VARIOUS

BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, VOLUME 64, NO.394, AUGUST, 1848

Various

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 64, No.394, August, 1848

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25569519
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 64, No.394, August, 1848:

Содержание

LIFE IN THE "FAR WEST." 4
PART III 4
ART – ITS PROSPECTS. CLEGHORN'S 48
ANCIENT AND MODERN ART
KAFFIRLAND 84
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 91

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 64, No.394, August, 1848

LIFE IN THE "FAR WEST."

PART III

La Bonté and his companions proceeded up the river, the Black Hills on their left hand, from which several small creeks or feeders swell the waters of the North Fork. Along these they hunted unsuccessfully for beaver "sign," and it was evident that the spring hunt had almost entirely exterminated the animal from this vicinity. Following Deer Creek to the ridge of the Black Hills, they crossed the mountain on to the waters of the Medicine Bow, and here they discovered a few lodges, and La Bonté set his first trap. He and old Luke finding "cuttings" near the camp, followed the "sign" along the bank until the practised eye of the latter discovered a "slide," where the beaver had ascended the bank to chop the trunk of a cotton wood, and convey the

bark to its lodge. Taking a trap from "sack," the old hunter after "setting" the "trigger," placed it carefully under the water, where the "slide" entered the stream, securing the chain to the stem of a sappling on the bank; while a stick, also attached to the trap by a thong, floated down the stream, to mark the position of the trap, should the animal carry it away. A little farther on, and near another "run," three traps were set; and over these Luke placed a little stick, which he first dipped into a mysterious-looking phial which contained his "medicine."[1]

The next morning they visited the traps, and had the satisfaction of finding three fine beaver secured in the first three they visited, and the fourth, which had been carried away, they discovered by the floatstick, a little distance down the stream, with a large drowned beaver between its teeth.

The animals being carefully skinned, they returned to camp with the choicest portions of the meat, and the tails, on which they most luxuriously supped; and La Bonté was fain to confess that all his ideas of the superexcellence of buffalo were thrown in the shade by the delicious beaver tail, the rich meat of which he was compelled to allow was "great eating," unsurpassed by "tender loin" or "boudin," or other meat of whatever kind he had eaten of before.

The country where La Bonté and his companions were trapping, is very curiously situated in the extensive bend of

[1] A substance obtained from a gland in the scrotum of the beaver, and used to attract that animal to the trap.

the Platte which encloses the Black Hill range on the north, and which bounds the large expanse of broken tract known as the Laramie Plains, their southern limit being the base of the Medicine Bow Mountains. From the north-western corner of the bend, an inconsiderable range extends to the westward, gradually decreasing in height until they reach an elevated plain, which forms a break in the stupendous chain of the Rocky Mountains, and affords their easy passage, now known as the Great, or South Pass. So gradual is the ascent of this portion of the mountain, that the traveller can scarcely believe that he is crossing the dividing ridge between the waters which flow into the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and in a few minutes can fling a stick into two neighbouring streams, one of which would be carried thousands of miles, which the eastern waters traverse in their course to the Gulf of Mexico, the other, borne a lesser distance, to the Gulf of California.

The country is frequented by the Crows and Snakes, who are at perpetual war with the Shians and Sioux, following them often far down the Platte, where many bloody battles have taken place. The Crows are esteemed friendly to the whites; but when on war expeditions, and "hair" their object, it is always dangerous to fall in with Indian war-parties, and particularly in the remote regions of the mountains, where they do not anticipate retaliation.

Trapping with tolerable success in this vicinity, as soon as the premonitory storms of approaching winter warned them to leave the mountains, they crossed over to the waters of Green River,

one of the affluents of the Colorado, intending to winter at a rendezvous to be held in "Brown's Hole" – an enclosed valley so called, which, abounding in game, and sheltered on every side by lofty mountains, is a favourite wintering-ground of the mountaineers. Here they found several trapping bands already arrived; and a trader from the Uintah country, with store of powder, lead, and tobacco, prepared to ease them of their hardly earned peltries.

In bands numbering from two to ten, and singly, the trappers dropped into the rendezvous; some with many pack-loads of beaver, others with greater or less quantity, and more than one came in on foot, having lost his animals and peltry by Indian thieving. Here were soon congregated many mountaineers, whose names are famous in the history of the Far West. Fitzpatrick and Hatcher, and old Bill Williams, with their bands, well-known leaders of trapping parties, soon arrived. Sublette came in with his men from Yellow Stone, and many of Wyeth's New Englanders were there. Chábonard with his half-breeds, Wahkeitchas all, brought his peltries from the lower country; and half-a-dozen Shawanee and Delaware Indians, with a Mexican from Taos, one Marcellin, a fine strapping fellow, the best trapper and hunter in the mountains, and ever first in the fight. Here, too, arrived the "Bourgeois" traders of the "North West"[2] Company, with their superior equipments, ready to meet their trappers, and purchase the beaver at an equitable value; and soon

[2] The Hudson's Bay Company is so called by the American trappers.

the encampment began to assume a busy appearance when the trade opened.

A curious assemblage did the rendezvous present, and representatives of many a land met there. A son of *La belle France* here lit his pipe from one proffered by a native of New Mexico. An Englishman and a Sandwich islander cut a quid from the same plug of tobacco. A Swede and an "old Virginian" puffed together. A Shawanee blew a peaceful cloud with a scion of the "Six Nations." One from the Land of Cakes – a canny chiel – sought to "get round" (in trade) a right "smart" Yankee, but couldn't "shine."

The beaver went briskly, six dollars being the price paid per lb. in goods – for money is seldom given in the mountain market, where "beaver" is cash for which the articles supplied by the traders are bartered. In a very short time peltries of every description had changed hands, either by trade, or gambling with cards and betting. With the mountain men bets decide every question that is raised, even the most trivial; and if the Editor of *Bell's Life* was to pay one of these rendezvous a winter visit, he would find the broad sheet of his paper hardly capacious enough to answer all the questions which would be referred to his decision.

Before the winter was over, La Bonté had lost all traces of civilised humanity, and might justly claim to be considered as "hard a case" as any of the mountaineers then present. Long before the spring opened, he had lost all the produce of his

hunt and both his animals, which, however, by a stroke of luck, he recovered, and wisely "held on to" for the future. Right glad when spring appeared, he started from Brown's Hole, with four companions, to hunt the Uintah or Snake country, and the affluents of the larger streams which rise in that region and fall into the Gulf of California.

In the valley of the Bear River they found beaver abundant, and trapped their way westward until they came upon the famed locality of the Beer and Soda Springs – natural fountains of mineral water, renowned amongst the trappers as being "medicine" of the first order.

Arriving one evening, about sundown, at the Beer Spring, they found a solitary trapper sitting over the rocky basin, intently regarding, and with no little awe, the curious phenomenon of the bubbling gas. Behind him were piled his saddles and a pack of skins, and at a little distance a hobbled Indian pony was feeding amongst the cedars which formed a little grove round the spring. As the three hunters dismounted from their animals, the lone trapper scarcely noticed their arrival, his eyes being still intently fixed upon the water. Looking round at last, he was instantly recognised by one of La Bonté's companions, and saluted as "Old Rube." Dressed from head to foot in buckskin, his face, neck, and hands appeared to be of the same leathery texture, so nearly did they assimilate in colour to the materials of his dress. He was at least six feet two or three in his mocassins, straight-limbed and wiry, with long arms ending in hands of tremendous grasp,

and a quantity of straight black hair hanging on his shoulders. His features, which were undeniably good, wore an expression of comical gravity, never relaxing into a smile, which a broad good-humoured mouth could have grinned from ear to ear.

"What, boys," he said, "will you be simple enough to camp here, alongside these springs? Nothing good ever came of sleeping here, I tell you, and the worst kind of devils are in those dancing waters."

"Why, old hos," cried La Bonté, "what brings you hyar then, and camp at that?"

"This niggur," answered Rube solemnly, "has been down'd upon a sight too often to be skeared by what can come out from them waters; and thar arn't a devil as hisses thar, as can 'shine' with this child, I tell you. I've tried him onest, an' fout him to clawin' away to Eustis,[3] and if I draws my knife agin on such varmint, I'll raise his hair, as sure as shootin'."

Spite of the reputed dangers of the locality, the trappers camped on the spot, and many a draught of the delicious sparkling water they quaffed in honour of the "medicine" of the fount. Rube, however, sat sulky and silent, his huge form bending over his legs, which were crossed, Indian fashion, under him, and his long bony fingers spread over the fire, which had been made handy to the spring. At last they elicited from him that he had sought this spot for the purpose of "*making medicine*,"

[3] A small lake near the head waters of the Yellow Stone, near which are some curious thermal springs of ink-black water.

having been persecuted by extraordinary ill luck, even at this early period of his hunt, – the Indians having stolen two out of his three animals, and three of his half-dozen traps. He had, therefore, sought the springs for the purpose of invoking the fountain spirits, which, a perfect Indian in his simple heart, he implicitly believed to inhabit their mysterious waters. When the others had, as he thought, fallen asleep, La Bonté observed the ill-starred trapper take from his pouch a curiously carved red stone pipe, which he carefully charged with tobacco and kinnik-kinnik. Then approaching the spring, he walked three times round it, and gravely sat himself down. Striking fire with his flint and steel, he lit his pipe, and, bending the stem three several times towards the water, he inhaled a vast quantity of smoke, and, bending back his neck and looking upwards, puffed it into the air. He then blew another puff towards the four points of the compass, and emptying the pipe into his hand, cast the consecrated contents into the spring, saying a few Indian "medicine" words of cabalistic import. Having performed the ceremony to his satisfaction, he returned to the fire, smoked a pipe on his own hook, and turned into his buffalo robe, conscious of having done a most important duty.

In the course of their trapping expedition, and accompanied by Rube, who knew the country well, they passed near the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake, a vast inland sea, whose salitrose waters cover an extent of upwards of one hundred and forty miles in length, by eighty in breadth. Fed by several streams, of which

the Big Bear River is the most considerable, this lake presents the curious phenomenon of a vast body of water without any known outlet. According to the trappers, an island, from which rises a chain of lofty mountains, nearly divides the north-western portion of the lake, whilst a smaller one, within twelve miles of the northern shore, rises six hundred feet from the level of the water. Rube declared to his companions that the larger island was known by the Indians to be inhabited by a race of giants, with whom no communication had ever been held by mortal man; and but for the casual wafting to the shores of the lake of logs of gigantic trees, cut by axes of extraordinary size, the world would never have known that such a people existed. They were, moreover, white, as themselves, and lived upon corn and fruits, and rode on elephants, &c.

Whilst following a small creek at the south-west extremity of the lake, they came upon a band of miserable Indians, who, from the fact of their subsisting chiefly on roots, are called the Diggers. At first sight of the whites, they immediately fled from their wretched huts, and made towards the mountain; but one of the trappers, galloping up on his horse, cut off their retreat, and drove them like sheep before him back to their village. A few of these wretched creatures came into camp at sundown, and were regaled, with such meat as the larder afforded. They appeared to have no other food in their village but bags of dried ants and their larvæ, and a few roots of the yampah. Their huts were constructed of a few bushes of grease-wood, piled up as a sort of

breakwind, in which they huddled in their filthy skins. During the night, they crawled up to the camp and stole two of the horses, and the next morning not a sign of them was visible. Now La Bonté witnessed a case of mountain law, and the practical effects of the "lex talionis" of the Far West.

The trail of the runaway Diggers bore to the north-west, or along the skirt of a barren waterless desert, which stretches far away from the southern shores of the Salt Lake to the borders of Upper California. La Bonté, with three others, determined to follow the thieves, recover their animals, and then rejoin the other two (Luke and Rube) on a creek two days' journey from their present camp. Starting at sunrise, they rode on at a rapid pace all day, closely following the trail, which led directly to the north-west, through a wretched sandy country, without game or water. From the appearance of the track, the Indians must still have been several hours ahead of them, when the fatigue of their horses, suffering from want of grass and water, compelled them to camp near the head of a small water-course, where they luckily found a hole containing a little water, and whence a broad Indian trail passed, apparently frequently used. Long before daylight they were again in the saddle, and, after proceeding a few miles, saw the lights of several fires a short distance ahead of them. Halting here, one of the party advanced on foot to reconnoitre, and presently returned with the intelligence that the party they were in pursuit of had joined a village numbering thirty or forty huts.

Loosening their girths, they permitted their tired animals to feed on the scanty herbage which presented itself, whilst they refreshed themselves with a pipe of tobacco – for they had no meat of any description with them, and the country afforded no game. As the first streak of dawn appeared in the east, they mounted their horses, after first examining their rifles, and moved cautiously towards the Indian village. As it was scarcely light enough for their operations, they waited behind a sandhill in the vicinity, until objects became more distinct, and then, emerging from their cover with loud war-whoops, they charged abreast into the midst of the village.

