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OUR ARTISTS IN ITALY

WILLIAM PAGE.

Among artists, William Page is a painter.

This proposition may seem, to the great public which has so long and so well known him and his works, somewhat unnecessary. There are few who are not familiar with his paintings. Whether these seem great or otherwise, whether the Venus be pure or gross, we may not here discuss; the public has, and will have, many estimates; yet on one point there is no difference of opinion, apparently. The world willingly calls him whose hand wrought these pictures a painter. It has done so as a matter of course; and we accept the title.

But perhaps the title comes to us from this man's studio, charged with a significance elevating it above the simply self-

evident, and rendering it worthy of the place we have given it as a germ proposition.

Not every one who uses pigments can say, "I also am a painter." To him who would make visible the ideal, there are presented the marble, the pencil, and the colors; and should he employ either of these, just in proportion to his obedience to the laws of each will he be a sculptor, a designer, or a painter; and the revelations in stone, in light and shade, or on canvas, shall be his witnesses forevermore,—witnesses of him not only as an artist, in view of his relation to the ideal world, but as possessing a right to the especial title conferred by the means which he has chosen to be his interpreter.

The world has too much neglected these means of interpretation. It has condemned the science which would perfect the art, as if the false could ever become the medium of the true. The art of painting has suffered especially from the influence of mistaken views.

Nor could it be otherwise. Color-manifestation, of all art-utterance, is the least simple. It requires the fulfilment of a greater number of conditions than are involved in any other art. He who has selected colors as his medium cannot with impunity neglect form; light and shade must be to him as important as they are to the designer in *chiaro-scuro*; while above all are the mystery and power of color.

There is perplexity in this. The science of form seems to be vast enough for any man's genius. No more than he accomplishes

is demanded of the genuine sculptor. His life has been grand with noble fulfilments. We, and all generations, hold his name in the sacred simplicity which has ever been the sign of the consummate. Men say, Phidias, Praxiteles, and know that they did greatly and sufficiently.

Yet with the science which these men had we combine elements equally great, and still truth demands the consummate. Hence success in painting has been the rarest success which the world has known. If we search its history page by page, the great canvas-leaves written over with innumerable names yield us less than a score of those who have overcome the difficulties of its science, through that, achieving art, and becoming painters.

Yes, many men have painted, many great artists have painted, without earning the title which excellence gives. Overbeck, the apostle artist, whose rooms are sacred with the presence of the divine, never earned that name. Nor did thousands who before him wrought patiently and earnestly.

We think that we have among us a man who *has* earned it.

What does this involve? Somewhat more than the ability critically to distinguish colors and to use them skilfully.

Although practice may discipline and develop this power, there must exist an underlying physiological fitness, or all study and experience will be unavailing. In many persons, the organization of the eye is such that there can be no correct perception of the value, relation, and harmony of hues. There exists often an utter inability to perceive differences between

even the primary colors.

The late sculptor Bartholomew declared himself unable to decide which of two pieces of drapery, the one crimson and the other green, was the crimson. Nor was this the result of inexperience. He had been for years familiar not only with Nature's coloring, but with the works of the best schools of art, and had been in continual contact with the first living artists.

The instances of this peculiar blindness are exceptional, yet not more so than is the perfection of vision which enables the eye to discriminate accurately the innumerable tints derived from the three primitives.

Nothing can be finer than the sense of identity and harmony resulting from this exquisite organization. We have been told that there is a workman at the Gobelin manufactory who can select twenty-two thousand tints of the material employed in the construction of its famous tapestries. This capability is, of course, almost wholly dependent upon rare physical qualifications; yet it is the basis, the very foundation of a painter's power.

Still, it is *but* the foundation. An "eye for color" never yet made any man a colorist.

Perhaps there can be no severer test of this faculty of perception than the copying of excellent pictures. And among the few successful copies which have been produced, Page's stand unsurpassed.

The ability to perceive Nature, when translated into art, is,

however, a possession which this painter shares with many. Nor is he alone in the skill which enables him to realize upon his own canvas the effects which some master has rendered.

It is in the presence of Nature itself that a power is demanded with which mechanical superiority and physical qualifications have little to do. Here the man stands alone,—the only medium between the ideal and the outward world, wherefrom he must choose the signs which alone are permitted to become the language of his expression. None can help him, as before he was helped by the man whose success was the parent of his own. Here is no longer copying.

In the first place, is to be found the limit of the palette. Confining ourselves to the external, what, of all the infinitude of phenomena to which the vision is related, so corresponds to the power of the palette that it may become adequately representative thereof?

Passing over many minor points in which there seems to be an imperfect relation between Nature's effects and those of pigments, we will briefly refer to the great discrepancy occasioned by the luminosity of light. In all the lower effects of light, in the illumination of Nature and the revelation of colored surfaces, in the exquisite play and power of reflected light and color, and in the depth and richness of these when transmitted, we find a noble and complete response on the palette. But somewhere in the ascending scale a departure from this happy relation begins to be apparent. The *color*-properties of light are

no longer the first. Another element—an element the essential nature of which is absorbed in the production of the phenomena of color—now asserts itself. Hitherto the painter has dealt with light indirectly, through the mediatorship of substances. The rays have been given to him, broken tenderly for his needs;—ocean and sky, mountain and valley, draperies and human faces, all things, from stars to violets, have diligently prepared for him, as his demands have arisen, the precious light. And while he has restrained himself to the representation of Nature subdued to the limit of his materials, he has been victorious.

Turner, in whose career can be found almost all that the student needs for example and for warning, is perhaps the best illustration of wise temperance in the choice of Nature to be rendered into art. Nothing can be finer than some of those early works wrought out in quiet pearly grays,—the tone of Nature in her soberest and tenderest moods. In these, too, may be observed those touches of brilliant color,—bits of gleaming drapery, perhaps,—prophetic flecks along the gray dawn. Such pictures are like pearls; but art demands amber, also.

When necessity has borne the artist out of this zone, the peaceful domain of the imitator, he finds himself impelled to produce effects which are no longer the simple phases of color, but such as the means at his disposal fail to accomplish. In the simpler stages of coloring, when he desired to represent an object as blue or red, it was but necessary to use blue or red material. Now he has advanced to a point where this principle is no longer

applicable. The illuminative power of light compels new methods of manipulation.

As examples of a thorough comprehension of the need of such a change in the employment of means, of the character of that change, of the skill necessary to embody its principles, and of utter success in the result, we have but to suggest the name and works of Titian.

But the laws which Titian discovered have been unheeded for centuries; and they might have remained so, had not the mind of William Page felt the necessity of their revival and use. To him there could be no chance-work. Art must have laws as definite and immutable as those of science; indeed, the body in which the spirit of art is developed, and through which it acts, must be science itself. He saw, that, if exact imitation of Nature be taken as the law in painting, there must inevitably occur the difficulty to which we have before referred,—that, above a certain point, paint no longer undergoes transfiguration, thereby losing its character as mere coloring material,—that, if the ordinary tone of Nature be held as the legitimate key-note, the scope of the palette would be exhausted before success could be achieved.

Any one of Turner's latest pictures may serve to illustrate the nature of this difficulty. Although in his early practice he was remarkable for his judicious restraint, it is evident that the splendors of the higher phenomena of light had for him unlimited fascination; and he may be traced advancing cautiously through

that period of his career which was marked by the influence of Claude, toward what he hoped would prove, and perhaps believed to be, a realization of such splendors.

It must have been observed by those who have studied his later pictures, that, while the low passages of the composition are wonderfully fine and representative, all the higher parts, those supposed or intended to stand for the radiance of dazzling light, fail utterly in representative capacity. There is an abundance of the most brilliant pigment, but it is still paint,—unmitigated ochre and white lead. The spectator is obliged to recede from the picture until distance enables the eye to transmute the offending material and reconcile the conflicting passages.

To accomplish the result of rendering the quality and effect of high light was one of the problems to which Mr. Page years ago turned his attention; and he found its solution in the transposition of the scale. The pitch of Nature could not be adopted as the immutable in art. That were impossible, unless art presumed to cope with Nature.

More than he, no man could respect the properties and qualities of the visible world. His ideas of the truthful rendering of that which became the subject of his pencil might seem preposterous to those who knew not the wonderful significance which he attached to individual forms and tints. Yet, in imitation, where is the limit? What is possible? Must there be any sacrifice?

