, sulphur, and spirits of tar, and you will have some *taste* and *smell*, as well as view of the Potteries; and, notwithstanding all which, they are as healthy as any manufacturing district whatever.

Such is a tolerable picture of the external aspect of the Potteries, but it would be very imperfect still, if we did not point out all the large chapels that are scattered throughout the whole region, and the plastering of huge placard on placard on almost every blank wall, and at every street corner, giving you notice of plays and horse riders, and raffles! No: but of sermons upon sermons; sermons here, sermons there, sermons every where! There are sermons for the opening of schools and chapels, sermons for aiding the infirmary, for Sunday schools and infant schools, announcements of missionary meetings and temperance meetings, and perhaps, for political meetings also, for it is difficult to say whether the spirit of religion or politics flourishes most in the district.

The Potteries are, in fact, one stronghold of dissent and democracy. Nine-tenths of the population are dissenters. The towns have sprung up rapidly, and, comparatively, in a few years, and the inhabitants naturally associate themselves with popular opinions both in government and religion. They do not belong to the ancient times, nor therefore the ancient order of things. They seem to have as little natural alliance with aristocratic interest and establishments of religion as America itself. This people, indeed, are a busy swarm, that seem to have sprung out of the ground on which they tread, and claim as much right to mould their own opinions as to mould their own pottery. The men have been always noted for the freedom of their opinions, as well as for the roughness of their manners. But in this latter respect they are daily improving. Nearly twenty years ago, we have seen some things there which made us stare. We have seen a whole mob, men, women and children, collect round a couple of young Quaker ladies, and follow them along the streets in perfect wonder at their costume; and we have seen a great potter walk through a group of ladies on the footpath, in his white apron and dusty clothes, instead of stepping off the path; and all that with the most perfect air of innocent simplicity, as if it were the most proper and polite thing in the world. We also remarked that scarcely a dog was kept by the workmen but it was a bull-dog; a pretty clear indication of their prevailing tastes. But their chapels and schools, temperance societies, and literary

societies, and mechanics' institutes, have produced their natural effects, and there is now reason to believe that the population of the Potteries is not behind the population of other manufacturing districts in manners or morals. Were it otherwise, indeed, a world of social and religious exertion would have been made in vain. It is not to be supposed that such men as the Wedgwoods, the Spodes, the Ridgways, the Meighs, &c. &c., men who have not only acquired princely fortunes there, but have labored to diffuse the influence of their intelligence and good taste around them with indefatigable activity, should have worked to no purpose. Nay, the air of growing cleanliness and comfort, the increase of more elegant shops, of banks and covered markets, are of themselves evidence of increased refinement, and therefore of knowledge. One proof of the growth of knowledge we could not help smiling at the other day. We had noticed some years ago that a public-house with the sign of a leopard was always called the Spotted Cat; nobody knew it by any other name; but, now, such is the advance of natural history, that, as if to eradicate the name of Spotted Cat forever, the figure of the beast is dashed out by the painter's brush, and the words, The Leopard, painted in large letters in its stead.

As in most, populous districts, the Methodists have here done much to improve and reform the mass. John Wesley planted his church here, and his disciples, under the various names of Wesleyans, New and Primitive Methodists, are numerous. The New Methodists have in Shelton one of the largest chapels they have in the kingdom. The very Christian names abounding here seem to imply that there has long been in the people a great veneration for the Scriptures. In no part of the country do the names of the Old Testament so much prevail. We verily believe that a complete catalogue of the population would present a majority of such names. Every other name that you meet is Moses or Aaron, Elisha, Daniel, or Job. This peculiarity may be seen in the names of almost all potters of eminence. It is Josiah and Aaron Wedgwood, Josiah Spode, Enoch Wood and Aaron Wood, Jacob Warburton, Elijah Mayer, Ephraim Chatterley, Joshua Heath, Enoch Booth, Ephraim Hobson, Job Meigh, &c. &c. Fenton the poet, who was from Fenton in the Potteries, was *Elijah Fenton*,

But if the potters have been fond of ancient and patriarchal names, they have been equally fond of modern improvements and discoveries in their art; and when we recollect that little more than a century ago the Potteries were mere villages, their wares rude, their names almost unknown in the country, and now behold the beauty and variety of their articles, which they send to every part of the world, not excepting China itself; when we see the vast population here employed and maintained in comfort, the wealth which has been accumulated, and the noble warehouses full of earthenware of every description, we must feel that there is no part of England in

which the spirit and enterprise of the nation have been more conspicuous.

*Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.*

#### A MAIL COACH ADVENTURE OF CHARLES MATHEWS.

The following anecdote occurs in Mrs. Mathews' delightful Memoirs of her late husband:—"Mr. Mathews, on his way homewards from the north, just after the assizes, on entering the mail was fortunate enough to find only two gentlemen, who, being seated opposite to each other, left him the fourth seat for his legs. \* \* The passengers were very agreeable men; one a Scotchman—always a *safe card*. At the close of the evening the latter encased his head and throat in an enormous fold of white linen, and then sank back to sleep, looking like the *veiled prophet*; while the other, an Englishman, was characteristically satisfied with a 'comfortable.' \* \* Just as the trio had sunk into their first forgetfulness, they were awakened by the sudden stoppage of the vehicle, a light at the door of an inn, and a party of rough discordant voices, bidding, however, a cordial farewell to a large, becoated, and ominous-looking stranger, who, in a broad Yorkshire dialect, wished his companions 'a good night,' reminding them that he had paid *his* share of the reckoning. To the great discomfiture of our three *insides*, the door of the mail was opened, and the fourth passenger invited by the guard to enter without further loss of time. Since the three gentlemen had 'dropped off,' the weather had suddenly changed from frost to snow. A heavy sleet had fallen, and the man I have mentioned quitted the open air, and entered the coach with, properly enough, a frieze coat on, powdered all over by the snow. All were disconcerted by this intrusion, and sufficiently chilled and disturbed to be in a very ill-humour with the odious *fourth*. They, however, seemed tacitly to agree not to speak to the new comer, but endeavoured to regain their before happy unconsciousness. They had not, however, been spending a jovial evening, as he had whose 'absence' they would have 'doated upon.' He was in any thing but a sleeping mood: and after a few minutes' rustling about, in order to *settle himself*, treading upon my husband's toes, elbowing his neighbour, without begging pardon for his so doing, &c., (all which was received with a sullen silence,) he asked, in a voice that sounded like thunder to the sleepers, while he held the pull of the window in one hand, 'Coompany, oop or down?' *Answer made they none*. Again he inquired, still dubious of what might be 'agreeable,' and desirous to prove himself a polished gentleman, 'Coompany! oop or down?' Still receiving no answer, a smothered oath bespoke his disgust at such uncourtous return for his polite consideration for his fellow-passengers; and, with some exasperation of tone, he repeated aloud, 'I say, Coompany—oop or—down?' Still not a word; and with another exclamation, he allowed 'twin-

dow' to remain down. It was clear to the half-perceptions of the drowsy travellers that he of the frieze coat had laid in enough spirit to keep him from chilliness, and they hoped the potency of his precaution would soon make him unconscious, as they were disposed to be. But no; he continued restless and talkative. All at once, however, a

'Change came o'er the spirit of his dream;

he, it appeared, for the first time, perceived the alteration in the weather. His excitement at the door of the little inn, where he had left his friends, had caused him totally to overlook the snow that then fell upon him; and he saw it now with a degree of stupid wonder, and exclaimed, in audible soliloquy, 'Eh!—what's this? whoigh! the whole country is covered wi' snow?—eh! it's awful. *Coompany!*—wake up and see t' snow! eh! they're all asleep. Whoigh, it's wonderful and awful! What a noight—*what* a noight! Eh! God presarve all poor mariners on the western coast this noight! Then roaring out once more, with increased vehemence of tone, '*Coompany!* wake oop, I say, and see t'noight!' \* \* In this manner did he go on, until the patience of the English gentleman was tired out, and he at length spoke: 'I wish, sir; you would show some feeling for us, and hold your tongue. We were all asleep when you came in, and you have done nothing but talk and disturb us ever since. You're a positive nuisance.' 'Eh!' said he of the frieze coat; 'I loike that, indeed! Aw've as much right here, I reckon, as oothers—aw've paid my fare, har'n't I?' said he, (his voice raising as he remembered his claims to consideration. 'Aw'm a respectable man—my name's John Luckie—I owes nobody onything. I pays king's taxes—I'm a respectable mon, I say. Aw help to support church and state.' On he went, with all the senseless swagger of cup valour and self-laudation, till he of the '*comfortable*' again grumbled out his anger. Again the huge drover (for such he was) thundered forth his rights and summed up his title to respect; 'Eh! whoigh! what have I done? I coomed into t' coich loike a gentleman, didn't I? I was civil, wasn't I? I said, *Coompany*, oop or down? but nepe o' ye had the polittness to answer; ye were not loike gentlemen!!!' \* \* \* At length his sense of oppression became so strong, that his independence reached its climax, and he boldly declared that he would not hold his tongue, or be quiet—'no, not though Baron Hullock, or the great Mr. Brougham (or, as he pronounced the name, Mr. *Bruffem*), *himself* was in t' coich.' My husband, who found all tendency to sleep broken up by this obstreperous fellow, now conceived a desire to amuse himself with his fellow-passenger. Just, therefore, as John Luckie's last declaration was uttered, Mr. Mathews leant forward to him, and in a half whisper said, with affected caution, 'Hush, you are not aware, but you have been speaking all this time to Baron Hullock himself! The drover seemed to quail under this intimation, 'Whoigh, you don't say so?' '*Fact*, I assure