As the frightened Indians were scarcely risen from their beds, no opposition was given to the daring mountaineers, who, rushing upon the flying crowd, discharged their rifles at close quarters, and then, springing from their horses, attacked them knife in hand, and only ceased the work of butchery when nine Indians lay dead upon the ground. All this time the women, half dead with fright, were huddled together on the ground, howling piteously; and the mountaineers advancing to them, whirled their lassos round their heads, and throwing the open nooses into the midst, hauled out three of them, and securing their arms in the rope, bound them to a tree, and then proceeded to scalp the dead bodies. Whilst they were engaged in this work, an old Indian, withered and grisly, and hardly bigger than an ape, suddenly emerged from a rock, holding in his left hand a bow and a handful of arrows, whilst one was already drawn to the head. Running

towards them, and almost before the hunters were aware of his presence, he discharged an arrow at a few yards' distance, which buried itself in the ground not a foot from La Bonté's head as he bent over the body of the Indian he was scalping; and hardly had the whiz ceased, when whirr flew another, striking him in his right shoulder. Before the Indian could fit a third arrow to his bow, La Bonté sprang upon him, seized him by the middle, and spinning the pigmy form of the Indian round his head, as easily as he would have twirled a tomahawk, he threw him with tremendous force on the ground at the feet of one of his companions, who, stooping down, coolly thrust his knife into the Indian's breast, and quickly tore off his scalp.

The slaughter over, without casting an eye to the captive squaws, the trappers proceeded to search the village for food, of which they stood much in need. Nothing, however, was found but a few bags of dried ants, which, after eating voraciously of, but with wry mouths, they threw aside, saying the food was worse than "poor bull." They found, however, the animals they had been robbed of, and two more besides, – wretched half-starved creatures; and on these mounting their captives, they hurried away on their journey back to their companions, the distance being computed at three days' travel from their present position. However, they thought, by taking a more direct course, they might find better pasture for their animals, and water, besides saving at least half a day by the short cut. To their cost, they proved the truth of the old saying, that "a short cut is always a

long road," as will be presently shown.

It has been said that from the south-western extremity of the Great Salt Lake a vast desert extends for hundreds of miles, unbroken by the slightest vegetation, destitute of game and water, and presenting a cheerless expanse of sandy plain, or rugged mountain, thinly covered with dwarf pine or cedar, the only evidence of vegetable life. Into this desert, ignorant of the country, the trappers struck, intending to make their short cut; and, travelling on all day, were compelled to camp at night, without water or pasture for their exhausted animals, and themselves ravenous with hunger and parched with thirst. The next day three of their animals "gave out," and they were fain to leave them behind; but imagining that they must soon strike a creek, they pushed on until noon, but still no water presented itself, nor a sign of game of any description. The animals were nearly exhausted, and a horse which could scarcely keep up with the slow pace of the others was killed, and its blood greedily drunk; a portion of the flesh being eaten raw, and a supply carried with them for future emergencies.

The next morning two of the horses lay dead at their pickets, and one only remained, and this in such a miserable state that it could not possibly have travelled six miles further. It was, therefore, killed, and its blood drunk, of which, however, the captive squaws refused to partake. The men began to feel the effects of their consuming thirst, which the hot horse's blood only served to increase; their lips became parched and swollen, their

eyes bloodshot, and a giddy sickness seized them at intervals. About mid-day they came in sight of a mountain on their right hand, which appeared to be more thickly clothed with vegetation; and arguing from this that water would be found there, they left their course and made towards it, although some eight or ten miles distant. On arriving at the base, the most minute search failed to discover the slightest traces of water, and the vegetation merely consisted of dwarf piñon and cedar. With their sufferings increased by the exertions they had used in reaching the mountain, they once more sought the trail, but every step told on their exhausted frames. The sun was very powerful, the sand over which they were floundering deep and heavy, and, to complete their sufferings, a high wind was blowing it in their faces, filling their mouths and noses with its searching particles.

Still they struggled onwards manfully, and not a murmur was heard until their hunger had entered the *second stage* attendant upon starvation. They had now been three days without food, and three without water; under which privation nature can hardly sustain herself for a much longer period. On the fourth morning, the men looked wolfish, their captives following behind in sullen and perfect indifference, occasionally stooping down to catch a beetle if one presented itself, and greedily devouring it. A man named Forey, a Canadian half-breed, was the first to complain. "If this lasted another sundown," he said, "some of them would be 'rubbed out;' that meat had to be 'raised' anyhow; and for his part, he knew where to look for a feed, if no game was seen

before they put out of camp on the morrow; and meat was meat, anyhow they fixed it."

No answer was made to this, though his companions well understood him: their natures as yet revolted against the last expedient. As for the three squaws, all of them young girls, they followed behind their captors without a word of complaint, and with the stoical indifference to pain and suffering, which alike characterises the haughty Delaware of the north and the miserable stunted Digger of the deserts of the Far West. On the morning of the fifth day, the party were sitting round a small fire of piñon, hardly able to rise and commence their journey, the squaws squatting over another at a little distance, when Forey commenced again to suggest that, if nothing offered, they must either take the alternative of starving to death, for they could not hope to last another day, or have recourse to the revolting extremity of sacrificing one of the party to save the lives of all. To this, however, there was a murmur of dissent, and it was finally resolved that all should sally out and hunt; for a deer-track had been discovered near the camp, which, although it was not a fresh one, proved that there must be game in the vicinity. Weak and exhausted as they were, they took their rifles and started for the neighbouring uplands, each taking a different direction.

It was nearly sunset when La Bonté returned to the camp, where he already espied one of his companions engaged in cooking something over it. Hurrying to the spot, overjoyed with the anticipations of a feast, he observed that the squaws were

gone; but, at the same time, thought it was not improbable they had escaped during their absence. Approaching the fire, he observed Forey broiling some meat on the embers, whilst at a little distance lay what he fancied was the carcass of a deer.

"Hurrah, boy!" he exclaimed, as he drew near the fire. "You've 'made' a 'raise,' I see."

"*Well*, I have," rejoined the other, turning his meat with the point of his butcher knife. "There's the meat, hos – help yourself."

La Bonté drew the knife from his scabbard, and approached the spot his companion was pointing to; but what was his horror to see the yet quivering body of one of the Indian squaws, with a large portion of the flesh butchered from it, and part of which Forey was already greedily devouring. The knife dropped from his hand, and his heart rose to his throat.

The next day he and his companion struck the creek where Rube and the other trapper had agreed to await them, and whom they found in camp with plenty of meat, and about to start again on their hunt, having given up the others for lost. From the day they parted, nothing was ever heard of La Bonté's two companions, who doubtless fell a prey to utter exhaustion, and were unable to return to the camp. And thus ended the Digger expedition.

It may appear almost incredible that men having civilised blood in their veins could perpetrate such wanton and cold-blooded acts of aggression on the wretched Indians, as that

detailed above; but it is fact that the mountaineers never lose an opportunity of slaughtering these miserable Diggers, and attacking their villages, often for the purpose of capturing women, whom they carry of, and not unfrequently sell to other tribes, or to each other. In these attacks neither sex nor age is spared; and your mountaineer has as little compunction in taking the life of an Indian woman, as he would have in sending his rifle-ball through the brain of a Crow or Blackfoot warrior.

La Bonté now found himself without animals, and fairly "afoot;" consequently nothing remained for him but to seek some of the trapping bands, and hire himself for the hunt. Luckily for him, he soon fell in with Roubideau, on his way to Uintah, and was supplied by him with a couple of animals; and thus equipped, started again with a large band of trappers, who were going to hunt on the waters of Grand River and the Gila. Here they fell in with another nation of Indians, from which branch out the innumerable tribes inhabiting Northern Mexico and part of California. They were in general friendly, but lost no opportunity of stealing horses or any articles left lying about the camp. On one occasion, being camped on a northern affluent of the Gila, as they sat round the camp-fires, a volley of arrows was discharged amongst them, severely wounding one or two of the party. The attack, however, was not renewed, and the next day the camp was moved further down the stream, where beaver was tolerably abundant. Before sundown a number of Indians made their appearance, and making signs of peace, were admitted into

the camp.

The trappers were all sitting at their suppers over the fires, the Indians looking gravely on, when it was remarked that now would be a good opportunity to retaliate upon them for the trouble their incessant attacks had entailed upon the camp. The suggestion was highly approved of, and instantly acted upon. Springing to their feet, the trappers seized their rifles, and commenced the slaughter. The Indians, panic-struck, fled without resistance, and numbers fell before the death-dealing rifles of the mountaineers. A chief, who had been sitting on a rock near the fire where the leader of the trappers sat, had been singled out by the latter as the first mark for his rifle.

Placing the muzzle to his heart, he pulled the trigger, but the Indian, with extraordinary tenacity of life, rose and grappled with his assailant. The white was a tall powerful man, but, notwithstanding the deadly wound the Indian had received, he had his equal in strength to contend against. The naked form of the Indian twisted and writhed in his grasp, as he sought to avoid the trapper's uplifted knife. Many of the latter's companions advanced to administer the *coup-de-grâce* to the savage, but the trapper cried to them to keep off: "If he couldn't whip the Injun," he said, "he'd go under."

At length he succeeded in throwing him, and, plunging his knife no less than seven times into his body, tore off his scalp, and went in pursuit of the flying savages. In the course of an hour or two, all the party returned, and sitting by the fires, resumed

their suppers, which had been interrupted in the manner just described. Walker, the captain of the band, sat down by the fire where he had been engaged in the struggle with the Indian chief, whose body was lying within a few paces of it. He was in the act of fighting the battle over again to one of his companions, and was saying that the Indian had as much life in him as a buffalo bull, when, to the horror of all present, the savage, who had received wounds sufficient for twenty deaths, suddenly rose to a sitting posture, the fire shedding a glowing light upon the horrid spectacle. The face was a mass of clotted blood, which flowed from the lacerated and naked scalp, whilst gouts of blood streamed from eight gaping wounds in the naked breast.

Slowly this frightful figure rose to a sitting posture, and, bending slowly forward to the fire, the mouth was seen to open wide, and a hollow gurgling – owg-h-h – broke from it.

"H – !", exclaimed the trapper – and jumping up, he placed a pistol to the ghastly head, the eyes of which sternly fixed themselves on his, and pulling the trigger, blew the poor wretch's head to atoms.

The Gila passes through a barren, sandy country, with but little game, and sparsely inhabited by several different tribes of the great nation of the Apache. Unlike the rivers of this western region, this stream is, in most parts of its course, particularly towards its upper waters, entirely bare of timber, and the bottom, through which it runs, affords but little of the coarsest grass. Whilst on this stream, the trapping party

lost several animals from the want of pasture, and many more from the predatory attacks of the cunning Indians. These losses, however, they invariably made good whenever they encountered a native village – taking care, moreover, to repay themselves with interest whenever occasion offered.

Notwithstanding the sterile nature of the country, the trappers, during their passage up the Gila, saw with astonishment that the arid and barren valley had once been peopled by a race of men far superior to the present nomade tribes who roam over it. With no little awe they gazed upon the ruined walls of large cities, and the remains of houses, with their ponderous beams and joists, still testifying to the skill and industry with which they were constructed: huge ditches and irrigating canals, now filled with rank vegetation, furrowed the plains in the vicinity, marking the spot where once the green waving maize and smiling gardens covered what now was a bare and sandy desert. Pieces of broken pottery, of domestic utensils, stained with bright colours, every where strewed the ground; and spear and arrow-heads of stone, and quaintly carved idols, and women's ornaments of agate and obsidian, were picked up often by the wondering trappers, examined with child-like curiosity, and thrown carelessly aside.[4]

A Taos Indian, who was amongst the band, was evidently impressed with a melancholy awe, as he regarded these ancient

[4] The Aztecs are supposed to have built this city during their migration to the south; there is little doubt, however, but that the region extending from the Gila to the Great Salt Lake, and embracing the province of New Mexico, was the locality from which they emigrated.

monuments of his fallen people. At midnight he rose from his blanket and left the camp, which was in the vicinity of the ruined city, stealthily picking his way through the line of slumbering forms which lay around; and the watchful sentinel observed him approach the ruins with a slow and reverential gait. Entering the mouldering walls, he gazed silently around, where in ages past his ancestors trod proudly, a civilised race, the tradition of which, well known to his people, served but to make their present degraded position more galling and apparent. Cowering under the shadow of a crumbling wall, the Indian drew his blanket over his head, and conjured to his mind's eye the former power and grandeur of his race, – that warlike people who, forsaking their own country for causes of which not the most dim tradition affords a trace, sought in the fruitful and teeming valleys of the south for a soil and climate which their own lands did not afford; and displacing the wild and barbarous hordes which inhabited the land, raised there a mighty empire, great in riches and civilisation, of which but the vague tradition now remains.

The Indian bowed his head and mourned the fallen greatness of his tribe. Rising, he slowly drew his tattered blanket round his body, and was preparing to leave the spot, when the shadow of a moving figure, creeping past a gap in the ruined wall, through which the moonbeams were playing, suddenly arrested his attention. Rigid as a statue, he stood transfixed to the spot, thinking a former inhabitant of the city was visiting, in a ghostly form, the scenes his body once knew so well. The bow in his

right hand shook with fear as he saw the shadow approach, but was as tightly and steadily grasped when, on the figure emerging from the shade of the wall, he distinguished the form of a naked Apache, armed with bow and arrow, crawling stealthily through the gloomy ruins.

Standing undiscovered within the shadow of the wall, the Taos raised his bow, and drew an arrow to the head, until the other, who was bending low to keep under cover of the wall, and thus approach the sentinel, standing at a short distance, seeing suddenly the well-defined shadow on the ground, rose upright on his legs, and, knowing escape was impossible, threw his arms down his sides, and, drawing himself erect, exclaimed, in a suppressed tone, "Wa-g-h!"