Evidently there must be; and of course it follows that the less important must be sacrificed. Nature herself has taught the artist

that the most variable of all her phenomena is that of *tone*. Other truths of Nature have a character of permanency which the artist cannot modify without violating the first principles of art. He is required to render the essential; and to render the essential of that which art cannot sacrifice, if it would, and continue art, he foregoes the non-essential and evanescent.

Not only is this permitted,—it is demanded. It is a law through which alone success is attainable. In obedience to it, Mr. Page adopts a key somewhat lower than that of Nature as a point of departure, using his degrees of color frugally, especially in the ascending scale. With this economy, when he approaches the luminous effects of Nature, he finds, just where any other palette would be exhausted, upon his own a reserve of high color. With this, seeking only a corresponding effect of light in that lower tone which assumes no rivalry with the infinite glory of Nature, he attains to a representation fully successful.

We would not have it understood that a mere transposition of the scale is all that is required to accomplish such a result; only this,—that in no other way can such a result be secured. To color well, to color so that forms upon the canvas give back tints like those of the objects which have served as models, is only half the work. Quality, as well as color, must be attained. Local, reflected, and transmitted color can be imitated; but as in the attempt to represent light its luminousness is the element which defeats the artist, so, throughout Nature, quality, texture, are the elements which most severely test his power.

Could any indispensable truth be considered secondary, it might be assumed that rendering truthfully the qualities of Nature is the first and highest of art. The forms and colors of objects vary infinitely. It might be said that the law of all existence is, in these two particulars, that of change. From the time a human being is born until it disappears in the grave, from the day when the first leaves break the mould to that which sees the old tree fall, the form of each has been modified hourly.

But that which differentiates objects more completely than any other property is quality. The sky over us, and the waters of the earth, are subject to infinite variations. Yet, whether in the tiny drop that trembles at the point of a leaf or in the vast ocean-globe of our planet, in the torpor of forest-ponds or in the wrath of cataracts, water never loses its quality of wetness,—the open sky never that of dryness. These two characteristics are of course entirely the reverse of each other,—as unlike as are the properties of transparency and opacity,—which they involve.

So, throughout Nature, one truth, that of texture, is the distinguishing; and this distinctive element is that which cannot be sacrificed; for through it are Nature's finest laws manifested. And the painter finds in his obedience to her demands his highest power over the material which serves him in his efforts to embody the true and the beautiful.

It is, then, this which compels us to estimate Mr. Page a painter,—a man especially organized for his profession,—chosen by its demands,—set apart, by his wonderful adaptation

to its requirements, from all the world. In virtue of this specialty, the necessity arose early in his life to seek excellence in his department of art,—to search the depths of its philosophy and discover its vital principles,—to analyze its methods and expose its errors. It led him to investigate the relation between the phenomena of Nature and the effects of painting; it guided him to a clear perception of the laws of art-translation; above all, it compelled him to practise what he believed to be the true.

Thus much of the painter;—now what of the artist?

It does not necessarily follow, that, because a man is a great painter, he is also a great artist. Yet we may safely infer, that, if he has been true in one department of the several which constitute art, he cannot have been false in others. Should there be a shortcoming, it must be that of a man whose mission does not include that wherein he fails. Fidelity to himself is all we should demand. We say this for those who are disposed to depreciate what an artist actually accomplishes, because in some one point Turner or Overbeck surpasses him. Nor do we say it apologetically. The man, who, basing his action upon the evident purpose of the organization which God has given him, fulfils his destiny, requires no apology.

We have seen something of the faithfulness which has marked Mr. Page's pursuit of excellence in the external of his art. He has wrought that which proves his claim to a broader title than that of painter. Were it not for the vagueness which involves the appellation of historical painter, it might be that. Even were we

obliged to confine our interest and study to the portraiture which he has executed, we might, in view of its remarkable character, designate it as historical.

Than a really great portrait, no work of art can be more truly historical. We feel the subjectiveness of compositions intended to transmit facts to posterity,—and unless we know the artist, we are at a loss as to the degree of trust which we may place in his impressions. A true portrait is objective. The individuality of the one whom it represents was the ruling force in the hour of its production; and to the spirit of a household, a community, a kingdom, or an age, that individuality is the key. There is, too, in a genuine portrait an internal evidence of its authenticity. No artist ever was great enough to invent the combination of lines, curves, and planes which composes the face of a man. There is the accumulated significance of a lifetime,—subtile traces of failures or of victories wrought years ago. How these will manifest themselves, no experience can point out, no intuition can foresee or imagine. The modifications are infinite, and each is completely removed from the region of the accidental.

But, although details and their combinations in the human face and form cannot be wrought from the imagination, the truthfulness or falsity of their representation is instantly evident. It is because of this, that the unity of a portrait carries conviction of its truth and of the unimpeachability of its evidence, that this phase of art becomes so valuable as history. Compared with the worth of Titian's Philip II.,—the Madrid picture, of which Mr.

Wild has an admirable study,—what value can be attached to any historical composition of its period?

It has not been the lot of Mr. Page to paint a mighty man, so inlocked with the rugged forces of his age. His sitters have come from more peaceful, nobler walks of life,—and their portraits are beloved even more than they are admired. Not yet are they the pride of pompous galleries, but the glory and saintliness of homes.

Could we enter these homes, and discuss freely the character of their treasures, we would gladly linger in the presence of the more precious. But so inseparably associated are they with their originals, so much more nearly related to them than to the artist, that no fitting analysis can be made of the representation without involving that of the individual represented.

Three portraits have, however, such wonderful excellence, and through this excellence have become so well known, that we may be forgiven for alluding to them. In a former paper, the writer spoke of the portrait of a man in his divinest development. The first of these three works is the representation of a woman, and is truly "somewhat miraculous." It is a face rendered impressive by the grandest repose,—a repose that pervades the room and the soul,—a repose not to be mistaken for serenity, but which is power in equilibrium. No brilliancy of color, no elaboration of accessories, no intricacy of composition attracts the attention of the observer. There is no need of these. But he who is worthy of the privilege stands suddenly conscious of a presence such as the

world has rarely known. He feels that the embodiment before him is the record of a great Past, as well as the reflection of a proud Present,—a Past in which the soul has ever borne on through and above all obstacles of discouragement and temptation to a success which was its inheritance. He sees, too, the possibilities of the near Future; how from that fine equipoise the soul might pass out into rare manifestations, appearing in the sweetness and simplicity of a little child, in the fearful tumultuousness of a Lady Macbeth, in the passionate tenderness of a Romeo, or in the Gothic grandeur of a Scotch sorceress,—in the love of kindred, in the fervor of friendship, and in the nobleness of the truest womanhood.

Another portrait—can it have been painted in this century?—presents a widely different character. We have seen the rendering of a nature made too solemn by the possession of genius to admit of splendor of coloring. This picture is that of ripe womanhood, manifesting itself in the fulness of summer's goldenest light. Color, in all its richness as color, in all its strength as a representative agent, in all its glory as the minister of light, in all its significance as the sign and expression of plenitude of life,—life at one with Nature;—thus we remember it, as it hung upon the wall of that noble room in the Roman home of Crawford.

A later portrait, and one artistically the finest of Mr. Page's productions, although executed in Rome, has found a home in Cambridge. Here no grave subdual of color was called for, nor was there any need of its fullest power,—but, instead thereof,

we have color in the purity of its pearl expression. A mild lustre, inexpressibly clear, seems to pervade the picture, and beam forth the revelation of a white soul. Shadows there are none,—only still softer light, to carry back the receding forms. But interest in technicalities is lost in the nobler sense of sweet influences. We are at peace in the presence of a peace which passeth all understanding. We are holy in the ineffable light of immortal holiness. We are blessed in the consciousness of complete harmony.

Surely, none but a great painter could have achieved such success; surely, no mere painter could thus have appealed to us.

These works we have chosen to represent the artist's power in the direction of portraiture,—not only because of their wonderful merit as embodiments of individualism, but to illustrate a law which has not yet had its due influence in art, but which must be the very life of its next revival, when painting shall be borne up until it marks the century.