you; and the opposite to him is *Lady Hullock!*' (The Scotchman with the white drapery over his head began to titter at this.) 'Whoigh, you don't say *that*? Eh! what shall I do? Art thou sure?' 'I am, indeed,' said Mr. Mathews; 'they are Baron and Lady Hullock, and I am Mr. Brougham.' 'Eh!' roared the man in a tone of actual terror, 'let me go! let me go! (struggling to open the coach door,) let me go! I'm no coompany for sitch gentlefolks; Aw've no book-larning; I'm no but John Luckie. Let me get out—here, guard! stop! stop! I won't roide here ony longer!' The guard was insensible to this, and on went the coach, and still John Luckie struggled; and in his rough and clumsy movements a little of my husband's ventriloquy proved a useful auxiliary to urge his welcome departure; and a child suddenly cried out as if hurt. 'Eh! what, is there a bairn i' t' coich too? Eh! my Lord Baron, pray forgive me; I meant no offence. My name's John Luckie. Aw'm a respectable mon, pays king's taxes. I said, *Coompany*, oop or down? I meant to be civil. Eh! my Lady Hullock, I hope I've not hurt thy bairn.' The child's cries now increased. 'Eh! ma poor bairn, where *art* thee? What *moost* I do? Guard! stop and let me out! Eh! what a noight! Guard! I'm not fit coompany for Baron Hullock and Mr. *Bruffem*, I know. Let me out, I say!' At last his voice at the window reached the higher powers, and the coach stopped, and as soon out rolled this porpoise of a man, who again begged the *baron* and his *lady* to overlook his inadvertency, and asking pardon of '*Mr. Bruffem*,' he was with some difficulty hoisted on the top of the mail, and off it drove. The two inside gentlemen (who had been trying to stifle their amusement) now laughed outright, and thanking Mr. Mathews for his device, they all three recomposed themselves, now and then catching by the wind a broken phrase from Mr. Luckie, as he gave vent to his feelings to the coachman and guard—'Baron Hullock'—'Respectable mon'—'Bairn'—'Oop or down'—'My Lady Hullock'—'Mr. Bruffem'—'Church and State,' &c.; all which must have puzzled his listeners without, who doubtless attributed his account to the quantity of rum-toddy which they might suppose had filled his brain with such unreal mockeries."

MILITARY PRIDE.—A farmer was elected to a corporalship in a militia company. His wife, after discoursing with him for some time on the advantage which the family would derive from his exaltation, inquired in a doubting tone, "Husband, will it be proper for us to let our children play with the neighbours now?" One of the little urchins eagerly asked, "Are we not all corporals?" "Tut," said the mother, "hold your tongue; there is no one corporal, but your father and myself."

We once knew a boy who said that he "liked a good rainy day—too rainy to go to school, and just rainy enough to go a-fishing."

## EDIBLE BIRD'S-NESTS.

The edible bird's-nest is an important article of the Java trade. It is of a cream white colour, semi-translucent, and in shape and size like a quarter of an orange. It is muco-albuminous, and in soup possesses little or no taste; at least to the European palate.

The quantity of edible bird's-nests annually exported from Java to China is estimated at not less than two hundred *piculs*, of which by far the largest proportion is the produce of the Javan rocks and hills. It is well known that these are the nests of a species of swallow (*Hirundo esculenta*), common in the Malayan islands, and in great demand for the China table. Their value as a luxury in that empire has been estimated on importation to be weight for weight equal with silver. The price which those nests of the best quality have of late years brought in the Canton and Amoi market, has been forty Spanish dollars per *kati*, of rather more than a pound and a quarter English. They are usually classed into first, second and third sorts, differing in price from forty to fifteen Spanish dollars, and even ten and less for the most ordinary. The price in the Bata-vian market rises as the period for the departure of the junks approaches; but as the principal produce of Java is still a monopoly in the hands of government, it is difficult to fix the price at which they might be sold under other circumstances.