"Wagh!" exclaimed the Taos likewise, but quickly dropped his arrow point, and eased the bow.

"What does my brother want," he asked, "that he lopes like a wolf round the fires of the white hunters?"

"Is my brother's skin not red?" returned the Apache, "and yet he asks a question that needs no answer. Why does the 'medicine wolf' follow the buffalo and deer! For blood – and for blood the Indian follows the treacherous white from camp to camp, to strike blow for blow, until the deaths of those so basely killed are fully avenged."

"My brother speaks with a big heart, and his words are true; and though the Taos and Pimo (Apache) black their faces towards each other, (are at war,) here, on the graves of their

common fathers, there is peace between them. Let my brother go."

The Apache moved quickly away, and the Taos once more sought the camp-fires of his white companions.

Following the course of the Gila to the eastward, they crossed a range of the Sierra Madre, which is a continuation of the Rocky Mountains, and struck the waters of the Rio del Norte, below the settlements of New Mexico. On this stream they fared well; besides trapping a great quantity of beaver, game of all kinds abounded, and the bluffs near the well-timbered banks of the river were covered with rich gramma grass, on which their half-starved animals speedily improved in condition.

They remained for some weeks encamped on the right bank of the stream, during which period they lost one of their number, who was shot with an arrow whilst lying asleep within a few feet of the camp-fire.

The Navajos continually prowl along that portion of the river which runs through the settlements of New Mexico, preying upon the cowardly inhabitants, and running off with their cattle whenever they are exposed in sufficient numbers to tempt them. Whilst ascending the river, they met a party of these Indians returning to their mountain homes with a large band of mules and horses which they had taken from one of the Mexican towns, besides several women and children, whom they had captured, as slaves. The main body of the trappers halting, ten of the band followed and charged upon the Indians, who numbered at least

sixty, killed seven of them, and retook the prisoners and the whole cavallada of horses and mules. Great were the rejoicings when they entered Socorro, the town from whence the women and children had been taken, and as loud the remonstrances, when, handing them over to their families, the trappers rode on, driving fifty of the best of the rescued animals before them, which they retained as payment for their services. Messengers were sent on to Albuquerque with intelligence of the proceeding; and as there were some troops stationed there, the commandant was applied to to chastise the insolent whites.

That warrior, on learning that the trappers numbered less than fifteen, became alarmingly brave, and ordering out the whole of his disposable force, some two hundred dragoons, sallied out to intercept the audacious mountaineers. About noon one day, just as the latter had emerged from a little town between Socorro and Albuquerque, they descried the imposing force of the dragoons winding along a plain ahead. As the trappers advanced, the officer in command halted his men, and sent out a trumpeter to order the former to await his coming. Treating the herald to a roar of laughter, on they went, and, as they approached the soldiers, broke into a trot, ten of the number forming line in front of the packed and loose animals, and, rifle in hand, charging with loud whoops. This was enough for the New Mexicans. Before the enemy were within shooting distance, the gallant fellows turned tail, and splashed into the river, dragging themselves up the opposite bank like half-drowned rats, and saluted with loud peels

of laughter by the victorious mountaineers, who, firing a volley into the air, in token of supreme contempt, quietly continued their route up the stream.

Before reaching the capital of the province, they struck again to the westward, and following a small creek to its junction with the Green River, ascended that stream, trapping *en route* to the Uintah or Snake Fork, and arrived at Roubideau's rendezvous early in the fall, where they quickly disposed of their peltries, and were once more on "the loose."

Here La Bonté married a Snake squaw, with whom he crossed the mountains and proceeded to the Platte through the Bayou Salado, where he purchased of the Yutes a commodious lodge, with the necessary poles, &c.; and being now "rich" in mules and horses, and all things necessary for *otium cum dignitate*, he took unto himself another wife, as by mountain law allowed; and thus equipped, with both his better halves attired in all the glory of fofarraw, he went his way rejoicing.

In a snug little valley lying under the shadow of the mountains, watered by Vermilion Creek, and in which abundance of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope fed and fattened on the rich grass, La Bonté raised his lodge, employing himself in hunting, and fully occupying his wives' time in dressing the skins of the many animals he killed. Here he enjoyed himself amazingly until the commencement of winter, when he determined to cross to the North Fork and trade his skins, of which he had now as many packs as his animals could carry. It happened that he had left

his camp one day, to spend a couple of days hunting buffalo in the mountain, whither the bulls were now resorting, intending to "put out" for Platte on his return. His hunt, however, had led him farther into the mountains than he anticipated, and it was only on the third day that sundown saw him enter the little valley where his camp was situated.

Crossing the creek, he was not a little disturbed at seeing fresh Indian sign on the opposite side, which led in the direction of his lodge; and his worst fears were realised when, on coming within sight of the little plateau where the conical top of his white lodge had always before met his view, he saw nothing but a blackened mass strewing the ground, and the burnt ends of the poles which had once supported it.

Squaws, animals, and peltry, all were gone – an Arapaho mocassin lying on the ground told him where. He neither fumed nor fretted, but throwing the meat off his pack animal, and the saddle from his horse, he collected the blackened ends of the lodge poles and made a fire – led his beasts to water and hobbled them, threw a piece of buffalo meat upon the coals, squatted down before the fire, and lit his pipe. La Bonté was a true philosopher. Notwithstanding that his house, his squaws, his peltries, were gone "at one fell swoop," the loss scarcely disturbed his equanimity, and before the tobacco in his pipe was half smoked out, he had ceased to think of his misfortune. Certes, as he turned his apolla of tender loin, he sighed as he thought of the delicate manipulations with which his Shosshone squaw,

Sah-qua-manish, was wont to beat to tenderness the toughest bull meat – and missed the tending care of Yute Chil-co-thē, or the "reed that bends," in patching the holes worn in his neatly fitting mocassin, the work of her nimble fingers. However, he ate and smoked, and smoked and ate, and slept none the worse for his mishap; thought, before he closed his eyes, a little of his lost wives, and more perhaps of the "Bending Reed" than Sah-qua-manish, or "she who runs with the stream," drew his blanket tightly round him, felt his rifle handy to his grasp, and was speedily asleep.

As the tired mountaineer breathes heavily in his dream, careless and unconscious that a living soul is near, his mule on a sudden pricks her ears and stares into the gloom, from whence a figure soon emerges, and with noiseless steps draws near the sleeping hunter. Taking one look at the slumbering form, the same figure approaches the fire and adds a log to the pile; which done, it quietly seats itself at the feet of the sleeper, and remains motionless as a statue. Towards morning the hunter awoke, and, rubbing his eyes, was astonished to feel the glowing warmth of the fire striking on his naked feet, which, in Indian fashion, were stretched towards it; as by this time, he knew, the fire he left burning must long since have expired. Lazily raising himself on his elbow, he saw a figure sitting near it with the back turned to him, which, although his exclamatory wagh was loud enough in all conscience, remained perfectly motionless, until the trapper rising, placed his hand upon the shoulder: then, turning up its

face, the features displayed to his wondering eye were those of Chilcothē, his Yuta wife. Yes, indeed, the "reed that bends" had escaped from her Arapaho captors, and made her way back to her white husband, fasting and alone.

The Indian women who follow the fortunes of the white hunters are remarkable for their affection and fidelity to their husbands, the which virtues, it must be remarked, are all on their own side; for, with very few exceptions, the mountaineers seldom scruple to abandon their Indian wives, whenever the fancy takes them to change their harems; and on such occasions the squaws, thus cast aside, wild with jealousy and despair, have been not unfrequently known to take signal vengeance both on their faithless husbands and the successful beauties who have supplanted them in their affections. There are some honourable exceptions, however, to such cruelty, and many of the mountaineers stick to their red-skinned wives for better and for worse, often suffering them to gain the upper hand in the domestic economy of the lodges, and being ruled by their better halves in all things pertaining to family affairs; and it may be remarked, when once the lady dons the unmentionables, she becomes the veriest termagant that ever henpecked an unfortunate husband.

Your refined trappers, however, who, after many years of bachelor life, incline to take to themselves a better half, often undertake an expedition into the settlements of New Mexico, where not unfrequently they adopt a very "Young Lochinvar"

system in procuring the required rib; and have been known to carry off, *vi et armis*, from the midst of a fandango in Fernandez, or El Rancho of Taos, some dark-skinned beauty – with or without her own consent is a matter of unconcern – and bear the ravished fair one across the mountains, where she soon becomes inured to the free and roving life which fate has assigned her.

American women are valued at a low figure in the mountains. They are too fine and "fofarraw." Neither can they make mocassins, or dress skins; nor are they so schooled to perfect obedience to their lords and masters as to stand a "lodge poleing," which the western lords of the creation not unfrequently deem it their bounden duty to inflict upon their squaws for some dereliction of domestic duty.

To return, however, to La Bonté. That worthy thought himself a lucky man to have lost but one of his wives, and the worst at that. "Here's the beauty," he philosophised, "of having two 'wiping sticks' to your rifle; if the one break whilst ramming down a ball, still there's hickory left to supply its place." Although, with animals and peltry, he had lost several hundred dollars' worth of "possibles," he never groaned or grumbled. "There's redskin will pay for this," he once muttered, and was done.

Packing all that was left on the mule, and mounting Chil-co-thē on his buffalo horse, he shouldered his rifle and struck the Indian trail for Platte. On Horse Creek they came upon a party

of French[5] trappers and hunters, who were encamped with their lodges and Indian squaws, and formed quite a village. Several old companions were amongst them; and, to celebrate the arrival of a "camarade," a splendid dog-feast was prepared in honour of the event. To effect this, the squaws sallied out of their lodges to seize upon sundry of the younger and plumper of the pack, to fill the kettles for the approaching feast. With a presentiment of the fate in store for them, the curs slunk away with tails between their legs, and declined the pressing invitations of the anxious squaws. These shouldered their tomahawks and gave chase; but the cunning pups outstripped them, and would have fairly beaten the kettles, if some of the mountaineers had not stepped out with their rifles and quickly laid half-a-dozen ready to the knife. A cayeute, attracted by the scent of blood, drew near, unwitting of the canine feast in progress, and was likewise soon made *dog* of, and thrust into the boiling kettle with the rest.

The feast that night was long protracted; and so savoury was the stew, and so agreeable to the palates of the hungry hunters, that at the moment when the last morsel was being drawn from the pot, and all were regretting that a few more dogs had not been slaughtered, a wolfish-looking cur incautiously poked his long nose and head under the lodge skin, and was instantly pounced upon by the nearest hunter, who in a moment drew his knife across the animal's throat, and threw it to a squaw to skin and prepare it for the pot. The wolf had long since been vigorously

[5] Creoles of St Louis, and French Canadians.

discussed, and voted by all hands to be "good as dog."

"Meat's meat," is a common saying in the mountains, and from the buffalo down to the rattlesnake, including every quadruped that runs, every fowl that flies, and every reptile that creeps, nothing comes amiss to the mountaineer. Throwing aside all the qualms and conscientious scruples of a fastidious stomach, it must be confessed that *dog-meat* takes a high rank in the wonderful variety of cuisine afforded to the gourmand and the gourmet by the prolific "mountains." Now, when the bill of fare offers such tempting viands as buffalo beef, venison, mountain mutton, turkey, grouse, wildfowl, hares, rabbits, beaver and their tails, &c., &c., the station assigned to "dog" as No. 2 in the list can be well appreciated – No. 1, in delicacy of flavour, richness of meat, and other good qualities, being the flesh of *panthers*, which surpasses every other, and all put together.

"Painter meat can't 'shine' with this," says a hunter, to express the delicious flavour of an extraordinary cut of "tender loin," or delicate fleece.

La Bonté started with his squaw for the North Fork early in November, and arrived at the Laramie at the moment that the big village of the Sioux came up for their winter trade. Two other villages were encamped lower down the Platte, including the Brulés and the Yanka-taus, who were now on more friendly terms with the whites. The first band numbered several hundred lodges, and presented quite an imposing appearance, the village being laid out in parallel lines, the lodge of each chief being marked

with his particular totem. The traders had a particular portion of the village allotted to them, and a line was marked out which was strictly kept by the soldiers appointed for the protection of the whites. As there were many rival traders, and numerous *coureurs des bois*, or peddling ones, the market promised to be brisk, the more so as a large quantity of ardent spirits was in their possession, which would be dealt with no unsparing hand to put down the opposition of so many competing traders.

In opening a trade a quantity of liquor is first given "on the prairie,"[6] as the Indians express it in words, or by signs in rubbing the palm of one hand quickly across the other, holding both flat. Having once tasted the pernicious liquid, there is no fear but they will quickly come to terms; and not unfrequently the spirit is drugged, to render the unfortunate Indians still more helpless. Sometimes, maddened and infuriated by drink, they commit the most horrid atrocities on each other, murdering and mutilating in a barbarous manner, and often attempting the lives of the traders themselves. On one occasion a band of Sioux, whilst under the influence of liquor, attacked and took possession of a trading fort of the American Fur Company, stripping it of every thing it contained, and roasting the trader himself over his own fire during the process.