We refer to the expressional power of color,—not the conventional significance whereby certain colors have been associated arbitrarily with mental conditions. This last has often violated all the principles of natural relation; yet no fact is more generally accepted than this,—that colors, from the intensity of the primitives to the last faint tints derived therefrom, bear fixed and demonstrable relations to the infinite moods and phases of human life. As among themselves the hues of the palette exist in immutable conditions of positive affinity or repulsion, so are

they all related to the soul as definitely in harmony or in discord. There has been imperfect recognition of this at various times in the history of painting since the age of Giotto,—the most notable examples having occurred in the Venetian school.

But even in that golden age of art, this property of color was but rarely perceived and called into use under the guidance of principles. Still, the sense of the value and the harmonies of colors was so keen among the Venetian artists, that, intuitively, subjects were chosen which required an expression admitting of the most lavish use and magnificent display of color.

Paul Veronese, the splendor of whose conceptions seemed ever to select the pomp and wealth of banquets and ceremonies,—Giorgione, for whom the world revolved in an atmosphere of golden glory,—each had a fixed ideal of noble coloring; and it is questionable whether either ever modified that ideal for the sake of any expressional purpose.

Titian, from whom no property or capability of color was concealed, could not forego the power which he secured through obedience to the law of its relation to the human soul. Were we asked which among pictures is most completely illustrative of this obedience, we should answer, "The Entombment," in the Louvre. Each breadth of color mourns,—sky and earth and all the conscious air are laden with sorrow.

In portraiture, however, the great master was inclined to give the full perfection of the highest type of coloring. That rich glow which is bestowed by the Venetian sun did, indeed, seem

typical of the life beneath it; and Titian may have been justified in bringing thither those who were the recipients of his favors. One only did he not invite,—Philip II.; him he placed, dark and ominous, against a sky barred with blood.

Is it in virtue of conformity to law, and under the government of the principles of correspondence, that Mr. Page has wrought with mind and hand?

Otherwise it cannot be; for, in the three portraits to which allusion has been made, such subtile distinctions of character find expression in equally subtile differences of tint, that no touch could have been given from vague apprehensions of truth. No ambiguity perplexes the spectator; he beholds the inevitable.

Other works than those of portraiture have won for Mr. Page the attention of the world. This attention has elicited from individuals praise and dispraise, dealt out promptly, and with little qualification. But we have looked in vain for some truly appreciative notice of the so-called historical pictures executed by this artist. We do not object to the prompt out-speaking of the public. So much is disposed of, when the mass has given or withheld its approval. We know whether or not the work appeals to the hearts of human beings. Often, too, it is the most nearly just of any which may be rendered. Usually, the conclusions of the great world are correct, while its reasonings are absurd. Its decisions are immediate and clear; its arguments, subsequent and vague.

This measure, however, cannot be meted to all artists. A

painter may appeal to some wide, yet superficial sympathy, and attain to no other excellence.

That Mr. Page might have found success in this direction will not be denied by any one who has seen the engraving of a girl and lamb, from one of his early works. It is as sweet and tenderly simple as a face by Francia. But not only did he refuse to confine himself to this style of art, as, when that engraving is before us, we wish he had done,—he passed out of and away from it. And those phases which followed have been such as are the least fitted to stand the trial of public exhibition. His pictures do not command the eye by extraordinary combinations of assertive colors,—nor do they, through great pathos, deep tenderness, or any overcharged emotional quality, fascinate and absorb the spectator.

Much of the middle portion of this artist's professional life is marked by changes. It was a period of growth,—of continual development and of obvious transition. Not infrequently, the transition seemed to be from the excellent to the crude. Nevertheless, we doubt not, that, through all vicissitudes, there has been a steady and genuine growth of Mr. Page's best artistic power, and that he has been true to his specialty.

We should like to believe that the Venetian visit of 1853 was the closing of one period of transition, and the beginning of a new era in Mr. Page's artistic career. It is pleasant to think of the painter's pilgrimage to that studio of Titian, Venice,—for it was all his,—not in nebulous prophetic youth,—not before his

demands had been revealed to his consciousness,—not before those twenty long years of solitary, hard, earnest work,—but in the full ripeness of manhood, when prophecy had dawned into confident fulfilment, when the principles of his science had been found, and when of this science his art had become the demonstration. It was fine to come then, and be for a while the guest of Titian.

There is evidence that he began after this visit to do what for years he had been learning to do,—yet, of course, as is ever the case with the earnest man, doing as a student, as one who feels all truth to be of the infinite.

The result has been a series of remarkable pictures. There are among these the specimens of portraiture, a few landscapes, and a number of ideal, or, as they have been called, historical works. Of these last named there is somewhat to be said; and those to which we shall refer are selected for the purpose of illustrating principles, rather than for that of description. These are all associated with history. There are three representations of Venus, and several renderings of Scriptural subjects.

If these pictures are valuable, they are so in virtue of elements which can be appreciated. To present these elements to the world, to appeal to those who can recognize them, is, it is fair to assume, the object of exposition. Not merely praise, but the more wholesome meed of justice, is the desire of a true artist; and as we deal with such a one, we do not hesitate to speak of his works as they impress us.

First of all, in view of the artist's skill as a painter, it is well to regard the external of his work. Here, in both Scriptural and mythological subjects, there is little to condemn. The motives have been bravely and successfully wrought out; the work is nobly, frankly done. The superiority of methods which render the texture and quality of objects becomes apparent. There is no attempt at illusion; yet the representation of substances and spaces is faultless,—as, for instance, the sky of the "Venus leading forth the Trojans." Nor have we seen that chaste, pearly lustre of the most beautiful human skin so well rendered as in the bosom of the figure which gleams against the blue.

But there is a pretension to more than technical excellence in the mythological works; there is a declaration of physical beauty in the very idea; in both these and the Scriptural there is an assumption of historical value.

While we believe that the problem of physical beauty can be solved and demonstrated, and the representations of Venus can be proved to possess or to lack the beautiful, we choose to leave now, as we should be compelled to do after discussion, the decision of the question to those who raise it. It is of little avail to prove a work of art beautiful,—of less, to prove it ugly. Spectators and generations cannot be taken one by one and convinced. But where the operation of judgment is from the reasoning rather than from the intuitive nature, facts, opinions, and impressions may exert healthful influences.

The Venus of Page we cannot accept,—not because it may be

unbeautiful, for that might be but a shortcoming,—not because of any technical failure, for, with the exception of weakness in the character of waves, nothing can be finer,—not because it lacks elevated sentiment, for this Venus was not the celestial,—but because it has nothing to do with the present, neither is it of the past, nor related in any wise to any imaginable future.

The present has no ideal of which the Venus of the ancients is a manifestation. Other creations of that marvellous Greek mind might be fitly used to symbolize phases of the present. Hercules might labor now; there are other stables than the Augean; and not yet are all Hydras slain. Armor is needed; and a Vulcan spirit is making the anvil ring beneath the earth-crust of humanity. But Venus, the voluptuous, the wanton,—no sensuousness pervading any religion of this era finds in her its fitting type and sign. She, her companions, and her paramours, with the magnificent religion which evolved them, were entombed centuries ago; and no angel has rolled the stone from the door of their sepulchre. They are dead; the necessity which called the Deistic ideal into existence is dead; the ideal itself is dead, since Paul preached in Athens its funeral sermon.

As history of past conditions, no value can be attached to representations produced in subsequent ages. In this respect all these pictures must be false. The best can only approximate truth. Yet his two pictures of Scriptural subjects—one from the remoteness of Hebrew antiquity, the other from the early days of Christianity—are most valuable even as history: not the history

of the flight from Egypt, nor that of the flight into Egypt, but the history of what these mighty events have become after the lapse of many centuries.

Herein lies the difference between Mythology and Christianity: the one arose, culminated, and perished, soul and body, when the shadow of the Cross fell athwart Olympus; the other is immortal,—immortal as is Christ, immortal as are human souls, of which it is the life. No century has been when it has not found, and no century can be when it will not find, audible and visible utterance. The music of the "Messiah" reveals the relation of its age to the great central idea of Christianity. Frà Angelico, Leonardo, Bach, Milton, Overbeck, were the revelators of human elevation, as sustained by the philosophy of which Christ was the great interpreter.

Therefore, to record that elevation, to be the historian of the present in its deepest significance, the noblest occupation. Dwelling, as an artist must dwell, in the deep life of his theme, his work must go forth utterly new, alive, and startling.