The quantity of birds'-nests obtained from the rocks called *Karang Bolang*, on the southern coast of Java, and within the provinces of the native princes, is estimated, one year with another, at a hundred *piculs*, (a *picul* is 133½ lbs.), and is calculated to afford an annual revenue to the government of 200,000 dollars. The quantity gathered besides by individuals, on rocks and hills belonging to them, in other parts of the island, may amount to fifty *piculs*; making the extent of this export not less than one hundred and fifty *piculs*, besides the collections from the other islands of the Archipelago.

In the Malayan islands in general, but little care is taken of the rocks and caverns which produce this dainty, and the nests procured are neither so numerous nor so good as they otherwise would be. On Java, where perhaps the birds are fewer, and the nests in general less fine than those to be met with in some of the more Eastern islands, both the quantity and the quality have been considerably improved by European management. To effect this improvement, the caverns which the birds are found to frequent are cleansed by smoking and burning of sulphur, and the destruction of all the old nests. The cavern is then carefully secured from the approach of man—the birds are left undisturbed to form their nests, and the gathering takes place as soon as it is calculated that the young are fledged. If they are allowed to remain until the eggs are again laid in them, they lose their pure colour and transparency, and are no longer of what are termed the first sort. They are sometimes collected so recently after their formation, that time has not been given for the birds to lay their eggs

in them, and these nests are considered as the most superior; but as the practice, if carried to any extent, would prevent the number of birds from increasing, it is seldom resorted to when the caverns are in the possession of those who have a permanent interest in their produce. Much of their excellence and peculiar properties however, depends on the situation of the place in which they are formed. It has been ascertained, for instance, that the same bird forms a nest of somewhat different quality, according as it constructs it in the deep recesses of an unventilated and damp cavern, or attaches it to a place where the atmosphere is dry and the air circulates freely. The nature of the different substances also to which they are fixed, seems to have some influence on their properties. The best are procured in the deepest caverns, (the favourite retreat of the birds,) where a nitrous dampness continually prevails, and where being formed against the sides of the cavern they imbibe a nitrous taste, without which they are little esteemed by the Chinese. The principal object of the proprietor of a bird's-nest rock is to preserve a sufficient number of the swallows, by not gathering the nests too often, or abstracting the finer kinds in too great numbers, lest the birds should quit their habitations and emigrate to a more secure and inaccessible retreat. It is not unusual for an European, when he takes a rock under his superintendence, after ridding it of the old nests and fumigating the caverns, to allow the birds to remain undisturbed; two, or three, or even more years, in order that they may multiply for his future advantage. When a cave is once brought into proper order, it will bear two gatherings in the year.

In the vicinity of the rocks are usually found a number of persons accustomed from their infancy to descend into these caverns; in order to gather the nests; an office of the greatest risk and danger, the best nests being so sometimes many hundred feet within the damp and slippery opening of the rock. The gatherers are sometimes obliged to lower themselves by ropes over immense chasms, in which the surf of a turbulent sea dashes with the greatest violence, threatening instant destruction in the event of a false step or an insecure hold. The people employed by the government for this purpose were formerly slaves, in the domestic service of the minister or resident at the native court. To them the distribution of a few dollars, and the preparation of a buffalo feast after each gathering, was thought sufficient pay, and the sum thus expended constituted all the disbursements attending the gathering and packing, which are conducted by the same persons. This last operation is however carefully superintended by the resident, as the slightest neglect would essentially deteriorate the value of the commodity.—*Ruschenberger*.

"Which is the best method to become virtuous?" said one to Socrates. "When we endeavour to be that which we wish to appear."

Pliability without firmness, is weakness; firmness without pliability, stupid self-will.

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## FLOWERS OF THE FAIREST.

Flowers of the fairest,  
And gems of the rarest,  
I find and I gather in country or town;  
But one is still wanting,  
Oh! where is it haunting?  
The bud and the jewel must make up my crown.

The rose with its bright heads,  
The diamond that light sheds,  
Rich as the sunbeam and pure as the snow;  
One gives me its fragrance,  
The other its radiance;  
But the pearl and the lily where dwell they below?

Thou pearl of the deep sea,  
That flows in my heart free,  
Thou rock-planted lily, come hither or send:  
'Mid flowers of the fairest  
And gems of the rarest,  
I miss thee, I seek thee, my own parted friend!

M. J. Jewsbury.

## THE OLD FARM-GATE.

Where, where is the gate that once served to divide  
The elm-shaded lane from the dusty road side?  
I like not this barrier gaily bedight,  
With its glittering latch and its trellis of white.  
It is seemly, I own—yet, oh! dearer by far  
Was the red-rusted hinge and the weather-warped bar.  
Here are fashion and form of a modernized date,  
But I'd rather have looked on the old farm-gate.