The principle on which the nefarious trade is conducted is this, that the Indians, possessing a certain quantity of buffalo robes, have to be cheated out of them, and the sooner the

[6] "On the prairie," is the Indian term for a free gift.

better. Although it is explicitly prohibited by the laws of the United States to convey spirits across the Indian frontier, and its introduction amongst the Indian tribes subjects the offender to a heavy penalty; yet the infraction of this law is of daily occurrence, and perpetrated almost in the very presence of the government officers, who are stationed along the frontier for the very purpose of enforcing the laws for the protection of the Indians.

The misery entailed upon these unhappy people by the illicit traffic must be seen to be fully appreciated. Before the effects of the poisonous "fire-water," they disappear from the earth like "snow before the sun;" and knowing the destruction it entails upon them, the poor wretches have not moral courage to shun the fatal allurement it holds out to them, of wild excitement and a temporary oblivion of their many sufferings and privations. With such palpable effects, it appears only likely that the illegal trade is connived at by those whose policy it has ever been gradually but surely to exterminate the Indians, and by any means extinguish their title to the few lands they now own on the outskirts of civilisation. Certain it is that large quantities of liquor find their way annually into the Indian country, and as certain are the fatal results of the pernicious system, and that the American government takes no steps to prevent it. There are some tribes who have as yet withstood the great temptation, and have resolutely refused to permit liquor to be brought into their villages. The marked difference between the improved

condition of these, and the moral and physical abasement of those tribes which give way to the fatal passion for drinking, sufficiently proves the pernicious effects of the liquor trade on the unfortunate and abused aborigines; and it is matter of regret that no philanthropist has sprung up in the United States to do battle for the rights of the Red man, and call attention to the wrongs they endure at the hands of their supplanters in the lands of their fathers.

Robbed of their homes and hunting-grounds, and driven by the encroachments of the whites to distant regions, which hardly support their bare existence, the Indians, day by day, are gradually decreasing before the accumulating evils, of body and soul, which their civilised persecutors entail upon them. With every man's hand against them, they drag on to their final destiny; and the day is not far distant when the American Indian will exist only in the traditions of his pale-faced conquerors.

The Indians who were trading at this time on the Platte were mostly of the Sioux nation, including the tribes of Burnt-woods, Yanka-taus, Pian-Kashas, Assinaboins, Oglallahs, Broken Arrows, all of which belong to the great Sioux nation, or La-cotahs, as they call themselves, and which means cut-throats. There were also some Cheyennes allied to the Sioux, as well as a small band of Republican Pawnees.

Horse-racing, gambling, and ball-play, served to pass away the time until the trade commenced, and many packs of dressed robes changed hands amongst themselves. When playing at the

usual game of "*hand*," the stakes, comprising all the valuables the players possess, are piled in two heaps close at hand, the winner at the conclusion of the game sweeping the goods towards him, and often returning a small portion "on the prairie," with which the loser may again commence operations with another player.

The game of "hand" is played by two persons. One, who commences, places a plum or cherry-stone in the hollow formed by joining the concaved palms of the hands together, then shaking the stone for a few moments, the hands are suddenly separated, and the other player must guess which hand now contains the stone.

Large bets are often wagered on the result of this favourite game, which is also often played by the squaws, the men standing round encouraging them to bet, and laughing loudly at their grotesque excitement.

A Burnt-wood Sioux, Tah-tunga-nisha, and one of the bravest chiefs of his tribe, when a young man, was out on a solitary war expedition against the Crows. One evening he drew near a certain "medicine" spring, where, to his astonishment, he encountered a Crow warrior in the act of quenching his thirst. He was on the point of drawing his bow upon him, when he remembered the sacred nature of the spot, and making the sign of peace, he fearlessly drew near his foe, and proceeded likewise to slake his thirst. A pipe of kinnik-kinnik being produced, it was proposed to pass away the early part of the night in a game of "hand." They accordingly sat down beside the spring, and commenced

the game.

Fortune favoured the Crow. He won arrow after arrow from the Burnt-wood brave; then his bow, his club, his knife, his robe, all followed, and the Sioux sat naked on the plain. Still he proposed another stake against the other's winnings – his scalp. He played, and lost; and bending forward his head, the Crow warrior drew his knife and quickly removed the bleeding prize. Without a murmur the luckless warrior rose to depart, but first exacted a promise from his antagonist, that he would meet him once more at the same pot, and engage in another trial of skill.

On the day appointed, the Burnt-wood sought the spot, with a new equipment, and again the Crow made his appearance, and they sat down to play. This time fortune changed sides, and the Sioux won back his former losses, and in his turn the Crow was stripped to his skin.

Scalp against scalp was now the stake, and this time the Crow submitted his head to the victorious Burnt-wood's knife; and both the warriors stood scalpless on the plain.

And now the Crow had but one single stake of value to offer, and the offer of it, he did not hesitate to make. He staked his life against the other's winnings. They played; and fortune still being adverse, he lost. He offered his breast to his adversary. The Burnt-wood plunged his knife into his heart to the very hilt; and, laden with his spoils, returned to his village, and to this day wears suspended from his ears his own and enemy's scalp.

The village presented the usual scene of confusion as long as

the trade lasted. Fighting, brawling, yelling, dancing, and all the concomitants of intoxication, continued to the last drop of the liquor-keg, when the reaction after such excitement was almost worse than the evil itself. During this time, all the work devolved upon the squaws, who, in tending the horses, packing wood and water from a long distance, had their time sufficiently occupied. As there was little or no grass in the vicinity, the animals were supported entirely on the bark of the cotton-wood; and to procure this, the women were daily engaged in felling huge trees, or climbing them fearlessly, chopping off the upper limbs, – springing like squirrels from branch to branch, which, in their confined costume, appeared matter of considerable difficulty.

The most laughter-provoking scenes, however, were, when a number of squaws sallied out to the grove, with their long-nosed, wolfish-looking dogs harnessed to their *travées* or trabogans, on which loads of cotton-wood were piled. The dogs, knowing full well the duty required of them, refuse to approach the coaxing squaws, and, at the same time, are fearful of provoking their anger by escaping and running off. They, therefore, squat on their haunches, with tongues hanging out of their long mouths, the picture of indecision, removing a short distance as the irate squaw approaches. When once harnessed to the travée, however, which is simply a couple of lodge-poles lashed on either side of the dog, with a couple of cross-bars near the ends to support the freight, they follow quietly enough, urged by bevies of children, who invariably accompany the women. When arrived at the scene

of their labours, the reluctance of the curs to draw near the piles of cotton-wood is most comical. They will lie down stubbornly at a little distance, whining their uneasiness, or sometimes scamper off bodily, with their long poles trailing after them, pursued by the yelling and half frantic squaws.

When the travées are laden, the squaws take the lead, bent double under loads of wood sufficient to break a porter's back, and calling to the dogs, which are urged on by the buffalo-fed urchins in rear, take up the line of march. The curs, taking advantage of the helpless state of their mistresses, turn a deaf ear to their coaxings, lying down every few yards to rest, growling and fighting with each other, in which encounters every cur joins, the *mêlée*, charging pell-mell into the yelping throng; upsetting the squalling children, and making confusion worse confounded. Then, armed with lodge-poles, the squaws, throwing down their loads, rush to the rescue, dealing stalwart blows on the pugnacious curs, and finally restoring something like order to the march.

"Tszoo – tszoo!" they cry, "wah, kashne, ceitcha – get on, you devilish beasts – tszoo – tszoo!" and belabouring them without mercy, start them into a gallop, which, once effected, they generally continue till they reach their destination.

The Indian dogs are, however, invariably well treated by the squaws, since they assist materially the everyday labours of these patient overworked creatures, in hauling firewood to the lodge, and, on the line of march, carrying many of the household goods

and chattels which otherwise the squaw herself would have to carry on her back. Every lodge possesses from half-a-dozen to a score, – some for draught and others for eating, – for dog meat forms part and parcel of an Indian feast. The former are stout, wiry animals, half wolf half sheep-dog, and are regularly trained to draught; the latter are of a smaller kind, more inclined to fat, and embrace every variety of the genus cur. Many of the southern tribes possess a breed of dogs entirely divested of hair, which evidently have come from South America, and are esteemed highly for the kettle. Their meat, in appearance and flavour, resembles young pork, but far surpasses it in richness and delicacy of flavour.

The Sioux are very expert in making their lodges comfortable, taking more pains in their construction than most Indians. They are all of conical form: a framework of straight slender poles, resembling hop-poles, and from twenty to twenty-five feet long, is first erected, round which is stretched a sheeting of buffalo robes, softly dressed, and smoked to render them watertight. The apex, through which the ends of the poles protrude, is left open to allow the smoke to escape. A small opening, sufficient to permit the entrance of a man, is made on one side, over which is hung a door of buffalo hide. A lodge of the common size contains about twelve or fourteen skins, and contains comfortably a family of twelve in number. The fire is made in the centre immediately under the aperture in the roof, and a flap of the upper skins, is closed or extended at pleasure, serving as a cowl or chimney-top

to regulate the draught and permit the smoke to escape freely. Round the fire, with their feet towards it, the inmates sleep on skins and buffalo rugs, which are rolled up during the day, and stowed at the back of the lodge.

In travelling, the lodge-poles are secured half on each side a horse, and the skins placed on transversal bars near the ends, which trail along the ground, – two or three squaws or children mounted on the same horse, or the smallest of the latter borne in the dog travées. A set of lodge-poles will last from three to seven years, unless the village is constantly on the move, when they are soon worn out in trailing over the gravelly prairie. They are usually of ash, which grows on many of the mountain creeks, and regular expeditions are undertaken when a supply is required, either for their own lodges, or for trading with those tribes who inhabit the prairies at a great distance from the locality where the poles are procured.

There are also certain creeks where the Indians resort to lay in a store of kinnik-kinnik, (the inner bark of the red, willow,) which they use as a substitute for tobacco, and which has an aromatic and very pungent flavour. It is prepared for smoking by being scraped in thin curly flakes from the slender saplings, and crisped before the fire, after which it is rubbed between the hands into a form resembling leaf-tobacco, and stored in skin bags for use. It has a highly narcotic effect on those not habituated to its use, and produces a heaviness sometimes approaching stupefaction, altogether different from the soothing effects of

tobacco.

Every year, owing to the disappearance of the buffalo from their former haunts, the Indians are necessitated to encroach upon each other's hunting-grounds, which is a fruitful cause of war between the different tribes. It is a curious fact, that the buffalo retire before the whites, while the presence of Indians in their pastures appears in no degree to disturb them. Wherever a few white hunters are congregated in a trading port, or elsewhere, so sure it is that, if they remain in the same locality, the buffalo will desert the vicinity, and seek pasture elsewhere; and in this, the Indians affirm the wah-keitcha, or "bad medicine," of the pale-faces is very apparent; and ground their well-founded complaints of the encroachments made upon their hunting-grounds by the white hunters.

In the winter, many of the tribes are reduced to the very verge of starvation – the buffalo having passed from their country into that of their enemies, when no other alternative is offered them, but to remain where they are and starve, or follow the game into a hostile region, entailing a war and all its horrors upon them.

Reckless, moreover, of the future, in order to prepare robes for the traders, and procure the pernicious fire-water, they wantonly slaughter vast numbers of buffalo cows every year, (the skins of which sex only are dressed,) and thus add to the evils in store for them. When questioned on this subject, and such want of foresight being pointed out to them, they answer, that however quickly the buffalo disappears, the Red man "goes under" in

greater proportion; and that the Great Spirit has ordained that both shall be "rubbed out" from the face of nature at one and the same time, – "that arrows and bullets are not more fatal to the buffalo than the small-pox and fire-water to them, and that before many winters' snows have disappeared, the buffalo and the Red man will only be remembered by their bones, which will strew the plains." – "They look forward, however, to a future state, when, after a long journey, they will reach the happy hunting-grounds, where buffalo will once more blacken the prairies; where the pale-faces daren't come to disturb them; where no winter snows cover the ground, and the buffalo are always plentiful and fat."

As soon as the streams opened, La Bonté, now reduced to but two animals and four traps, sallied forth again, this time seeking the dangerous country of the Blackfeet, on the head waters of the Yellow Stone and Upper Missouri. He was accompanied by three others, a man named Wheeler, and one Cross-Eagle, a Swede, who had been many years in the western country. Reaching the fork of a small creek, on both of which appeared plenty of beaver sign, La Bonté followed the left-hand one alone, whilst the others trapped the right in company, the former leaving his squaw in the company of a Sioux woman, who followed the fortunes of Cross-Eagle, the party agreeing to rendezvous at the junction of the two forks as soon as they had trapped to their heads and again descended them. The larger party were the first to reach the rendezvous, and camped on the banks of the main stream to

await the arrival of La Bonté.

The morning after their return, they had just risen from their blankets, and were lazily stretching themselves before the fire, when a volley of firearms rattled from the bank of the creek, and two of their number fell dead to the ground, at the same moment that the deafening yells of Indians broke upon the ears of the frightened squaws. Cross-Eagle seized his rifle, and, though severely wounded, rushed to the cover of a hollow tree which stood near, and crawling into it, defended himself the whole day with the greatest obstinacy, killing five Indians outright, and wounding several more. Unable to drive the gallant trapper from his retreat, the savages took advantage of a favourable wind which sprang up suddenly, and fired the long and dried-up grass which surrounded the tree. The rotten log catching fire at length compelled the hunter to leave his retreat, and, clubbing his rifle, he charged amongst the Indians, and fell at last pierced through and through with wounds, but not before two more of his assailants had fallen by his hand.