Thus did we find the "Flight into Egypt" a picture full of the spirit of that marvellous age, hallowed by the sweet mystery which all these years have given. Who of those who were so fortunate as to see this work of Mr. Page will ever forget the solemn, yet radiant tone pervading the landscape of sad Egypt, along which went the fugitives? Nothing ever swallowed by the insatiable sea, save its human victims, is more worthy of lament than this lost treasure.

Thus, too, is the grandest work of Mr. Page's life, the Moses with hands upheld above the battle. Were we on the first page instead of the last, we could not refrain from describing it. Yet in its presence the impulse is toward silence. We feel, that, viewed even in its mere external, it is as simple and majestic as the Hebrew language. The far sky, with its pallid moon,—the deep, shadowy valley, with its ghostly warriors,—the group on the near mountain, with its superb youth, its venerable age, and its manhood too strong and vital for the destructive years;—in the presence of such a creation there is time for a great silence.

KNITTING SALE-SOCKS

"He's took 'ith all the sym't'ms,—thet 's one thing sure! Dretful pain in hez back an' l'ins, legs feel 's ef they hed telegraph-wires inside 'em workin' fur dear life, head aches, face fevered, pulse at 2.40, awful stetch in the side, an' pressed fur breath. You guess it's neuralogy, Lurindy? I do'no' nothin' about yer high-flyin' names fur rheumatiz. *I don't guess so!*"

"But, Aunt Mimy, what *do* you guess?" asked mother.

"I don' guess nothin' at all,—I nigh about know!"

"Well,—you don't think it's"—

"I on'y wish it mebbe the veryaloud,—I on'y wish it mebbe. But that's tew good luck ter happen ter one o' the name. No, Miss Ruggles, I—think—it's—the raal article at first hand."

"Goodness, Aunt Mimy! what"—

"Yes, I du; an' you'll all hev it stret through the family, every one; you needn't expect ter go scot-free, Emerline, 'ith all your rosy cheeks; an' you'll all hev ter stay in canteen a month ter the least; an' ef you're none o' yer pertected by vaticination, I reckon I"—

"Well, Aunt Mimy, if that's your opinion, I'll harness the filly and drive over for Dr. Sprague."

"Lor'! yer no need ter du *thet*, Miss Ruggles,—I kin kerry yer all through jest uz well uz Dr. Sprague, an' a sight better, ef the truth wuz knowed. I tuk Miss Deacon Smiler an' her hull

family through the measles an' hoopin'-cough, like a parcel o' pigs, this fall. They *du* say Jane's in a poor way an' Nathan'I's kind o' declinin'; but, uz I know they say it jest ter spite me, I don' so much mind. You *a'n't* gwine now, be ye?"

"There's safety in a multitude of counsellors, you know, Aunt Mimy, and I think on the whole I had best."

"Wal! ef that's yer delib'rate ch'ice betwixt Dr. Sprague an' me, ye kin du ez ye like. I never force my advice on no one, 'xcept this,—I'd advise Emerline there ter throw them socks inter the fire; there'll never none o' them be fit ter sell, 'nless she wants ter spread the disease. Wal, I'm sorry yer 've concluded ter hev that old quack Sprague; never hed no more diplomy 'n I; don' b'lieve he knows cow-pox from kine, when he sees it. The poor young man's hed his last well day, I'm afeard. Good-day ter ye; say good-bye fur me ter Stephen. I'll call ag'in, ef ye happen ter want any one ter lay him eout."

And, staying to light her little black pipe, she jerked together the strings of her great scarlet hood, wrapped her cloak round her like a sentinel at muster, and went puffing down the hill like a steamboat.

Aunt Mimy Ruggles wasn't any relation to us, I wouldn't have you think, though our name was Ruggles, too. Aunt Mimy used to sell herbs, and she rose from that to taking care of the sick, and so on, till once Dr. Sprague having proved that death came through her ignorance, she had to abandon some branches of her art; and she was generally roaming round the neighborhood,

seeking whom she could devour in the others. And so she came into our house just at dinner-time, and mother asked her to sit by, and then mentioned Cousin Stephen, and she went up to see him, and so it was.

Now it can't be pleasant for any family to have such a thing turn up, especially if there's a pretty girl in it; and I suppose I was as pretty as the general run, at that time,—perhaps Cousin Stephen thought a trifle prettier; pink cheeks, blue eyes, and hair the color and shine of a chestnut when it bursts the burr, can't be had without one 's rather pleasant-looking; and then I'm very good-natured and quick-tempered, and I've got a voice for singing, and I sing in the choir, and a'n't afraid to open my mouth. I don't look much like Lurindy, to be sure; but then Lurindy's an old maid,—as much as twenty-five,—and don't go to singing-school.—At least, these thoughts ran through my head as I watched Aunt Mimy down the hill.—Lurindy a'n't so very pretty, I continued to think,—but she's so very good, it makes up. At sewing-circle and quilting and frolics, I'm as good as any; but somehow I'm never any 'count at home; that's because Lurindy is by, at home. Well, Lurindy has a little box in her drawer, and there's a letter in it, and an old geranium-leaf, and a piece of black silk ribbon that looks too broad for anything but a sailor's necktie, and a shell. I don't know what she wants to keep such old stuff for, I'm sure.

We're none so rich,—I suppose I may as well tell the truth, that we're nearly as poor as poor can be. We've got the farm, but

it's such a small one that mother and I can carry it on ourselves, with now and then a day's help or a bee,—but a bee's about as broad as it is long,—and we raise just enough to help the year out, but don't sell. We've got a cow and the filly and some sheep; and mother shears and cards, and Lurindy spins,—I can't spin, it makes my head swim,—and I knit, knit socks and sell them. Sometimes I have needles almost as big as a pipe-stem, and choose the coarse, uneven yarn of the thrums, and then the work goes off like machinery. Why, I can knit two pair, and sometimes three, a day, and get just as much for them as I do for the nice ones,—they're warm. But when I want to knit well, as I did the day Aunt Mimy was in, I take my best blue needles and my fine white yarn from the long wool, and it takes me from daybreak till sundown to knit one pair. I don't know why Aunt Jemimy should have said what she did about my socks; I'm sure Stephen hadn't been any nearer them than he had to the cabbage-bag Lurindy was netting, and there wasn't such a nice knitter in town as I, everybody will tell you. She always did seem to take particular pleasure in hectoring and badgering me to death.

Well, I wasn't going to be put down by Aunt Mimy, so I made the needles fly while mother was gone for the doctor. By-and-by I heard a knock up in Stephen's room,—I suppose he wanted something,—but Lurindy didn't hear it, and I didn't so much want to go, so I sat still and began to count out loud the stitches to my narrowings. By-and-by he knocked again.

"Lurindy," says I, "a'n't that Steve a-knocking?"

"Yes," says she,— "why don't you go?"—for I had been tending him a good deal that day.

"Well," says I, "there's a number of reasons; one is, I'm just binding off my heel."

Lurindy looked at me a minute, then all at once she smiled.

"Well, Emmy," says she, "if you like a smooth skin more than a smooth conscience, you're welcome,"—and went up-stairs herself.

I suppose I had ought to 'a' gone, and I suppose I'd ought to wanted to have gone, but somehow it wasn't so much fear as that I didn't want to see Stephen himself now. So Lurindy stayed up chamber, and was there when mother and the doctor come. And the doctor said he feared Aunt Mimy was right, and nobody but mother and Lurindy must go near Stephen, (you see, he found Lurindy there,) and they must have as little communication with me as possible. And his boots creaked down the back-stairs, and then he went.

Mother came down a little while after, for some water to put on Stephen's head, which was a good deal worse, she said; and about the middle of the evening I heard her crying for me to come and help them hold him,—he was raving. I didn't go very quick; I said, "Yes,—just as soon as I've narrowed off my toe"; and when at last I pushed back my chair to go, mother called in a disapproving voice and said that they'd got along without me and I'd better go to bed.