'Twas here where the urchins would gather to play  
In the shadows of twilight or sunny mid-day;  
For the stream running nigh, and the hillocks of sand,  
Were temptations no dirt-loving rogue could withstand.  
But to swing on the gate-rails, to clamber and ride,  
Was the utmost of pleasure, of glory, and pride;  
And the car of the victor or carriage of state  
Never carried such hearts as the old farm-gate.

'Twas here where the miller's son paced to and fro,  
When the moon was above and the glow-worm below;  
Now pensively leaning, now twirling his stick,  
While the moments grew long and his heart-throbs  
grew quick.

Why did he linger so restlessly there,  
With church-going vestment and sprucely comb'd  
hair?

He loved, oh! he loved, and had promised to wait  
For the one he adored at the old farm-gate.

'Twas here where the grey-headed gossips would meet:  
And the falling of markets, or goodness of wheat—  
This field lying fallow—that heifer just bought—  
Were favorite themes for discussion and thought.  
The merits and faults of a neighbor just dead—  
The hopes of a couple about to be wed—  
The parliament doings—the bill and debate—  
Were all canvassed and weighed at the old farm-gate.

'Twas over that gate I taught Pincher to bound  
With the strength of a steed and the grace of a hound.  
The beagle might hunt, and the spaniel might swim,  
But none could leap over that postern like him.  
When Dobbin was saddled for mirth-making trip,  
And the quickly pull'd willow branch served for a  
whip,  
Spite of lugging and tugging he'd stand for his freight,  
While I climb'd on his back from the old farm-gate.

'Tis well to pass portals where pleasure and fame  
May come winging our moments and gilding our name  
But give me the joy and the freshness of mind,  
When, away on some sport—the old gate slam'd be  
hind—

I've listened to music, but none that could speak  
In such tones to my heart as the teeth-setting creak  
That broke on the ear when the night had worn late,  
And the dear ones came home through the old farm-  
gate.

Oh! fair is the barrier taking its place,  
But it darkens a picture my soul longed to trace.  
I sigh to behold the rough staple and hasp,  
And the rails that my growing hand scarcely could clasp.  
Oh! how strangely the warm spirit grudges to part  
With the commonest relic once linked to the heart;  
And the brightest of fortune—the kindest fate—  
Would not banish my love for the old farm-gate.

Eliza Cook.

## MY GRAVE.

Sweet is the ocean grave, under the azure wave,  
Where the rich coral the sea-grot illumines;  
Where pearls and amber meet, decking the winding  
sheet,  
Making the sailor's the brightest of tombs.

Let the proud soldier rest, wrapt in his gory vest,  
Where he may happen to fall on his shield,  
To sink in the glory-strife was his first hope in life;  
Dig him his grave on the red battle-field.

Lay the one great and rich, in the strong cloister niche,  
Give him his coffin of cedar and gold;  
Let the wild torchlight fall, flouting the velvet pall,  
Lock him in marble vault, darksome and cold.

But there's a sunny hill, fondly remember'd still,  
Crown'd with fair grass and a bonnie elm tree:  
Fresh as the foamy surf, sacred as churchyard turf,  
There be the resting-place chosen by me!

There in the summer days rest the bright flashing rays,  
There spring the wild flowers—fair as can be:  
Daisy and pimpernel, lily and cowslip bell,  
These be the grave flowers chosen by me.

'Tis on that sunny hill, fondly remember'd still,  
Where my young footsteps climb'd, happy and free:  
Fresh as the foamy surf, sacred as churchyard turf—  
There be the sleeping-place chosen by me.

Eliza Cook.

## THIRTY-FIVE.

Of in danger, yet alive,  
We are come to thirty-five;  
Long may better years arrive,  
Better years than thirty-five.  
Could philosophers contrive  
Life to stop at thirty-five,  
Time his hours should never drive  
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.  
High to soar and deep to dive  
Nature gives at thirty-five.  
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,  
Trifle not at thirty-five;  
For, howe'er we boast and strive,  
Life declines from thirty-five:  
He that ever hopes to thrive  
Must begin by thirty-five;  
And all who wisely wish to wive  
Must look about at thirty-five.

## LITERARY NOTICES.

*Works intended for notice in the Magazine should be forwarded to the office as early in the week as possible.*

**THE CANADIAN JOURNAL.**—This publication is intended as a “repertory of industry, science and art; and a record of the proceedings of the Canadian Institute.” The September number contains articles on the Atmospheric Phenomena of Light; Gas Patents; Thermometric Registers; Physical Lines of magnetic force; Irish submarine Telegraph; South Wales Railway; Portable lifting machine; Agricultural engineering; Architectural notices; with a variety of scientific and miscellaneous information, illustrated with plates. If well supported this Journal will form a valuable addition to Canadian Literature; we cordially wish it every success.