The two squaws were carried off, and, shortly after, one was sold to some white men at the trading ports on the Platte; but La Bonté never recovered the "Bending Reed," nor even heard of her existence from that day. So once more was the mountaineer bereft of his better half; and when he returned to the rendezvous, a troop of wolves were feasting on the bodies of his late companions, and of the Indians killed in the affray, of which he only heard the particulars a long time after from a trapper,

who had been present when one of the squaws was offered at the trading post for sale, and who had recounted the miserable fate of her husband and his companions on the forks of the creek, which, from the fact of that trapper being the leader of the party, is still called La Bonté's Creek.

Nevertheless, he continued his solitary hunt, passing through the midst of the Crow and Blackfeet country; encountering many perils, often hunted by the Indians, but escaping all; and speedily loading both his animals with beaver, he thought of bending his steps to some of the trading rendezvous on the other side of the mountains, where employés of the Great Northwest Fur Company meet the trappers with the produce of their hunts, on Lewis's fork of the Columbia, or one of its numerous affluents, and intending to pass the winter at some of the company's trading posts in Oregon, into which country he had never yet penetrated.

ART – ITS PROSPECTS. CLEGHORN'S ANCIENT AND MODERN ART

[7]As the age in which Shakspeare wrote, had he not been in existence, would still have been remarkable on account of its dramatic writers, so the Cinque Cento is equally distinguished as the era of the arts. Yet has no very satisfactory cause been assigned for the direction of the human mind to these particular pursuits at these precise periods; for, simultaneously in countries differing in climate, governments, and manners, have the requisite men of genius arisen.

It might be easier to account for the depression than the rise of the noblest arts. Of this we shall presently speak; aware, at the same time, how ungracious will be the words which will admit of a decadence among ourselves. When we boast of our "enlightened age," it would not be amiss that we stay for a moment our pride, look back, and consider how much we have absolutely lost; in how much we are inferior. Every age seems destined to do its own work, which it does nearly to the perfection of its given art or science. Succeeding ages are destined rather to invent new than to improve upon the old. What has been

[7] *Ancient and Modern Art, historical and critical.* By George Cleghorn, Esq. 2 vols. Blackwoods. 1848.

done, becomes an accumulated wealth that Time deposits ever, and passes on to continual work to add fresh materials, and stock the world with the means of general improvement and happiness. There is always progression, but it is a progression of invention; the destined works are too vast, too infinite to allow a long delay in the advancement of any one accomplishment. It is rapidly completed; we are scarcely allowed time to stand and wonder; we must pass on to perform something new. Yet, if such attained thing shall be lost, or nearly so, the power to create it again may be again given; but it works *de novo*, adapting itself to the new principle which has rendered the reproduction advantageous, if not necessary. Thus, for instance, in the ages which we are pleased to call dark, to what magnitude and what exactness of beauty did not architecture reach, and that in a particularly inventive style – the Gothic – borrowing not from what had before been, and which had been held perfect, a style upon which we do not now even hope to improve, but content ourselves with admiring and copying. Thus it should seem that where any thing like a practical continuance of an art has been permitted, the entirely new direction it has taken would show that invention, required for the age, was the object, and that, too, bounded by a limit. "For this purpose have I raised thee up," would appear to be the text upon which the histories of the arts, as of every thing human, may be considered the comment.

It is to the total loss of ancient art that mankind are indebted for its revival, its re-discovery, as it were; for little or nothing was

left from which, as from an old stock, art was to begin.

The new Christian principle created a new mind, to which there was little consonant in what was known, however imperfectly, of ancient works. Hence what is termed revival might, with more aptitude of expression, be called the re-discovery.

Had art been uninterruptedly continued from the days of Apelles, it would probably have degenerated to its lowest state. The destruction, the altogether vanishing away of the former glory, was essential to the rise of the new. All was nearly obliterated. Of the innumerable statues of which Greece was plundered by the Romans, but six were to be found – five of marble, and one of brass – in the city of Rome, at the beginning of the fifteenth century; so that art may be said to have been defunct. The decadence of architecture seems also to have been required for the originating the Gothic, for the inventing altogether a new style, which had no prototype. It was necessary to the establishing the Christian principle operatively, that the mind should be wrested powerfully from former and antagonistic ideas. And this could scarcely have been effected had any thing like a continual, an important succession of vigorous life in these arts been allowed.

It seems to have been the work of a great guiding will, that the way should be prepared for renovation, by the almost entire loss or mutilation of the greatest works of former periods, and by the veil of ignorance which victorious barbarism spread before

all eyes, that they should not distinguish through that cloud the remnant of a glory which was too great to be altogether destroyed. The very language which spoke of it was a buried charm, that the oblivion might be more perfect. And not until the now grown Christian mind required the re-discovery of art, was that tongue loosened. The revival of ancient literature and the birth of new art were simultaneous. With the latter, at least, it was more than a sleep from which it arose – it was from a death, with all the marks of its corruption.

We do not mean to assert that art rose at once full-grown, as Pallas from the head of Jove. It had undoubtedly its progression; but it did not grow from an old stock; and hence it did grow and arose unimpeded and unchoked by an unwholesome exuberance, to the greatest splendour and glory. Whether there can be again any new principle which will require new inventions, it would be almost presumptuous to consider; but we do feel assured that should it be so, there will not be an adaptation of present means to it, but that the wing of oblivion must have to sweep over, overshadow, and obliterate the present multifarious form and body of art. The fine arts are not like the exact sciences, always progressing from accumulative knowledge towards their final and sure establishment of truth; on the contrary, their great truths recede further from view, as knowledge is accumulated, and practice, deteriorates by example. Science is truth to be dug out of the earth, as it were; a precious ore, not strictly ours, but by and for our use. The fine arts are in a far greater

degree ours, for they are of the mind's creation; they are the product of a faculty given, indeed, but given to create and not to gather, and dig up ready-made for our purpose; they are of that faculty which has given the name to the poet, as altogether the maker. They give that to the world which it never could have received by any accumulation of fact and knowledge. Take away the individual genius, the inventive, the creating mind of the one man, the Homer, the Dante, the Shakspeare, the Michael Angelo, the Raffaelle, and the whole product is annihilated; we cannot even conceive of its existence, know of no mine wherein to dig, no facts, no knowledge out of which it can grow. That creating power may, indeed, turn all existing things to its use, all facts and all knowledge; but it commands and is not governed by them – is a power in no degree dependant on them, which would still be, though they existed not – a power which, if it exhausted worlds, would invent new for its purpose. To whom, then, are such powers given? for what purpose? – and are they of a gift deteriorated in its use and abuse? Alas! they are still of the "corruptible," and cannot, in our present state, "put on incorruption." They are, however, of the mind, which may be purified and strengthened, or corrupted and degraded.

They effect in a great degree, and suitably to the age's requirement, their purpose. Corrupted from the ardour and sincerity of their first passion, and by the admission, little by little, of what is vicious, and yet which, we must confess, has its beauty; their very aim becomes changed, less large

by subdivision, and less sure by confusion and uncertainty of aim, until all purpose be lost, in a low satisfaction in mere dexterity and mindless imitation. And what shall stay art in such downward way of decadence? Can a strong impulse be given to it – for there is no strength but the mind's strength? It is not patronage, but purpose, which is wanted. What shall revivify the passion that gave it earnestness, – the sincerity, the trust in itself, the confidence in its own high-mindedness, the sense of the importance of its objects, and the true glory of their pursuit? We have our fears that we are doing much to multiply artists, and degrade art. We distribute patronage in so many streams, by our art-unions, that no full fertilising current is visible. We make a pauperism, and stamp it with the disgrace of the beggarly contribution; we, pauperise the mind too, by the demand for mean productions, and by circulating, as the choicest specimens of British art, engravings which tend utterly to the deterioration of the public taste. Perhaps there is nothing more frightfully injurious in the present state of art, than this ever putting before the public eye things in themselves bad, and mostly bad, where badness is more surely fatal, in purpose. It is far easier for good taste and for good art, in practice, to arise out of a blank, out of nothing, than out of an exuberance of bad examples. These things tend to vitiate the pure. The great daily accumulation of inferior works, low in character, and deficient in artistic knowledge and skill, that are ever thrust before the public eye, are doing much mischief. They are poisoning and

vitiating the ground from which taste should spring. We are not educating in art, but against art. We are teaching to admire things which, were it possible to keep what is bad from the public eye, would disgust as soon as seen. And even where the exhibition is in no other respect vicious, it is too often vicious from the total absence of any high purpose. For lack of object, we look to some mere mechanical prettinesses; and by habit learn first to look for, and then to work for, nothing more. When the great men of other days, whose names we have now so constantly in our mouths, dedicated themselves to art, they did it with all their soul. They had the earnestness of a passion; and what they did not, as we should now say, well, technically viewing some of their early works, they did to express some strong and some worthy feeling. And as they advanced in technical skill, still they ever thought a certain dignity and importance were essential to their works. The public mind had not yet felt satiety. But in time the progeny of art multiplied. The trading multitude had to entice purchasers, and to persuade them that their novelties were at least more pleasing, if the aim was not so high. The new lamps were cried up above the old. Thus they first created a bad taste, and then pandered to it. Cold conventionalities took the place of feeling; even beauty was studied more for low sense, than for its moral, and intellectual expression. Art was smothered by her own children. The brood has been too numerous, and the productions as variable as the brood. They who would do great things were they allowed, are not allowed. The lower fascinations

have taken possession of the public mind. Patronage runs to the little, and the greatest encouragement is to those who will provide the market with the cheapest, if not the best wares. Artists must live as well as other people. They cannot, if they would, sacrifice themselves to work out great and noble ideas, for which there is no demand; and for this state of things they are themselves in no small degree to blame. It is their own cry for patronage that has raised these art-unions: the patronage has been raised, but who gets it? They (like the national guard in Paris) have been superseded by their own inferior workmen. And what shall remedy all this superfœtation? First, let pains be taken properly to educate in art the public eye, and the public mind. We rejoice to know that, while we are writing, a society is forming, similar to the Cambden Society, for the publication of all important works on art, whether old or original, and for having the finest productions of art engraved, in whatever country they are to be found. As good taste is the object, so care will be taken that nothing of a deteriorating character will be admitted; and works will be produced which, in the present state of general feeling, private speculation would scarcely venture upon. The works will, we are given to understand, chiefly be distributable among the members of the society; but some, thought to be particularly well adapted to give a better direction to the public taste, will be generally purchasable.

This society is of great promise – if it succeeds at all, it will succeed eminently, and we believe it must succeed. It will,

we have some hope drive the low, the meaningless things of the day out of the field. We are, as a nation, really ignorant of art. We know it not, as it has been. We want to see the public eye acquainted, through good engravings, with the numerous fine frescos that cannot be generally known in any other way. Whatever tends to the real advancement of art will obtain the solicitous attention of this society.

The Fine Arts Commission affords another means of remedying the evils that are besetting the profession, and through them the public taste. We do not like the Government competition system. We go further – we do not like the Government, we mean the Commission, constituting themselves judges and purveyors. This is not the way to make great men. The man of genius shrinks from the competition system; nay, he fears or doubts the judgment of his judges. Perhaps he feels that he is himself the best judge; and if he has a just confidence in himself, he ought to feel this. He will not like the check of too much dictation as to subjects, composition, or any of the detail. We are persuaded that it would be far wiser, both for the public and for art, that the commissioners should studiously select their man, without competition, not for some one or more pictures, but for a far wider range. There will be still competition enough for proper ambition in the number still to be employed. Raffaelle had the Vatican assigned to him, and that at an early age; so would we gladly see a large portion given to one man, and let the whole be of his one mind, and let him have his assistants

if he please. Let him be dominant, and if he has within him a power, it will come out; and it cannot be difficult to find a few men of sense and vigour; and even though they have not as yet shown great powers, it does not follow that they have them not – trust to what they have, and more will grow. But we have some even now capable of performing beautiful works to do honour to the nation. We should rejoice to see their secretary released from the clerkship of his office, and set to work seriously with his hand and his superintending mind. We would impress this upon the consideration of the commissioners as an indisputable truth, that if they select a man of genius, they select one superior to themselves – one who is to teach, not to be taught by them – and one with whose arrangements, after their selection, they should by no means interfere. And supposing the worst, that they have actually made an unfortunate choice – what then? They have made an experiment at no very great cost, and may obliterate whatever is a disgrace. The works of other painters were obliterated in the Sistine Chapel to make room for Michael Angelo. Nor was there any hesitation in destroying the labours of previous artists, and even the suspended operations of his old master, Perugino, that the whole space might be open to the genius of the youth Raffaelle. It is whole, entire responsibility that makes great men. Throw upon the persons you select the whole weight, and thereby give them the benefit of all the glory; and whatever be their powers, you tax them to the utmost. We would have them by no means interfered with, any more than

we would cripple the commander of our armies abroad with the petty counsels and restrictions of bureau-manufacture. Nor should they be too strictly limited as to time, nor subjected to the continual questionings of an ungenerous impatience. Let the trust be conferred upon them as an honour which they are to wear and enjoy, not as a notice of their servility, but of their freedom. That trust is less likely to be abused the more generously it is given. To fulfil it then, becomes an ambition; and the daily habit of this higher feeling, by making the given work the all in all of life, renders the men more fit for it. Let the nation, expecting liberality from the "Liberal Arts," bestow it – hold out high rewards, leave the artists in all respects unshackled; and, the intention of a work being approved of, let not the time it is to occupy be in the stipulation. And it would be well to look to the promise of the young as well as actual performances; for the power to do will grow. Of thirty-eight competitors convened at Florence, Lorenzo Ghiberti, only twenty-three years of age, was chosen to execute the celebrated doors; the work occupied forty years of his life. The work is immortal, if human work can be; and obtained this eulogium from Michael Angelo, that "they were worthy of being the gates of Paradise." He conferred honour upon his city, and received such as was worthy the city to bestow. "His labours were justly appreciated, and ably rewarded by his fellow citizens, who, besides granting him whatever he demanded, assigned him a portion of land, and elected him Gonfaloniere, or chief magistrate of the state. His bust was

afterwards placed in the baptistery." Was the confidence, the full trust, in the power of the young Raffaelle misplaced? What wonders did he not perform in his too short life! Had he lived longer, he would without question have reached the highest honours his country had to bestow.