Well, after I was in bed I began to remember all that had

happened lately. Somehow my thoughts went back to the first time Cousin Stephen came to our place, when I was a real little girl, and mother'd sent me to the well and I had dropped the bucket in, and he ran straight down the green slippery stones and brought it up, laughing. Then I remembered how we'd birds-nested together, and natted, and come home on the hay-carts, and how we'd been in every kind of fun and danger together; and how, when my new Portsmouth lawn took fire, at Martha Smith's apple-paring, he caught me right in his arms and squeezed out the fire with his own hands; and how, when he saw once I had a notion of going with Elder Hooper's son James, he stepped aside till I saw what a nincom Jim Hooper was, and then he appeared as if nothing had happened, and was just as good as ever; and how, when the ice broke on Deacon Smith's pond, and I fell in, and the other boys were all afraid, Steve came and saved my life again at risk of his own; and how he always seemed to think the earth wasn't good enough for me to walk on; and how I'd wished, time and again, I might have some way to pay him back; and here it was, and I'd failed him. Then I remembered how I'd been to his place in Berkshire,—a rich old farm, with an orchard that smelled like the Spice Islands in the geography, with apples and pears and quinces and peaches and cherries and plums,—and how Stephen's mother, Aunt Emeline, had been as kind to me as one's own mother could be. But now Aunt Emeline and Uncle 'Siah were dead, and Stephen came a good deal oftener over the border than he'd any right to. Today, he brought some of

those new red-streaks, and wanted mother to try them; next time, they'd made a lot more maple-sugar on his place than he wanted; and next time, he thought mother's corn might need hoeing, or it was fine weather to get the grass in: I don't know what we should have done without him. Then I thought how Stephen looked, the day he was pall-bearer to Charles Payson, who was killed sudden by a fall,—so solemn and pale, nowise craven, but just up to the occasion, so that, when the other girls burst out crying at sight of the coffin and at thought of Charlie, I cried, too,—but it was only because Stephen looked so beautiful. Then I remembered how he looked the other day when he came, his cheeks were so red with the wind, and his hair, those bright curls, was all blown about, and he laughed with the great hazel eyes he has, and showed his white teeth;—and now his beauty would be spoiled, and he'd never care for me again, seeing I hadn't cared for him. And the wind began to come up; and it was so lonesome and desolate in that little bed-room down-stairs, I felt as if we were all buried alive; and I couldn't get to sleep; and when the sleet and snow began to rattle on the pane, I thought there wasn't any one to see me and I'd better cry to keep it company; and so I sobbed off to dreaming at last, and woke at sunrise and found it still snowing.

Next morning, I heard mother stepping across the kitchen, and when I came out, she said Lurindy'd just gone to sleep; they'd had a shocking night. So I went out and watered the creatures and milked Brindle, and got mother a nice little breakfast, and made Stephen some gruel. And then I was going to ask mother if

I'd done so very wrong in letting Lurindy nurse Stephen, instead of me; and then I saw she wasn't thinking about that; and besides, there didn't really seem to be any reason why she shouldn't;—she was a great deal older than I, and so it was more proper; and then Stephen hadn't ever *said* anything to me that should give me a peculiar right to nurse him more than other folks. So I just cleared away the things, made everything shine like a pin, and took my knitting. I'd no sooner got the seam set than I was called to send something up on a contrivance mother'd rigged in the back-entry over a pulley. And then I had to make a red flag, and find a stick, and hang it out of the window by which there were the most passers. Well, I did it; but I didn't hurry, —I didn't get the flag out till afternoon; somehow I hated to, it always seemed such a low-lived disease, and I was mortified to acknowledge it, and I knew nobody'd come near us for so long, —though goodness knows I didn't want to see anybody. Well, when that was done, Lurindy came down, and I had to get her something to eat, and then she went up-stairs, and mother took *her* turn for some sleep; and there were the creatures to feed again, and what with putting on, and taking off, and tending fires, and doing errands, and the night's milking, and clearing the paths, I didn't knit another stitch that day, and was glad enough, when night came, to go to bed myself.

Well, so we went on for two or three days. I'd got my second sock pretty well along in that time,—just think! half a week knitting half a sock!—and was setting the heel, when in came

Aunt Mimy.

"I a'n't afeard on it," says she; "don't you be skeert. I jest stepped in ter see ef the young man wuz approachin' his eend."

"No," said I, "he isn't, any more than you are, Aunt Mimy."

"Any more 'n I be?" she answered. "Don't you lose yer temper, Emerline. We're all approachin' it, but some gits a leetle ahead; it a'n't no disgrace, ez I knows on. What yer doin' of? Knittin' sale-socks yet? and, my gracious! still ter work on the same pair! You'll make yer fortin', Emerline!"

I didn't say anything, I was so provoked.

"I don' b'lieve you know heow ter take the turns w'en yer mother a'n't by to help," she continued. "Can't ye take up the heel? Widden ev'ry fourth. Here, let me! You won't? Wal, I alluz knowed you wuz mighty techy, Emerline Ruggles, but ye no need ter fling away in thet style. Neow I'll advise ye ter let socks alone; they're tew intricate fur sech ez you. Mitt'ns is jest abeout 'ithin the compass uv your mind,—mitt'ns, men's single mitt'ns, put up on needles larger 'n them o' yourn be, an' by this rule. Seventeen reounds in the wrist,—tew an' one's the best seam"—

"Now, Miss Jemimy, just as if I didn't know how to knit mittens!"

"Wal, it seems you don't," said she, "though I don' deny but you may know heow ter give 'em; an' ez I alluz like ter du w'at good I kin, I'm gwine ter show ye."

"Show away," says I; "but I'll be bound, I've knit and sold and eaten up more mittens than ever you put your hands in!"

"Du tell! I'm glad to ha' heern you've got sech a good digestion," says she, hunting up a piece of paper to light her pipe. "Wal, ez I wuz sayin'," says she, "tew an' one's the best seam, handiest an' 'lastickest; twenty stetches to a needle, cast up so loose thet the fust one's ter one eend uv the needle an' the last ter t'other eend,—thet gives a good pull."

"I guess your smoke will hurt Stephen's head," said I, thinking to change her ideas.

"Oh, don't you bother abeout Stephen's head; ef it can't stan' thet, 't a'n't good fur much. Wal, an' then you set yer thumb an' knit plain, 'xcept a seam-stetch each side uv yer thumb; an' you widden tew stetches, one each side,—s'pose ye know heow ter widden? an' narry?—ev'ry third reound, tell yer 've got nineteen stetches acrost yer thumb; then ye knit, 'ithout widdenin', a matter uv seven or eight reounds more,—you listenin', Emerline?"

"Lor', Miss Jemimy, don't you know better than to ask questions when I'm counting? Now I've got to go and begin all over again."

"Highty-tighty, Miss! You're a weak sister, ef ye can't ceount an' chat, tew. Wal, ter make a long matter short, then ye drop yer thumb onter some thread an' cast up seven stetches an' knit reound fur yer hand, an' every other time you narry them seven stetches away ter one, fur the gore."

"Dear me, Aunt Mimy! do be quiet a minute! I believe mother's a-calling."

"I'll see," said Aunt Mimy,—and she stepped to the door and

listened.

"No," says she, coming back on tiptoe,— "an' you didn't think you heern any one neither. It's ruther small work fur ter be foolin' an old woman. Hows'ever, I don' cherish grudges; so, ez I wuz gwine ter say, ye knit thirty-six reounds above wheer ye dropped yer thumb, an' then ye toe off in ev'ry fifth stetch, an' du it reg'lar, Emerline; an' then take up yer thumb on tew needles, an' on t'other you pick up the stetches I told yer ter cast up, an' knit twelve reounds, an' thumb off 'ith narryin' ev'ry third"—

"Well, Miss Jemimy, I guess I shall know how to knit mittens, now!"

"Ef ye don't, 't a'n't my fault. When you've fastened off the eends, you roll 'em up in a damp towel, an' press 'em 'ith a middlin' warm iron on the wrong side. There!"

After this, Miss Mimy smoked awhile in silence, satisfied and gratified.

At last she knocked the ashes out of her pipe.

"Wal," says she, "I must be onter my feet. I'd liked ter seen yer ma, but I won't disturb her, an' you can du ez well. Yer ma promised me a mess o' tea, an' I guess I may ez well take it neow ez any day."

"Why, Miss Mimy," said I, "there a'n't above four or five messes left, and we can't get any more till I sell my socks."

"Wal, never mind, then, you can le' me take one, an' mebbe I kin make up the rest at Miss Smilers's."