**THE CANADIAN CONSTABLES’ ASSISTANT.**—By his Honor Judge Gowan; with notes and additions by James Patton Esq.—This Pamphlet, as its title imports, is intended to guide the steps of the deputy ministers of the law, “in the way that they should go.” Henceforth, no “constable” or other officer of the peace, will be justified in pleading ignorance of his duties, or exclaiming with ancient Dogberry, “write me down Ass!”

## SPECIMENS OF A NEW DICTIONARY.

**Absentees.**—Certain Irish land-owners, who stand a chance of being knocked on the head if they stay at home, and are sure of getting no rents if they go abroad; thus illustrating the fate of the hippopotamus, which, according to the authority of the showman at Exeter Change, “is a hamphibious hanimal that cannot live upon land and dies in the water.”

**Absurdity.**—Any thing advanced by our opponents, contrary to our own practice, or above our comprehension.

**Accomplishments.**—In women, all that can be supplied by the dancing-master, music-master, mantua-maker, and milliner. In men, tying a cravat, talking nonsense, playing at billiards, dressing like a groom, and driving like a coachman.

**Alderman.**—A vetri-potential citizen, into whose Mediterranean mouth good things are perpetually flowing, although none come out.

**Ancestry.**—The boast of those who have nothing else to boast of.

**Antiquity.**—The youth, nonage, and inexperience of the world, invested, by a strange blunder, with the reverence due to the present times, which are its true old age. Antiquity is the young miscreant who massacred prisoners taken in war, sacrificed human beings to idols, burnt them in Smithfield, as heretics or witches, believed in astrology, demonology, witchcraft, and every exploded folly and enormity, although his example be still gravely urged as a rule of conduct, and a standing argument against any improvement upon the “wisdom of our ancestors!”

**Astrology** is to **Astronomy**, what alchemy is to chemistry, the ignorant parent of a learned offspring.

**Bachelor.**—Plausibly derived by Junius from the Greek word for foolish, and by Spelman from Baculus, a cudgel, because he deserves it. An useless appendage of society; a poltroon who is afraid to marry lest his wife should become his mistress, and generally finishes by converting his mistress into a wife.

**Bait.**—One animal impaled on a hook in order to torture a second for the amusement of a third.

**Bed.**—An article in which we are born and pass the happiest portion of our lives, and yet one which we never wish to keep.

**Bumper-toasts.**—See Drunkenness, ill-health, and Vice.

**Butcher.**—See Suwarrow, Turkish commander, and the history of miscalled heroes, &c.

**Challenge.**—Giving your adversary an opportunity of shooting you through the body, to indemnify you for his having hurt your feelings.

**Coffin.**—The cradle in which our second childhood is laid to sleep.

**College.**—An institution where young men learn every thing but that which is professed to be taught.

**Courage.**—The fear of being thought a coward.

**Cousin.**—A periodical bore from the country, who, because you happen to have some of his blood, thinks he can inflict the whole of his body upon you during his stay in town.

**Cunning.**—The simplicity by which knaves generally outwit themselves.—*New Monthly Magazine.*

**THE RULING PASSION.**—During a negotiation between Mr. Fordham, the late celebrated horse-dealer of Cambridge, and one of the members of the university, the former was suddenly taken ill. There were only a very few pounds between them in respect to the price. The gownsman, little expecting what had occurred, called the next morning at the stable-yard, and asked to see Mr. Fordham. “Master, sir,” said the hostler, “is dead, but he left word that you should have the horse.”

**OPIMUM EATING.**—Mustapha Shatoor, an opium eater in Smyrna, took daily three drachms of crude opium. The visible effects at the time were the sparkling of his eyes, and great exhilaration of spirits. He found the desire of increasing his dose growing upon him. He seemed twenty years older than he really was; his complexion was very sallow, his legs small, his gums eaten away, and the teeth laid bare to the sockets. He could not rise without first swallowing half a drachm of opium.