One word more on this subject of generosity – of national generosity. We seem to think it a great thing to bestow a knighthood upon an artist of eminence here and there, yet give not the means of keeping the dignity from conspicuous shame, of maintaining a decent hospitality among his brethren artists, by which much general improvement might evidently arise. All our real substantial honours are conferred upon soldiers and lawyers. They have estates publicly given, and are raised to the peerage; yet it is doubtful if one man of genius, in literature and the arts, does not deserve better of his country, and confer upon it more glory, than any ten of the other more favoured professions: and more than this, the name of one such genius will be remembered, perhaps with some sense of the disgrace of neglect, when all the others are forgotten. Let a lawyer be but a short period of his life upon the woolsack, he will find means to raise to himself a fortune, and retire back upon private life with an annual pension of thousands; while the man of genius in arts and literature is too often left in old age uncheered by any acknowledgment, and perhaps weighed down to death by embarrassments, from which a delighted, improved, and at the same time an ungrateful country will not relieve him. A government should know that it

is for the crown to honour a profession, and thereby to make it worthy the honour. We live in a country where distinctions do much, and are worse than profitless without adequate means to sustain them. It would be well if sometimes selections were made in other directions than the law and army, and if our peerage were not unfrequently radiated with the glory of genius. Why should a barren baronetcy have been conferred on the author of Waverley? Had he been a conqueror in fifty battles, could he have conferred more benefit than he has conferred upon his country? Why is it that there is always in our government a jealousy of literature and the arts? There has not been a decent honour bestowed on either since the reign of the unfortunate Charles. Poets, painters, and sculptors, it is vulgarly thought, are scarcely "alendi," and certainly "non saginandi." The arts might at least be given a position in our universities. This, as a first step, would do much, – it would tend, too, mainly to raise the public taste, which is daily sinking lower and lower. We should be glad to see Mr Eastlake made professor of painting at Oxford, with an adequate establishment there to enable him not only to lecture, but to teach more practically by design, in the very place of all others in the kingdom where there is most in feeling congenial with art. We mention Mr Eastlake, not making an invidious distinction, but because his acquirements in literature, and his valuable contributions to it, seem most readily to point to him as a fit occupant for the professor's chair. We have repeatedly, in the pages of *Maga*, insisted upon the importance of establishing

the fine arts in our universities, and at one time entertained a hope that the Taylor Legacy would have taken this direction. We are not, however, sorry altogether that it did not do so, for it would surely be more advantageous that such a movement should begin with the Government. It would remedy, too, more evils than one; it would give an occupation of mind, congenial with their academic studies, to our youth, and preserve them from a dangerous extravagance both of purse and of opinions. The hopes, however, of any thing really advantageous to the fine arts arising from our Government, unless very strongly urged to it, are small. They do not seem inclined at all to favour the profession; they would look upon it as solely addicted to the labour of the hand with a view to small profits – a portion of which profits, too, upon some strange principles of the political economists, they would appropriate to the nation as a fine, the penalty of genius. One would imagine, from the proposition of the Board of Trade to take 10 per cent from subscriptions to art-unions for the purchasing pictures for the National Gallery, that they considered the epithet "fine" so appropriated to the arts as intended originally to suggest a tax. They would not allow the profession a free trade. Whatever is obtained by exhibiting works of artists, should be as much their property as would the product of any other manufacture be the property of the respective adventurers, and the art-union subscriptions are undoubtedly a portion of these profits. What, in common justice, have the public to do with them? The proposed scheme is a step towards

communism, and may have been borrowed from the French provisional seizure of their railroads. With equal justice might they require that every butcher and baker and tailor should give a portion of his meat, his bread, and his cloth to feed and clothe our army and navy; and this not as of a common taxation, but as an extra compliment and advantage to these trades. There is a great deal too much here of the beggarly utilitarian view. We advocate not the cause of art-unions – we think them perfectly mischievous, and would gladly see them suppressed; but surely to invite and tempt the poor artists to paint their twenty and five-and-twenty pound pictures, and coolly to take 10 per cent out of their pockets to purchase to yourself a gallery of art, is not very consonant to our general ideas of what is due to the liberal arts. The liberality is certainly not reciprocal.

Nor, indeed, when we view the state of our National Gallery, considering the building as well as what it contains, can we be induced to think that the Government are very much in earnest in their profession of a desire to raise its importance. The National Gallery has its committee, and there is the Commission of Fine Arts. The former like not a questioning Parliament, and have not sufficient confidence in themselves to disregard the uncomplimentary animadversions of a critical press; and so the National Gallery advances not. The latter appear to treat art too much as a taxable commodity, and as having a right to levy specimens, and take for the public the profit of them, when they are required to cater for any national works. We do not, however,

doubt their sincere desire to promote the arts; but we do doubt if they are perfectly alive to the real importance of the work they have to do, and fear their efforts are rendered less useful by the number and conflicting tastes of the members. Divisions and subdivisions of responsibility terminate too frequently in many little things which, put together, do not make one great one.

However deficient, or however faulty in our taste, there seems to be at the present moment a more general desire to become acquainted with art and its productions in former ages. Publications of historical and critical importance are not wanting; but it is singular that the prevailing patronage is little influenced as yet by the knowledge received. From whatever cause it may arise, the fact is manifest that we have not a distinct School of Art. It might be quite correct to assert, that there is no characteristic school, not one founded on a principle – a principle distinguished from former influences – in any country of Europe. We do not even except the German schools; for able though the men be and honoured, they show no symptom of an inventive faculty, which can alone make a school. They are as yet in their imitative state – in that of revival. They are in the trammels of an artistic superstition. They have no one great and new idea to realise. They make their commencement from art, not from mind – forgetful of this truth, that art cannot grow out of art: for, if good, it seduces the mind into mere imitation, which soon becomes effect; if bad, it incapacitates from conceiving the beautiful. Art cannot grow out of art; it may progress from its

inferior to its better state, till the idea of its principle has been completed. It must then begin again from a new – from an idea not yet embodied – or it will inevitably decline, from the causes named, to mediocrity.

It does not at all follow, in this rise of new art – or, if we please, revival of art – that there shall be at first a consciousness of working upon a new principle, or a positive purpose to deviate (for such a purpose would be but a vagary and extravagance, relying on no principle:) there must be some want of the day strongly felt, some feeling to be embodied, some impress of the times to be stamped and made visible. Hence alone can arise a new principle of art; and it is one that cannot be preconceived, it must have its birth without forethought, and possibly without a knowledge that it exists; it may be in the artist's mind, an unconscious purpose working through the conscious processes of art. The age in which we live has a strong desire to *know* all about art, as to advance in knowledge of every kind; but has it in itself one characteristic feeling, one strong impulse, favourable to art, such as will make genius start up, as it were, from his slumber and his dream, and do his real work? Nor can this be prophesied of; for, if it could, it would exist somewhere, at least in the mind of the prophet. It is like the statue existing in the block; but it is the hand of time, under direction that we wot not of, that must be cutting it away. Nor is it fair, for any lack in one power of mind, to underrate the age in which we live. It may be great in another power to do a destined work; that work done, another

may be required, and another power be developed, in which art may be the required means to the more perfect vivifying a new principle. The genius of our day is too busy in the world's doings, in striving to advance utility, to have leisure, or to take an interest in the ideal and poetical. A great poetry it is indeed in itself, with all its mighty engines, working with iron arms more vast and powerful than fable could imagine of Brontes and Steropes, and all the huge manufacturers of thunderbolts for an Ideal Jove. Reality has outgrown fiction, – has become the "*major videri*," – is doing a sublime work – one, too, in which poetry of high cast is inherent, through hands and means most unpoetical. Mind is there, thought is there, worthy of all the greatness of man's reputation for sagacity or invention, and gigantic energy; the reaching to and grasping the large powers of nature, and adding them to his own body, thus becoming, unconscious of the poetic analogy, a Titan again. This age is, after all, doing a great deed. Let the dreamer, the versifier, the searcher after visible beauty, the painter, the statuary, incapacitated as they all generally are from the knowledge of what we term the business of life, consider coolly, without prejudice for his art, and against what more commonly meets him in some interrupting and ungracious form, reality, the machinery of governments, the science of banking, the law of markets, and the innumerable detail of which he seldom thinks, but without the establishment of which he would not be allowed to think, – by which he lives his daily life; let him trace any one manufacture through all its

successive ingenuities to its great uses and its great results. Let him travel a few hundred miles on a railroad, and note how all is ordered, with what precision all arrangements are made and conducted, and what a world it is in itself, moving through space like a world, and set in motion and stayed by the hand of one of his own Saxon blood; and then, in idea, transferring himself from his own work, and his pride of his own art, let him ask himself if he sees not something beyond, quite extraneous to himself, a great thing effected, which he never could have conceived nor have executed; and then let him say if there be not even in this our working world, a great and living poetry, a magnificent thought realised, a principle brought out, worthy an age; and then let him be content for a while that his own particular capacity should for a time be in abeyance, to great purposes inoperative, unproductive of the world's esteem. It may be that he will but have to wait for his season. His time may come again. Some new principle in the world's action, with possibly a secret and electric power, may reach him, enter his own mind, and set at large all his capacities, and make them felt; for that principle, whatever it is to be, will be electric, too, in the general mind. It may arise naturally out of the present state of things. Now, our schoolless art, like what has once been a mighty river, with all its tributary streams, has wandered into strange and lower lands, and been enticed away through innumerable small channels, still fertilising, in a more homely and modest way, many countries, but losing its own distinctive character and name. The streams

will never flow back and unite again, but some of them, in this earth's shifts and changes, may again become rivers, and bear a rich merchandise into the large ocean, and so enrich the world. If we think upon the distinct characteristics of schools, we must be struck with this, that before each one was known, established, and confirmed in public opinion, it could not have been generally imagined and preconceived. It is altogether the creation of gifted genius. We acknowledge the setting up a great truth, of which we had not a glimpse until we see it worked out, and standing before us manifest. It is ours by natural adoption, not by a universal instinctive invention. So that it is a presumption of our weakness to believe, as some do, that the arena of art is limited, and every part occupied; and that, for the future, nothing is left but a kind of copying and imitation. Who is to set limit to the powers of mind? We can imagine a dogmatist of this low kind, before Shakspeare's day, in admiration of the Greek drama, laying down the laws of the unities as irrefragable, and that the great volume of the drama was closed with them. And some such opinions have been set forth by our Gallic neighbours, and maintained with no little pertinacity. We must have been Shakspeares to have preconceived his drama. How, for ages, was poetry limited! the epic, as it were, closed! His age knew nothing of Milton before Milton. It was a new principle coming dimly through troubadours and romances, that shone forth at length Homerically, but with a difference, in Marmion, and indeed all Sir Walter Scott's poetry, which, if it be linked to any that has preceded it, must be referred

to the most remote, to that of Homer himself; so that let no man say that the world of fact and possibility is shut against art. The great classic idea, the deification, the worship of beauty, was completed by the ancients. There was a long rest, a sleep, without a dream of a new principle; but it came, and art awakened to its perception. Giotto, Della Robbo, the old Siennese school, Beato Angelico, Pisani, Donatello, evolve the Christian idea. Perugino, weak in faith, turns art towards earth, and leads Rafaelle to strive for a new beautiful; and Michael Angelo for the powerful – the former humanising the divine, the latter, if not deifying, gigantising humanity – not in the antique repose, but incorporeal energy – the whole dignity of man, as imagined in his personal condition. This was the characteristic of the Florentine school – as, after Perugino, or commencing with him, intellect, united with grace and beauty, became the characteristic of the Roman. But grace and beauty are dangerously human. The religious mind, in reverential contemplation, felt awe above humanity, and feared to invest divinity with corporeal charm. Even in heathen art, the great Athenian goddess affects not grace, but stands in a severe repose, so unlike rest, the beautiful emblem of weakness. Grace and beauty became dangerous qualities when applied to Christian devotional art. The followers of Perugino, who thought them essential, were not at first aware to what degree they were deteriorating the great principle of their school, and how they were rendering art too human for their creed. Woman – by the gift of nature, beauty personified – by more close and accurate

study of her perfections, ceased to be an object of real worship, as her fascinations were felt. Even Raffaelle was under an unadoring influence. His madonnas often detract much from the idolatry which his church laboured to confirm. We must not wonder, then, if after him we find humanity in woman even dethroned from her higher and almost majestic state of heavenly purity – though legitimatised as an object of worship, the "mother of God," in that higher sanctity than it was possible to set up man, in his most saintly apotheosis, (for the boldest mind would necessarily be shocked at the idea of bestowing a divine paternity on man, even if his religion forbade it not.) Woman, in her real beauty, superseded the ideal; and, from condescending to represent inferior saints and conventual devotees, reassumed at length her more earthly empire, and threw around fascinations which rather tended to dissipate than to encourage religious sentiment. The divinity of art, which had deigned to shine with sacred lustre beneath and through the natural veil of modesty, indignantly withdrew, when that veil was rudely cast aside by the undevotional hands of her not less skilful but more deteriorated professors.