So I went into the pantry to get it, and Aunt Mimy followed

me, of course.

"Them's nice-lookin' apples," said she. "Come from Stephen's place? Poor young man, he won't never want 'em! S'pose he won't hev no objection ter my tryin' a dozen,"—and she dropped that number into her great pocket.

"Nice-lookin' butter, tew," said she. "Own churnin'? Wal, you *kin* du sunthin', Emerline. W'en I wuz a heousekeeper, I used ter keep the family in butter an' sell enough to Miss Smith—she thet wuz Mary Breown—ter buy our shoes, all off uv one ceow. S'pose I take this pat?"

I was kind of dumfounded at first; I forgot Aunt Mimy was the biggest beggar in Rockingham County.

"No," says I, as soon as I got my breath, "I sha'n't suppose any such thing. You're as well able to make your butter as I am to make it for you."

"Wal, Emerline Ruggles! I alluz knowed you wuz close ez the bark uv a tree; it's jest yer father's narrer-contracted sperrit; you don't favor yer ma a speck. She's ez free ez water."

"If mother's a mind to give away her eye-teeth, it don't follow that I should," said I; "and I won't give you another atom; and you just clear out!"

"Wal, you kin keep yer butter, sence you're so sot on it, an' I'll take a leetle dust o' pork instead."

"Let's see you take it!" said I.

"I guess I'll speak 'ith yer ma. I shall git a consider'ble bigger piece, though I don't like ter add t' 'er steps."

"Now look here, Miss Mimy," says I,— "if you'll promise not to ask for another thing, and to go right away, I'll get you a piece of pork."

So I went down cellar, and fished round in the pork-barrel and found quite a respectable piece. Coming up, just as my head got level with the floor, what should I see but Miss Jemimy pour all the sugar into her bag and whip the bowl back on the shelf, and turn round and face me as innocent as Moses in the bulrushes. After she had taken the pork, she looked round a minute and said,—

"Wal, arter all, I nigh upon forgot my arrant. Here's a letter they giv' me fur Lurindy, at the post-office; ev'rybody else's afeard ter come up here";—and by-and-by she brought it up from under all she'd stowed away there. "Thet jest leaves room," says she.

"For what?" says I.

"Fur tew or three uv them eggs."

I put them into her bag and said,

"Now you remember your promise, Aunt Mimy!"

"Lor' sakes!" says she, "you're in a mighty berry ter git me off. Neow you've got all you kin out uv me, the letter, 'n' the mitt'ns, I may go, may I? I niver see a young gal so furrard 'ith her elders in all my born days! I think Stephen Lee's well quit uv ye, fur my part, ef he hed to die ter du it. I don't 'xpect ye ter thank me fur w'at instruction I gi'n ye;—there's some folks I niver du 'xpect nothin' from; you can't make a silk pus out uv a sow's ear.

W'at ye got thet red flag out the keepin'-room winder fur? 'Cause Lurindy's nussin' Stephen? Wal, good-day!"

And so Aunt Mimy disappeared, and the pat of butter with her.

I called Lurindy and gave her the letter, and after a little while I heard my name, and Lurindy was sitting on the top of the stairs with her head on her knees, and mother was leaning over the banisters. Pretty soon Lurindy lifted up her head, and I saw she had been crying, and between the two I made out that Lurindy'd been engaged a good while to John Talbot, who sailed out of Salem on long voyages to India and China; and that now he'd come home, sick with a fever, and was lying at the house of his aunt, who wasn't well herself; and as he'd given all his money to help a shipmate in trouble, she couldn't hire him a nurse, and there he was; and, finally, she'd consider it a great favor, if Lurindy would come down and help her.

Now Lurindy'd have gone at once, only she'd been about Stephen, so that she'd certainly carry the contagion, and might be taken sick herself, as soon as she arrived; and mother couldn't go and take care of John, for the same reason; and there was nobody but me. Lurindy had a half-eagle that John had given her once to keep; and I got a little bundle together and took all the precautions Dr. Sprague advised; and he drove me off in his sleigh, and said, as he was going about sixteen miles to see a patient, he'd put me on the cars at the nearest station. Well, he stopped a minute at the post-office, and when he came out he

had another letter for Lurindy. I took it, and, after a moment, concluded I'd better read it.

"What are you about?" says the Doctor; "your name isn't Lurindy, is it?"

"I wish it was," says I, "and then I shouldn't be here."

"Oh! you're sorry to leave Stephen?" says he. "Well, you can comfort yourself with reflecting that Lurindy's a great deal the best nurse."

As if that was any comfort! If Lurindy was the best nurse, she'd ought to have had the privilege of taking care of her own lover, and not of other folks's. Besides, for all I knew, Stephen would be dead before ever I came back, and here I was going away and leaving him! Well, I didn't feel so very bright; so I read the letter. The Doctor asked me what ailed John Talbot. I thought, if I told him that Miss Jane Talbot wrote now so that Lurindy shouldn't come, and that he was sick just as Stephen was, he wouldn't let me go. So I said I supposed he'd burnt his mouth, like the man in the South, eating cold pudding and porridge; men always cried out at a scratch. And he said, "Oh, do they?" and laughed.

After about two hours' driving, there came a scream as if all the panthers in Coos County were let loose to yell, and directly we stopped at a little place where a red flag was hung out. I asked the Doctor if they'd got the small-pox here, too; but before he could answer, the thunder running along the ground deafened me, and in a minute he had put me inside the cars and was off.

I was determined I wouldn't appear green before so many folks, though I'd never seen the cars before; so I took my seat, and paid my fare to Old Salem, and looked about me. Pretty soon a woman came bustling in from somewhere, and took the seat beside me. There she fidgeted round so that I thought I should have flown.

"Miss," says she, at length, "will you close your window? I never travel with a window open; my health's delicate."

I tried to shut it, but it wouldn't go up or down, till a gentleman put out his cane and touched it, and down it slid, like Signor Blitz. It did seem as if everything about the cars went by miracle. I thanked him, but I found afterward it would have been more polite not to have spoken. After that woman had done everything she could think of to plague and annoy the whole neighborhood, she got out at Ipswich, and somebody met her that looked just like our sheriff; and I shouldn't be a bit surprised to hear that she'd gone to jail. When she got out, somebody else got in, and took the same seat.

"Miss," says she, "will you have the goodness to open your window? this air is stifling."

And she did everything that the other woman didn't do. When she found I wouldn't talk, she turned to the young gentleman and lady that sat opposite, and that looked as if there was a great deal too much company in the cars, and found they wouldn't talk either, and at last she caught the conductor and made him talk.

AH this while we were swooping over the country in the most

terrific manner. I thought how frightened mother and Lurindy'd be, if they should see me. It was no use trying to count the cattle or watch the fences, and the birch-trees danced rigadoons enough to make one dizzy, and we dashed through everybody's back-yard, and ran so close up to the kitchens that we could have seen what they had for dinner, if we had stayed long enough; and finally I made up my mind that the engine had run away with the driver, and John Talbot would never have me to tend him; and I began to wonder, as I saw the sparks and cinders and great clouds of steam and smoke, if those tornadoes that smash round so out West in the newspapers weren't just passenger-trains, like us, off the track,—when all at once it grew as dark as midnight.

"Now," says I to myself, "it's certain. They've run the thing into the ground. However, we can't go long now."

And just as I was thinking about Korah and his troop, I remembered what the Doctor had told me about Salem Tunnel, and it began to grow lighter, and we began to go slower, and I picked up my wits and looked about me again. I had only time to notice that the young gentleman and lady looked very much relieved, and to shake my shawl from the clutch of the woman beside me, when we stopped at Salem, safe and sound.

I had a good deal of trouble to find Miss Talbot's house, but find it I did; and the first thing she gave me was a scolding for coming, thinking I was Lurindy, and her tongue wasn't much cooler when she found I wasn't; and then finally she said, as long as I was there, I might stay; and I went right up to see John, and

a sight he was!