*Phil. Trans.*

**PIG-STEALING EXTRAORDINARY.**—At Bankok in Siam there is a number of native Christians, chiefly mixed descendants of Portuguese, who are hated for their thievish and other bad habits. Among other accomplishments, they are complete adepts in pig-stealing; so much so, that a grunter can be whipped up and carried off without the least noise, and even without the animal being perfectly aware of the circumstance. I was told of a circumstance which occurred to a Danish gentleman, who resided

in the factory a few years previous to my visit. He had a sow, with a large family of very fine pigs, and as they were feeding one morning on the wharf in front of the factory, he was surprised to see one of the pigs rush into the water, apparently against its will, for it gave utterance to the most piercing squeaks as it plunged into the liquid element. The owner immediately went down to the water-side, but could see nothing of the runaway. A native Christian, who happened to be fishing from a canoe about twenty yards distant, was asked whether he could afford any explanation of the mystery, but he had seen nothing, and could only say that he had heard a splash in the water a short time before. The owner of the pig was very much surprised, and could not account for the disappearance of the animal by a natural reason. A few mornings afterwards the same thing occurred again, and, running down to the water-side, the bereaved pig-owner saw the same man fishing in the same spot, but could discover no signs of his pig. A similar phenomenon occurred a third time, but on this occasion the pig stopped suddenly on its flight to the river, and hurried, squeaking, back towards the house, with a part of a fishing line dangling from its mouth. On further examination, a strong hook was found attached to the end of the line, stuck fast in the jaw of the pig, part of a sweet potato, which had been used as a bait, still clinging to the snare. The gentleman, for sometime afterwards, kept a good look-out for his friend in the boat, but he never made his appearance again.—*George Windsor Earle's Eastern Seas.*

#### THE MISERIES OF A BACHELOR.

I would not advise any single gentleman hastily to conclude that he is in distress. Bachelors are discontented, and take wives; footmen are ambitious, and take eating-houses. What does either party gain by the change? "We know," the wise man said, "what we are; but we know not what we may be."

In estimating the happiness of householders, I had imagined all tenants to be like myself—mild, forbearing, punctual, and contented; but I "kept house" three years, and was never out of hot water the whole time! I did manage, after some trouble, to get fairly into a creditable mansion—just missing one, by a stroke of fortune, which had a brazier's shop at the back of it, and always shewn at hours when the workmen were gone to dinner—and sent a notice to the papers, that a bachelor of sober habits, having a "larger residence than he wanted," would dispose of half of it to a family of respectability. But the whole world seemed to be, and I think is, in a plot to drive me out of my senses. In the first ten days of my new dignity, I was visited by about twenty tax-gatherers, half of them with claims that I had never heard of, and the other half with claims exceeding my expectations. The householder seemed to be the minister's very milch cow—the positive scape-goat of the whole community! I was called on for house-tax, window-tax, land-tax, and servant's-tax! Poor's-rate,

sewer's-rate, pavement-rate, and scavenger's-rate! I had to pay for watering streets on which other people walked—for lighting lamps which other people saw by—for maintaining watchmen who slept all night—and for building churches that I never went into. And—I never knew that the country was taxed till that moment!—these were but a few of the "dues" to be sheared off from me. There was the clergyman of the parish, whom I never saw, sent to me at Easter for an "offering." There was the charity-school of the parish, solicited "the honour" of my subscription and support." One scoundrel came to inform me that I was "drawn for the militia;" and offered to "get me off," on payment of a sum of money.—Another rascal insisted that I was "chosen constable;" and actually brought the *insignia* of office to my door. Then I had petitions to read "in writing" from all the people who chose to be in distress—personal beggars, who penetrated into my parlour, to send to Bride-well, or otherwise get rid of. Windows were broken, and "nobody" had "done it." The key of the street-door was lost, and "nobody" had "had it." Then my cook stopped up the kitchen "sink;" and the bricklayers took a month to open it. Then my gutter ran over, and flooded my neighbour's garret; and I was served with notice of an action for dilapidation.

And, at Christmas!—Oh! it was no longer dealing with ones and twos!—The whole hundred, on the day after that festival, rose up, by concert, to devour me!

Dustmen, street-keepers, lamplighters, turncocks—postmen, beadles, scavengers, chimney-sweeps—the whole *pecus* of parochial servitorship was at my gate before eleven at noon.

Then the "waits" came—two sets!—and fought which should have "my bounty." Rival patrols disputed whether I did or did not lie within their "beat." At one time there was a doubt as to which, of two parishes, I belonged to; and I fully expected that (to make sure) I should have been visited by the collectors from both! Meantime the knocker groaned, until very evening, under the dull, stunning single thumps—each villain would have struck, although it had been upon the head of his own grandfather!—of bakers, butchers, tallow-chandlers, grocers, fish-mongers, poulterers, and oilmen! Every ruffian who made his livelihood by swindling me through the whole year, thought himself entitled to a peculiar benefaction (for his robberies) on this day. And

"Host! now by my life I scorn the name!"