The Venetian school, with a truly congenial luxury of colour, evolved the idea of civil polity, in all its connexions with religion, with judicature, with manners, commerce, societies, dignities, triumphs; a large field, indeed, but one in which the great civic idea was the characteristic, running through every subject. Even the nude, before considered as most eligible in the display of art,

yielded to civic dress and gorgeous ornament. What other ideas remain to be evolved? The world does not stand still – art may for a time. We must wait till some genius awaken us.

There is, we repeat, no modern school among us; art is pursued to an extent unprecedented, but without any fixed serious purpose, in all its multifarious forms, and with an ability sufficient to show that some moving cause is alone wanted. We progress in skill, in precision and clearness; but the hand is little directed by the mind. Our exhibition walls abound with talent, but are for the most part barren of genius: and surely this must continue to be the case, while the public mind is in its unpoetic, its utilitarian state, and shall look to art for its passing charm only as a gentle recreation, an idle amusement. If there is any tendency to a school, it is unfortunately to one which is most in opposition to that pure school which found, and cherished, and idealised the sanctity of female beauty.

We know not if it should be considered an escape or not; but certainly there was, in the earlier period of English art, one man of extraordinary genius, who, vigorously striking out a great moral idea, might have been the founder of a new school. We mean Hogarth. He was, however, too adventurously new for the age, and left no successor; nor is even now the greatness of his genius generally understood. He has been classed with "painters of drolls;" yet was he the most tragic painter this country – we were about to say, any country – has produced. We are not prepared to say it is a school we should wish to have been

established; but we assert that the genius of Hogarth incurred for us the danger. His works stand unique in art – that which can be said, perhaps, of the works of no other painter that ever existed, and obtained a name. We had written so far, when we were willing to see what a modern writer says of this great man; and we are happy to find his views in so great a degree coincide with our own. We make the follow-extract from Cleghorn's 2d volume of *Ancient and Modern Art*; a work, indeed, that, when we took up the pen, it was our purpose to speak of more largely, and to which we mean to devote what further space may be allowed for this paper: —

"To Hogarth, on the other hand, M. Passavant awards that justice which has been denied to him by his countrymen. Hogarth is of all English painters, and, perhaps, of all others, the one who knew how to represent the events of common life with the most humour, and, at the same time, with rare and profound truth. This truth of character is, however, visible not only in his conception of a subject, but is varied throughout in the form and colour of his figures in a no less masterly manner." "Hogarth [continues Mr Cleghorn] stands alone as an artist, having had no predecessors, rivals, nor successors. He is the more interesting, too, as being the first native English artist of celebrity. Yet a tasteless public was unable to appreciate his merits; and he was driven to the necessity of raffling his pictures for small sums, which only partially succeeded. In spite of the sneers of Horace Walpole that he was "more a writer of comedy with his

pencil than a painter," and the epigrammatic saying of Augustus Von Schlegel, that 'he painted ugliness, wrote on beauty, and was a thorough bad painter,' he was a great and original artist, both painter and engraver, whose works, coming home to every man's understanding and feelings, and applicable to every age and country, can never lose their relish and interest. They are chiefly known to the public by his etchings and engravings, which, however, convey a very imperfect idea of the beauty and expression of the original paintings." We only object to stress laid upon his humour, which is not his, or at least his only, characteristic. He was a great dramatist of human life; humour was the incidental gift, tragedy the more essential. Who had more humour, more wit than Shakspeare, and who was ever so tragic, or so employed his humour as to set it beside his most tragic scenes, with an effect that made the pathos deeper? In such a sense was Hogarth "comic." His "Marriage à la Mode" is the deepest of tragedies.

We turn to Mr Cleghorn's two interesting and very useful volumes. They give a compendious, yet, for general use and information, sufficiently elaborate view of architecture, sculpture, and painting, from their very origin to their present condition. We know of no work containing so complete a view. If we are disposed at all to quarrel with his plan, it is that in every branch he comes down to too late a time. And as it is always the case with writers who find themselves committed to the present age, he evidently finds himself encumbered with

the detail which this part of his plan has forced upon him. In matter it will be often found that the present age overpowers all preceding, when even it is vastly inferior in importance. Nor is it very easy to avoid a bias in speaking of contemporaries; nor can a writer safely depend upon his own judgment when he looks too nearly and intimately on men and their works, and fears the giving offence by omissions, or by too qualified praise. His divisions into schools, with general remarks on each at the end, give a very clear view, when taken together, of the history of these arts; and we are rejoiced to see them – architecture, sculpture, and painting – thus in a manner linked in history, as they were formerly in the minds and genius of the greatest men. In this he follows the good course led by Vasari. In his account of the Flemish and Dutch schools, there is a strange omission of the early Flemish painters preceding and subsequent to the Van Eycks, to the time of Rubens; nor is the influence which the brothers Van Eyck had upon art sufficiently discussed. We propose at some future day to treat more at length on this subject, and to make extracts from Michiel's very interesting little volume, his "Peintres Brugeois." Even in the short account of Van Eyck's invention, Mr Cleghorn is somewhat careless, in the omission of one important little word, *sue*, in his extract from Vasari, who does not exactly describe the invention as "the result of a mixture or vehicle composed of linseed oil or nut oil, *boiled up with other mixtures*," but "*with other mixtures of his own*." Vasari says, "e aggiuntevi altre *sue* misture fece la vernice," &c.

In the following remarks on Greek sculpture we find something consonant to the ideas we have ventured to express: —

"A remarkable difference is observable in the female ideal, the result of that refined delicacy and purity of taste evinced on all occasions by the Greeks. They neither increased the stature, nor heightened the contours of their heroines and goddesses, convinced that in so doing they must have sensibly impaired the beauty, modesty, and delicacy of the sex. In this the Greek sculptors conformed to the rule inculcated by Aristotle, and uniformly observed in the Greek tragedy, never to make woman overstep the modesty of the female character. The Medicean Venus is but a woman, though perhaps more beautiful than ever woman appeared on earth. Another peculiarity is very striking. While a great proportion of the male statues, whether men, heroes, or gods, were naked, or nearly so, those of the other sex, with the exception of the Venuses, Graces, and Hours, were uniformly draped from head to foot. Even the three Graces by Socrates, described by Pausanias as decorating the entrance to the Acropolis, were clothed in imitation of the more ancient Graces." As to this exception of the Venuses and Graces, Mr Cleghorn seems to have in some degree misapprehended the passage relating thereto in Pausanias, who distinctly says that he knows not who first sculptured or painted them naked, but it was after the time of Socrates. These Graces of Socrates, by the bye, may be the φιλαι, of whom he speaks in his dialogue with Theodota, who, he says, will not let him rest day nor night.

The number of nude Venuses would, it may be suspected, scarcely justify the elegant compliment in the epigram in the Anthologia —

> "Γυμνην ειδε Παρις με και Ανχισης και Αδωνις,
> Τους τρεις οιδα μονους; Πραχιτελης δε ποθεν?"
>
> Paris, Anchises, and Adonis – Three,
> Three only, did me ever naked see:
> But this Praxiteles – when, where did He?

Our author censures the school of Bernini, we should have thought justly, remembering much that has been said on the subject of the unfitness of the ponderous material to represent light action, if we had not seen the Xanthian marbles brought to this country by Sir Charles Fellowes, and now deposited in the British Museum. The female statues that stood in the Tomb Temple are exquisite, and perhaps equal to any Grecian art, yet are they represented with flying drapery. It is difficult to make a rule which some bold genius shall not subvert.

Most authors on art think it necessary to descant upon liberty, as most favourable to its advancement. It is difficult to define what liberty is, so that every example may be disputed. If we take the age of Pericles, when the wonders of Phidias were achieved, we must not forget that Phidias himself was treated by the Athenians with such indignity that he left them, and deposited his finest work at Corinth. The republic suspected him

of thieving the gold, and he had the precaution, knowing his men, to weigh the metal, and work it so as to be removable. We must not forget that Pericles, who fortunately in a manner governed Athens, was obliged to plead on his knees for the life of Aspasia, whose offence was her superior endowments. When Alexander subjugated Greece, art still flourished. Nor was it crushed even in the wars and revolts and subjugations by Cassander, after the death of Alexander. We should not say that the Augustan age was exactly the age of liberty, but it was the age of literature. The easier solution may be, "Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt Marones." Munificent patronage will often raise what that state which passes under the name of liberty will often destroy.

"In the most favoured periods of the fine arts, we find patronage either dispensed by the sovereign, the state, or the priesthood; or, if a commonwealth, by the rulers who had the revenues at their command. Possessing taste and knowledge themselves, and appreciating the importance and dignity of art, they selected the artists whom they deemed best fitted for the purpose. The artists, again, respected and consulted their patrons, between whom there reigned a mutual enthusiasm, good understanding, and respect. Such were Pericles, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Hadrian, Francis I. of France, Julius II., Lorenzo and Leo X. of the Medici, the nobles and rulers of the different Italian cities and commonwealths, the Roman Catholic church and clergy, Charles I. of England, Louis

XIV. of France – and in our own times the late and present kings of Prussia, the King of Bavaria, Louis Philippe of France, and – it is gratifying to add – Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Great Britain. But, indispensable as national patronage is, it can have no sure or permanent foundation, unless it be likewise supported by the aristocracy and wealthy classes. Instead of emanating, as in the continental states, from the sovereign and government, patronage in Great Britain may be said to have originated with the middle ranks, and to have forced its way up to the higher classes, and even to the government itself."

There are interesting yet short chapters on mosaic, tapestry, and painted glass; subjects now demanding no little public attention, coming again as we are to the taste for decoration. The ladies of England will be pleased to find their needle-work so seriously considered. Happy will it be if their idleness leads to a better and employed industry. Due praise is bestowed upon Miss Linwood, whose works are ranked with the Gobelin tapestry. We remember seeing many years ago an invention that promised great things – painting, if it may be so called, in wool work. It was the invention of Miss Thompson, and was exhibited, and we believe not quite fairly – much mischief having been done to the pictures by pulling out parts, either for wanton mutilation, or to see the manner of the working. Whether from disgust arising from this circumstance, or at the little encouragement shown to it, the invention seems to have dropped. Yet was the effect most powerful, more to the life than any picture, in whatever material;

and from the size of the works produced by the hands of one person, we should judge that it is capable of rapid execution. We have a vivid recollection of a copy from a picture by Northcote, figures size of life, and of the head of Govartius, in the National Gallery. We are not without hope that this slight notice may recall a very effective mode of copying, at least, if not of producing, original works.

Of painted glass, it is remarked, —

"The earliest notice of its existence is in the age of Pope Leo III., about the year 800. It did not, however, come into general use till the lapse of some centuries. The earliest specimens differ entirely from those of a later date, being composed of small pieces stained with colour during the process of manufacture, and thus forming a species of patchwork, or rude mosaic, joined together with lead, after being cut into the proper shapes." Mr Cleghorn omits to say that this more perfect invention of painting on one piece various tints and colours, and regulating gradations of burning, was effected and brought to perfection by the same extraordinary man to whom the world is indebted for the invention of oil painting, Van Eyck. From the discoveries of this extraordinary man, or rather these extraordinary brothers, Van Eyck, must be dated the advance in the arts, both on glass and in oil-colours, which brought to both the perfection of colouring.

The wonderful splendour added to design upon glass, which was so eminently practised at Venice, without doubt supplied to

the Venetian school an aim which it could not have had under the old tempera system, but which the new oil invention of Van Eyck sufficiently placed within its reach.

Yet, in one view, we may hence date the corruption of art. The severity of fresco was superseded by the new fascination, and somewhat of dignity was lost as beauty was more decidedly established. As very much of the splendour of glass painting was thus introduced in oil, the greater facility of more correctly representing nature, and embodying ideas by degrees of opacity, so gave the preference to oil-painting, that not only the old tempera and fresco were soon neglected, but painting on glass itself, as if it had done its work, and transferred its peculiar beauty, lost much of its repute, and, in no very long time, the processes to which it owed its former glory.

Mr Cleghorn remarks – "Within a few years it has been much cultivated in Great Britain; and the intended application to the decoration of the Houses of Parliament will materially conduce to its improvement and extension." It is unquestionably an art of the greatest importance in decoration. It has a charm peculiarly its own. It dignifies, it solemnises by its own light, and is capable of affecting the mind so as particularly to predispose it to the purposes of architecture. It encloses a sanctuary, excluding the very atmosphere of the outer world. There is the impression and the awe of truth under the searching and embracing light, that should make the utterance of a falsehood the more mean, even sacrilegious. The art that can have this power, nor is this

its only, though its greater power, is surely to be cultivated and encouraged extensively. There is now more attention paid to the architecture and decoration of our churches, and a taste has sprung up for monumental windows. We cannot resist, therefore, the temptation to offer a few remarks upon the subject, now that so many mistaken views are taken as to the proper application of this beautiful art.