It was about three months I stayed and took the greater part of the care of him. Sometimes in the midnight, when he was quite beside himself, and dreaming out loud, it was about as good as a story-book to hear him. He told me of some great Indian cities where there were men in white, with skins swarthier than old red Guinea gold, and with great shawls all wrought in palm-leaves of gold and crimson bound on their heads, who could sink a ship with their lacs of rupees; and of islands where the shores came down to the water's edge and unrolled like a green ribbon, and brooks came sparkling down behind them, and great trees hung above like banners, and beautiful women came off on rafts and skiffs loaded with fruit,—the islands set like jewels on the back of the sea, and the sky covered them with light and hung above them bluer than the hangings of the Tabernacle, and they sent long rivers of spice out on the air to entice the sailor back,—islands where night never came. Sometimes, when he talked on so, I remembered that I'd felt rather touched up when I found that Lurindy'd had a sweetheart all this time, and mother knew it, and they'd never told me, and I wondered how it happened. Now it came across me, that, quite a number of years before, Lurindy had gone to Salem and worked in the mills. She didn't stay long, because it didn't agree with her,—the neighbors said, because she was lazy. Lurindy lazy, indeed! There a'n't one of us knows how to spell the first syllable of that word. But that's where she must have got acquainted with John Talbot. He'd been up at our

place, too; but I was over to Aunt Emeline's, it seems. But one night, about this time, I thought he was dying, he'd got so very low; and I thought how dreadful it was for Lurindy never to see him again, and how it was all my selfish fault, and how maybe he wouldn't 'a' died, if he'd had her to have taken care of him; and I suppose no convicted felon ever endured more remorse than I did, sitting and watching that dying man all that long and lonely night. But with the morning he was better,—they always are a great deal worse when they are getting well from it; he laughed when the doctor came, and said he guessed he'd weathered that gale; and by-and-by he got well.

He meant to have gone up and seen Lurindy, after all, but his ship was ready for sea just as he was; and I thought it was about as well, for he wasn't looking his prettiest. And so he declared I was the neatest little trimmer that ever trod water, and he believed he should know a Ruggles by the cut of her jib, (I wonder if he'd have known Aunt Mimy,) and if ever he went master, he'd name his ship for me, and call it the Sister of Charity. And he kissed me on both cheeks, and looked serious enough when he sent his love to Lurindy, and went away; and no sooner was he gone than Miss Talbot said I'd better have the doctor myself; and I didn't sit up again for about three weeks.

All this time I hadn't heard a word from home, and, for all I knew, Stephen might be dead and buried. I didn't feel so very light-hearted, you may be sure, when one day Miss Talbot brought me a letter. It was from mother, and it seemed Stephen'd

only had a bad fever, and had been up and gone home for more than a week. So I wrote back, as soon as I could, all about John, and how he'd gone to sea again, and how Miss Talbot, who set sights by John, was rather lonely, and I thought I'd keep her company a little longer, and try a spell in the mills, seeing that our neighbors didn't think a girl had been properly accomplished till she'd had a term or two in the factory. The fact was, I didn't want to go home just then; I thought, maybe, if I waited a bit, my face would get back to looking as it used to. So I worked in the piece-room, light work and good pay, sent mother and Lurindy part of my wages, and paid my board to Miss Talbot. She'd become quite attached to me, and I to her, for all she was such an old-maidish thing; but I'd got to thinking an old maid wasn't such a very bad thing, after all. Fourth of July came at last, and the mills were closed, and I went with some of the other girls on an excursion down the harbor; and when I got home, Miss Talbot told me my Cousin Stephen had been down to see me, and had been obliged to go home in the last train. I wondered why Stephen didn't stay, and then it flashed upon me that she'd told him all about it, and he didn't want to see me afterwards. I knew mother and Lurindy suspected why I didn't come home, and now, thinks I, they *know*; but I asked no questions.

When September came, I saw it wasn't any use delaying, and I might as well go back to knitting sale-socks then as any time. However, I didn't go till October. You needn't think I'd stayed away from the farm all that time, while the tender things

were opening, the tiny top-heavy beans pushing up, the garden-sarse greening, the little grass-blades two and two,—while all the young creatures were coming forward, the chickens breaking the shell, and the gosling-storm brewing and dealing destruction, —while the strawberries were growing ripe and red up in the high field, and the hay and clover were getting in,—you needn't think I'd stayed away from all that had been pleasant in my life, without many a good heart-ache; and when at last I saw the dear old gray house again, all weather-beaten and homely, standing there with its well-sweep among the elms, I fairly cried. Mother and Lurindy ran out to meet me, when they saw the stage stop, and after we got into the house it seemed if they would never get done kissing me. And mother stirred round and made hot cream-biscuits for tea, and got the best china, and we sat up till nigh midnight, talking, and I had to tell everything John did and said and thought and looked, over and over again.

By-and-by I unpacked my trunk, and there was a little parcel in the bottom of it, and I pulled it up.

"There, Lurindy," says I, "John told me to tell you to have your wedding-dress ready against he came home,—he's gone mate,—and here it is." And I unrolled the neatest brown silk you ever saw, just fit for Lurindy, she's so pale and genteel, and threw it into her lap. I'd stayed the other month to get enough to buy it.

The first thing Lurindy did, by way of thanks, was to burst into tears and declare she never could take it, that she never should marry now; and the more I urged her, the more she cried. But

at last she said she'd accept it conditionally,—and the condition was, I should be married when she was.

"Well," says I, "agreed, if you'll provide the necessary article; because I can't very well marry my shadow, and I don't know any one else that would be fool enough to have such a little fright."

At that Lurindy felt all the worse, and it took all the spirits I had to build up hers and mother's. I suppose I was sorry to see they felt so bad, (and they hadn't meant that I should,) because it gave the finishing stroke to my conviction; and after I was in bed, I grew sorrier still; and if I cried, 't wasn't on account of myself, but I saw how Lurindy 'd always feel self-accused, though she hadn't ought to, whenever she looked at me, and how all her life she'd feel my scarred face like a weight on her happiness, and think I owed it to John, and how intolerable such an obligation, though it was only a fancied one, would be; and I saw, too, that it all came from my not going up-stairs that first time when Stephen knocked,—because if I had gone, I should have been there when the doctor came, and Lurindy 'd have gone to have taken care of John herself, and it would have been her face that was ruined instead of mine; and though it was a great deal better that it should be mine, still she'd have been easier in her mind;—and so thinking and worrying, I fell asleep.

Next day was baking-day, and Stephen was coming in the afternoon, and it was almost five o'clock when we got cleared up, and I went up-stairs to change my dress. I thought 't wasn't any use to trim myself out in bows and ruffles now, so I just put on

my brown gingham and a white linen collar; but Lurindy came and tied a pink ribbon at my throat, and fixed my hair herself, and looked down and said,—

"Well, I don't see but you're about as pretty as ever you was."

That almost finished me; but I contrived to laugh, and got down-stairs. Mother 'd run over to the village to get some yarn to knit up, for she 'd used all our own wool. It was getting dark, and I had just brought in another log, and hung the kettle on the crane. The log hadn't taken fire yet, and there was only a light glimmer, from the coals, on the ceiling. I heard the back-door-latch click, and thought it was mother, and commenced humming in the middle of a tune, as if I'd been humming the rest and had just reached that part; but the figure standing there was a sight too tall for mother.

"Oh, Stephen," says I,—and my heart jumped in my throat, but I just swallowed it down, and thanked Heaven that the evening was so dark,—"is that you?"

"Yes," says he, stepping forward, and putting out his hands, and making as if he would kiss me. Just for a minute I hung back, then I went and gave him my hand in a careless way.

"Yes," says he; "and I can't say that you seem so very glad to see me."

"Oh, yes," I answered, "I am glad. Did you drive over?"

"Well," says he, "maybe you are; but I should call it a mighty cool reception, after almost a year's absence. However, I suppose it's the best manners not to show any cordiality; you've had a

chance to learn more politeness down at Salem than we have up here in the country."

I was a little struck up by Stephen's running on so,—he was generally so quiet, and said so little, and then in such short sentences. But in a minute I reckoned he thought I was nervous, and was trying to put me at my ease,—and he knew of old that the best way to do that was to rouse my temper.

"I ha'n't seen anybody at Salem better-mannered 'n mother and Lurindy," said I.

"Come home for Thanksgiving?" asked Stephen, hanging up his coat.

I kept still a minute, for I couldn't for the life of me see what I had to give thanks for. Then it came over me what a cheery, comfortable home this was, and how Stephen would always be my kind, warm-hearted friend, and how thankful I ought to be that my life had been spared, and that I was useful, that I'd made such good friends as I had down to Salem, and that I wasn't soured against all mankind on account of my misfortune.