All this was child's play—*bagatelle*, I protest, and "perfumed," to what I had to go through in the "letting off" of my dwelling! The swarm of crocodiles that assailed me on every fine day—three-fourths of them to avoid an impending shower, or to pass away a stupid morning—in the shape of stale dowagers, city coxcombs, "professional gentlemen," and "single ladies!" And all (except a few that were swindlers) finding something wrong about my arrangements! Gil Blas's mule, which was nothing but faults, never had half so many

faults as my house. Carlton Palace, if it were to be "let" to-morrow, would be objected to by a tailor. One man found my rooms "too small;" another thought them rather "too large;" a third wished they had been loftier; a fourth, that there had been more of them. One lady hinted a sort of doubt, "whether the neighborhood was quite respectable;" another asked, "if I had any children;" and, then, "whether I would bind myself not to have any during her stay!" Two hundred, after detaining me an hour, had called only "for friends." Ten thousand went through all the particulars, and would "call again to-morrow." At last there came a lady who gave the *coup-de-grace* to my "housekeeping;" she was a clergyman's widow, she said from Somersetshire—if she had been an "officer's," I had suspected her; but in an evil hour, I let her in; and—she had come for the express purpose of marrying me! The reader who has bowels, they will yearn for my situation.

Nolo conjugari!\*

I exclaimed in agony; but what could serve against the ingenuity of woman? She seduced me—escape was hopeless—morning, noon, and night! She heard a mouse behind the wainscot, and I was called in to scare it. Her canary bird got loose—would I be so good as to catch it? I fell sick, but was soon glad to get well again; for she sent five times a day to ask if I was better, besides pouring in plates of *blanc mange*, jellies, cordials, raspberry vinegars, fruits fresh from the country, and hasty-puddings made by her own hand. And, at last, after I had resisted all the constant borrowing of books, the eternal interchange of newspapers, and the daily repair of crow-quills, the opinions upon wine, the corrections of hackney coachmen, and the recommendation of a barber to a poodle dog;—at last—Oh! the devil take all wrinkled stair-carpets, stray pattens, and bits of orange-peel dropped upon the ground! Mrs. F—sprained her ankle, and fell down at my very drawing-room door!

All the women in the house were bribed—there was not one of them in the way! My footman, my only safeguard, was sent off that minute for a doctor!—I was *not* married; for so much, let providence be praised!

Animus meminisse horret.

I can't go through the affair! But, about six months after, I presented Mrs. F.—with my house, and every thing in it, and determined never again—as a man's only protection against female cupidity—to possess even a pair of small clothes that I could legally call my own.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

ABSURDITIES.—To attempt to borrow money on the plea of extreme poverty. To lose money at play, and then fly into a passion about it. To ask the publisher of a new periodical how many copies he sells per week. To ask a wine merchant how old his wine is. To make your-

\* Was this Latin or Yorkshire.

self generally disagreeable, and wonder that nobody will visit you, unless they gain some palpable advantage by it. To get drunk, and complain the next morning of a headache. To spend your earnings on liquor and wonder that you are ragged. To sit shivering in the cold because you won't have a fire till November. To judge of people's piety by their attendance at church. To keep your clerks on miserable salaries, and wonder at their robbing you. Not to go to bed when you are tired and sleepy, because "it is not bed time." To make your servants tell lies for you, and afterwards be angry because they tell lies for themselves. To tell your own secrets, and believe other people will keep them. To fancy a thing is cheap because a low price is asked for it. To say that a man is charitable because he subscribes to an hospital. To keep a dog or a cat on short allowance and complain of its being a thief. To praise the beauty of a woman's hair before you know whether it did not once belong to somebody else. To arrive at the age of fifty, and be surprised at any vice, folly, or absurdity their fellow-creatures may be guilty of.

THE NEWFOUNDLAND DOG.—Take another story of this noble animal, which I know to be founded on fact:—A vessel was driven on the beach of Lydd, in Kent. The surf was rolling furiously; eight poor fellows were crying for help, but not a boat could be got off to their assistance. At length a gentleman came on the beach, accompanied by his Newfoundland dog. He directed the attention of the animal to the vessel, and put a short stick into its mouth. The intelligent and courageous fellow at once understood his meaning, and sprang into the sea, and fought his way through the waves. He could not, however, get close enough to the vessel to deliver that with which he was charged; but the crew joyfully made fast a rope to another piece of wood, and threw it towards him. He saw the whole business in an instant; he dropped his own piece, and immediately seized that which had been cast to him, and then, with a degree of strength and determination almost incredible, he dragged it through the surf, and delivered it to his master. A line of communication was thus formed, and every man on board was rescued from a watery grave.—*Youatt.*

One may be in solitude amongst all the tumults of life and this world.

Vacant souls are a burthen to themselves, and are therefore engaged in a continual round of dissipation.

We should have time for everything did we not wilfully mis-spend it,

He who is contented with himself must certainly have a bad taste.

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