There seems to be a false idea abroad that the painted window is to be predominant, not assistant to the general impression which the architecture intends. In reality it loses, not gains, power by setting up for itself. And, even in colours, it is not to vie with shop display of colours "by the piece," nor to set forth all its powers at once in a full glare and blaze, and too often without other object and meaning than to display flags of strong unmixed colours. A painted window should be a whole, and have no one colour predominant, but be of infinite depths and degrees of tint and tone with one tendency. Nor should it aim at picture-making, however it may be adapted to the emblematical. It should never affect the absolutely real – the picture illusion: it is altogether of a world of thought and imagination belonging rather to the inner mind of the spectator than to his ordinary thought or vision. The very difficulty of the early manufacture was an advantage to it, for great brilliancy has resulted from the crossings and hatchings of the leaden fastenings; and now that we are enabled to hang up, as it were, flags of colour, the effect of those subduing subdivisions is gone.

There is such a thing, so to speak, as the genius of a material. That genius, in the case of glass-painting, is not for picture. Surely Sir Joshua Reynolds made a great mistake when, in his window for New College, he designed, as for canvass, a picture, and that for the most part without colour, which the genius of the material required. Nor by the largeness of his figures, and of the whole as a design, did he assist, or indeed at all agree with, the character of the architecture. In such instances many and small parts should make one whole, both for the advantage of the real magnitude of the particular work, and that the magnitude of the architecture be not lessened – a method, indeed, which the Gothic architecture studiously followed, in which even minute design and detail give largeness to all the leading lines. Daylight is never to be seen – an imaginary light is the all in all. In this respect it should be like a precious stone, which is best seen in all its infinite depths, in shade, out of all common glare. In the best specimens of old glass-painting the positive and strong colours were few, and in small spaces, and adjoining them was a frequent aiming at those which were almost opaque, – even black and greens, browns and purples, bordering on black. And if emblematic subjects were represented, they were in many compartments, as if the window were a large history-book with its many pages – a world of curious emblems, no one obtrusive. It is bad taste to fill up a whole window with even Raffaelle's Transfiguration; either a picture or a large design is out of place, and dissonant to the genius of the art. One of

the worst specimens of painted window is that in the Temple, all self-glorifying, painted as a savage would paint himself, in flags of colour as crude as possible. The genius of the art is for innumerable subdivisions, none obtruding, lest there be no whole. It should be of the light of a brighter world subduing itself, veiling its glory, and diffusing itself in mystic communication with the inner mind; and like that mind, one in feeling with all its varied depths of thought. Colour and transparency are the means of this beautiful art; but these, as they are very powerful require great judgment and determination of purpose in the use. The interwoven gold in the old tapestries was more effectually to separate the character of the material from the too close imitation of nature or the picture; so on the transparent material of glass, the crossing, and sometimes quaintly formed lead lines, always marked, answer the same purpose. Mr Cleghorn is too sparing of remarks and information on the art of painting on glass, which we the less regret, as we are shortly to have before the public the carefully gathered knowledge upon this subject from the pen and research of Mrs Merrifield. His chapter on tapestry is more full and interesting. We have not seen the specimens of a new kind invented by Miss King. It will be a boon to the public if, in its adoption, it supersedes, with a better richness, the Berlin work, at which ladies are now so unceasingly and so tastelessly employed. The *Art-Union* speaks highly of the invention. It is curious that, in modern times, a Raffaelle tapestry should be destroyed to get at the gold. The anecdote is characteristic of the equally infidel

French of 1798 and of the Jew – excepting that the Jew was ignorant of its value. Mr Cleghorn thus speaks of the celebrated cartoon tapestries – "They were sent to be woven at Arras, under the superintendence of Barnard Van Orlay and Michael Coxes, who had been some years pupils of Raffaelle. Two sets of these interesting tapestries were executed; but the deaths of Raffaelle and the pontiff, and the intestine troubles, prevented them being applied to their intended destination. They were carried off by the Spaniards during the sack of Rome in 1526-7, and restored by the French general, Montmorency. They were first exhibited to the public by Paul IV. in front of the Basilica of St Peter's, on the festival of Corpus Domini, and again at the Beatification: a custom that was continued throughout part of the last century, and has again been resumed. *The French took them in 1798, and sold them to a Jew at Leghorn, who burned one of them – Christ's Descent into Limbus – to extract the gold with which it was interwoven.*"

There is so much information in these little volumes, that were we to notice a small part of the passages which we have marked with the pencil, we should unduly lengthen this paper, which we can by no means be allowed to do. We here pause, intending, however, shortly to resume the pen on the subject of art, which now offers so many points of interest.

KAFFIRLAND

[8]It is always with fresh interest that we address ourselves to the perusal of books relating to Great Britain's colonial possessions. The subject, daily increasing in importance, has the strongest claims upon our attention. In presence of a rapidly augmenting population, and of the prodigious progress of steam and machinery, the question naturally suggests itself – and more so in England than in any other country – how employment and support shall be found for the additional millions of human beings with which a few years (judging of the future from the past) will throng the surface of a country already densely and superabundantly populated? The problem, often discussed, has not yet been satisfactorily solved. Without broaching the complicated question of over-population and its antidotes, without attempting to decide when a country is to be deemed over-populated, we may assert, without fear of contradiction, that emigration is the simplest and most direct remedy for the state of plethora into which a nation must sooner or later be brought by a steady annual excess of births over deaths. It is a remedy to which more than one European state

[8] *Five Years in Kaffirland, with Sketches of the Late War in that Country.* Written on the Spot. By Harriet Ward. Two vols. London, 1848.*The Cape and its Colonists, with Hints to Settlers, in 1848.* By George Nicholson, Jun., Esq., a late Resident. London, 1848.*Three Years' Cruise in the Mozambique Channel, for the Suppression of the Slave Trade.* By Lieut. Barnard, R.N. London, 1848.

will ultimately be compelled to resort, however alleviation may previously be sought by temporising and theoretical nostrums, more palatable, perhaps, to the patient, but inadequate, if not wholly inefficacious and charlatanical. And, after all, emigration is no such insupportable prescription for a very ugly malady. Doubtless much may be said upon the cruelty of making exile a condition of existence; but sympathy on this score may also be carried too far, and degenerate into drivel. At first sight the decree appears cruel and tyrannical, until we investigate its source, and find it to proceed from no earthly potentate, but from that omniscient Being whose intention it never was that men should crowd together into nooks and corners, when vast continents and fruitful islands, untenanted save by beasts of the field, or by scanty bands of barbarians, woo to their shores the children of labour and civilisation. Love of country, admirable as an incentive to many virtues, may be pushed beyond reasonable limits. It is so, we apprehend, when it prompts men to pine in penury and idleness upon the soil that gave them birth, rather than seek new fields for their industry and enterprise in uncultivated and vacant lands. What choice of these is afforded by England's vast and magnificent colonies! The emigrant may select almost his degree of latitude. And where Britannia's banner waves, and her laws are paramount, and the honest, kindly Anglo-Saxon tongue is the language of the land, there surely needs no great effort of imagination for a Briton to think himself still at home, though a thousand leagues of ocean roll between

him and his native isle.

Excepting that they all more or less refer to the British possessions at the Cape of Good Hope, it were difficult to find three books more distinct from each other in character than those whose titles we have assembled at the foot of last page. An ex-settler, an accomplished lady, and a shrewd sailor, have selected the same moment for the publication of their African experiences. As in gallantry bound, we give the precedence to the lady. Mrs Harriet Ward, wife of a captain of the 91st regiment of foot, is a keen-witted, high-spirited person; and, like most of her sex when they espouse a cause, a warm partisan of the feelings and opinions of those she loves and admires. She is an uncompromising assailant of the system pursued at the Cape, especially as regards our treaties with the Kaffirs, whom she very justly denounces as perfidious, bloody, and unclean savages, untameable, she fully believes, and with whom Whig officials and negotiators have been ridiculously lenient and confiding. Although some of her views are rather sweeping and severe, she is certainly right in the main. And we honour her for her heartiness in denouncing the nauseous humbug of the pseudo-philanthropists, whose manœuvres have had a most prejudicial effect upon our South African possessions, and have given to persons in this country notions completely erroneous concerning the rights and wrongs of the Kaffir question. But whilst blaming the administration of the colony, she finds the country itself fair and excellent and of great resource. Herein she differs from her

contemporary, Mr George Nicholson, junior. This gentleman, lately a settler at the Cape, cannot be too highly lauded for the volume with which he has favoured the public. We are not quite sure, however, that the public will think as highly of it as we do. Our admiration is founded on the consistency of its tone; upon the steady, well-sustained grumble kept up throughout. The preface at once prepossessed us in favour of what was to follow. Intended, doubtless, as a dram of bitters to assist in the digestion of the subsequent sour repast, it consists of general depreciation of other works regarding the Cape, and especially of one by "a Mr Chase" – of sneers at "stay-at-home wiseacres" and hollow theorists – and of a vague accusation brought against certain colonial residents of "fomenting the warlike propensities of the neighbouring barbarians, to secure their own ends," grievously to the detriment and prejudice of their fellow-colonists. "The peculiar bent," says Mr Nicholson, "of each author's mind has, in general, been so far allowed to predominate as to exclude the hope of forming a correct estimate of the capabilities of the soil, climate, and other interesting features of this extensive country, by a perusal of their works." Could the author of "The Cape and its Colonists" read his book with somebody else's eyes, he would discover that his own "peculiar bent has been allowed to predominate," and that the consequences have been of the most gloomy description. Mr Nicholson is evidently a disappointed, man. Either by his fault or misfortune, by the force of circumstances or his own bad management,

his attempt to establish himself thrivingly at the Cape resulted unsatisfactorily; and this sufficiently accounts for the general tint of blue so conspicuous in his retrospective sketch of the scene of his mishaps. The particular spot where these occurred was a considerable tract of land (called a farm) in the district of Graaf Reinet, to arrive at which he steamed from Cape Town, where he had landed from England, to Port Elizabeth in Algoa Bay. The dismal aspect of this bay painfully affected him. He "had read some of the glowing descriptions given of this part of the country, by persons whose interest it is to entice over settlers by any means, even the most dishonest, in order to have the benefit of plucking them afterwards. It is true that I had not believed the El Dorado stories so current of this and other colonies, but my expectations had been raised sufficiently high to make the disappointment at the really desolate appearance of the place, perfect." The apparent desolation is accompanied by substantial disadvantages, which Mr Nicholson complacently enumerates. Water is scarce and brackish; there are no vegetables or fruit within twenty miles; hardly forage for a team of oxen; the town is built on sand, of which unceasing clouds are hurled by prevalent strong winds in the face of all comers. No wonder that the new settler, evidently indisposed to be easily pleased, made his escape as quickly as possible from so dreary a neighbourhood. Shipping himself, family, and chattels in an ox-waggon, he joyfully quitted Port Elizabeth on a splendid morning of the African autumn – that is to say, about the end of March or beginning of April,

and set out for his property, over a road which he describes as a fair sample of Cape causeways, "nothing more than a series of parallel tracks made by the passage of waggons, from time to time, through the sand and jungle." Finding little to notice on his way, he takes the opportunity of having a fling at the missionaries, whom he describes as doing much harm, although actuated, as he is willing to believe, by the best of intentions. The stations serve as the headquarters of the idlest and most vagabond portion of the coloured population, who have only to affect a Christian disposition to find ready acceptance and refuge. "No sooner is a Hottentot, or other coloured servant, discontented or hopelessly lazy, than off he flies to the nearest station, where he can indulge in the greatest luxury he knows of – that of sleeping either in the sun or shade as his inclination may lead him, with the occasional variation of participating in the singing and praying exercises of the regular inhabitants of the place." If the zealous propagators of Christianity, who thus encourage the natural idleness of the natives, were successful in their attempts at conversion, it might be accepted as some compensation for the temporal evils and inconvenience they aid to inflict on a colony where servants are scarce and bad. But this is far from being the case. Mr Nicholson assures us (and we readily believe him) that it is very rare to find an individual whose moral conduct has been improved by a residence at a missionary station, and that for his part he prefers the downright heathen to the imperfect convert. Few of these coloured Christians have

any distinct idea of the creed they profess; when able, which is seldom, to answer questions concerning its first principles, their replies are parrot-like and unintelligent. Against the general character of the missionaries nothing can be said; but they are throwing away time, and their employers are wasting money which might be employed to far greater advantage in England, or in other countries whose inhabitants, equally in want of religious instruction, are more capable of receiving and comprehending it than are the stolid aborigines of the Cape of Good Hope. Mr Nicholson does not dwell upon the subject of missionary labours in Africa, but compresses at the close of a chapter his opinions, which are sound and to the purpose. Mrs Ward says nothing on the matter, and we ourselves are not disposed to dilate upon it, having already often taken occasion to expose the folly of the system that sends preachers and biblemongers to the remotest corners of the earth when such scope for their labours exists at home. Let us return to George Nicholson, his trials and tribulations.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.