"Yes, Stephen," says I, "I've come home for Thanksgiving; and I have a great deal to give thanks for."

"So have I," said he.

"Stephen," says I, "I don't exactly know, but I shouldn't wonder if I'd had a change of heart."

"Don't know of anybody that needed it less," says Stephen, warming his hands. "However, if it makes you any more comfortable, I sha'n't object; except the part of it that belongs to

me,—I sha'n't have that changed."

The fire'd begun to brighten now, and the room was red and pleasant-looking; still I knew he couldn't see me plainly, and I waited a minute, and lingered round, pretending I was doing something, which I wasn't; I hated to break the old way of things, and then I took the tongs and blew a coal and lighted the dip and held it up, as if I was looking for something. Pretty soon I found it; it was a skein of linen thread I was going to wind for Lurindy. Then I got the swifts and came and sat down in front of the candle.

"There," says I, "the swifts is broken. What shall I do?"

"I'll hold the thread, if that's your trouble," says Stephen, and came and sat opposite to me while I wound.

I wondered whether he was looking at me, but I didn't durst look up,—and then I couldn't, if my life had depended upon it. At last we came to the end; then I managed to get a glance edgeways. He hadn't been looking at all, I don't believe, till that very moment, when he raised his eyes.

"Are folks always so sober, when they've had a change of heart?" he asked, with his pleasant smile.

"They are, when they've had a change of face," I was going to say; but just then mother came in with her bundle of yarn, and Lurindy came down, and there was such a deal of welcoming and talking, that I slipped round and laid the table and had the tea made before they thought of it. I'd about made up my mind now that Stephen would act as if nothing had happened, and pretend

to like me just the same, because he was so tender-hearted and couldn't bear to hurt my feelings nor anybody's; and I'd made up my mind, too, that, as soon as he gave me a chance, I'd tell him I was set against marriage: leastwise, I wouldn't have him, because I wouldn't have any man marry me out of pity; and the more I cared for him, the more I couldn't hamper an ugly face on him forever. So, you see, I had quite resolved, that, cost me what it would, I'd say 'No,' if Stephen asked me. Well, it's a very good thing to make resolutions; but it's a great deal better to break them, sometimes.

Having come to my conclusions, I grew as merry as any of them; and when mother put two spoons into Stephen's cup, I told him he was going to have a present. And he said he guessed he knew what it was; and I said it must be a mitten, I'd heard that Martha Smith had taken to knitting lately; and he confounded Martha Smith. Mother and Lurindy were very busy talking about the yarn, and how Mr. Fisher wanted the next socks knit; and Stephen asked me what that dish was beside me. I said, it was lemon-pie, and the top-crust was made of kisses, and would he have some? And he said, he didn't care for anybody's kisses but mine, and he believed he wouldn't. And I told him the receipt of this came from the Queen's own kitchen. And he said, he didn't know that the Queen of England was any better than the Queen of Hearts. Then I said, I supposed he remembered how the latter lady was served by the Knave of Hearts in 'Mother Goose'? And he replied, that he wasn't going to be Jack-at-a-pinch for

anybody. And so on, till mother finished tea.

After tea, I sat up to the table and ended some barley-trimming that I'd just learned how to make; and as the little kernels came tumbling out from under my fingers, Stephen sat beside and watched them as if it was a field of barley, growing, reaped, and threshed under his eyes. By-and-by I finished it; and then, rummaging round in the table-drawer, I found the sock that I was knitting, waiting at the very stitch where I left it, 'most a year ago.

"Well, if that isn't lucky!" said I. And I sat down on a stool by the fireside, determined to finish that sock that night; and no sooner had I set the needles to dancing, like those in the fairy-story, than open came the kitchen-door again, and in, out of the dark, stepped Aunt Mimy.

"Good-evenin', Miss Ruggles!" says she. "Heow d' ye du, Emerline? hope yer gwine ter stay ter hum a spell. Why, Stephen, 's this you? Quite a family-party, I declare fur't! Wai, Miss Ruggles, I got kind o' tired settin' in the dark, an', ez I looked out an' see the dips blazin' in yer winder, thinks I, I'll jest run up an' see w'at's ter pay."

"Why, there's only one dip," says Lurindy.

"Wal, thet's better 'n none," answered Miss Mimy.

I had enough of the old Adam left in me to be riled at her way of begging as much as ever I was; but I saw that Stephen was amused; he hadn't ever happened to be round, when Aunt Mimy was at her tricks.

"No, Miss Ruggles," continued she, "I thank the Lord I ha'n't got a complainin' sperrit, an' hed jest ez lieves see by my neighbor's dip ez my own, an', mebbe ye 'll say, a sight lieveser."

And then Miss Mimy pulled out a stocking without beginning or end, and began to knit as fast as she could rattle, after she 'd fixed one needle in a chicken-bone, and pinned the chicken-bone to her side.

"Wal, Emerline," says she, "I s'pose ye've got so grand down ter the mills, thet, w'at 'ith yer looms an' machines an' tic-doloreux, ye won't hev nothin' ter say ter the old way uv knittin' socks."

"Does this look like it, Aunt Mimy?" says I, shaking my needles by way of answer. "I'm going to finish this pair to-night."

"Oh," says she, "you be, be you? Wal, ef I don't e'en a'most vum it's the same one! ef ye ha'n't been nigh about a hull year a-knittin' one pair uv socks!"

"How do you know they're the same pair?" asked I.

"By a mark I see you sot in 'em ter the top, ef ye want ter know, afore I thought it would be hangin' by the eyelids the rest uv yer days. Wal, I never 'xpected ye'd be much help ter yer mother; ye're tew fond uv hikin' reound the village."

"Indeed, Miss Mimy," said Lurindy, kind of indignant, "she's always been the greatest help to mother."

"I don't know how I should have made both ends meet this year, if it hadn't been for her wages," said mother.

Stephen was whittling Miss Mimy's portrait on the end of a

stick, and laughing. I was provoked with mother and Lurindy for answering the thing, and was just going to speak up, when I caught Stephen's eye, and thought better of it. Pretty soon Aunt Mimy produced a bundle of herbs from her pocket, and laid them on the table.

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Jemimy," says mother. "Pennyroyal and catnip's always acceptable."

"Yes," said Aunt Mimy. "An' I'll take my pay in some uv yer dried apples. Heow much does Fisher give fur socks, Miss Ruggles?" she asked, directly.

"Fifty cents and I find,—fifteen and he finds."

"An' ye take yer pay out uv the store? Varry reasonable. I wuz thinkin' uv tryin' my han' myself;—business's ruther dull, folks onkimmon well this fall. Heow many strings yer gwine ter give me fur the yarbs?"

Then mother went up garret to get the apples and spread the herbs to dry, and Lurindy wanted some different needles, and went after her. Stephen'd just heaped the fire, and the great blaze was tumbling up the chimney, and Miss Mimy lowered her head and looked over her great horn-bowed spectacles at me.

"Wal, Emerline Ruggles," says she, after a while, going back to her work, "you've lost all *your* pink cheeks!"

I suppose it took me rather sudden, for all at once a tear sprung and fell right down my work. I saw it glistening on the bright needles a minute, and then my eyes filmed so that I felt there was more coming, and I bent down to the fire and made believe count

my narrowings. After all, Aunt Mimy was kind of privileged by everybody to say what she pleased. But Stephen didn't do as every one did, always.

"Emmie's beauty wasn't all in her pink cheeks, Miss Mimy," I heard him say, as I went into the back-entry to ask mother to bring down the mate of my sock.

"Wal, wherever it was, there's precious little of it left!" said she, angry at being took up, which maybe she never was before in her life.

"You don't agree with her friends," said he, cutting in the stick the great mole on the side of her nose; "*they* all think she's got more than ever she had."

Mother tossed me down the mate, and I went back.

"Young folks," said Aunt Mimy, after two or three minutes' silence, "did ye ever hear tell o' 'Miah Kemp?"

"Any connection of old Parson Kemp in the other parish?" asked Stephen.

"Yes," said Aunt Mimy,— "his brother. Wal, w'en I wuz a young gal, livin' ter hum,—my father wuz ez wealthy ez any farmer thereabouts, ye know,—I used ter keep company 'ith 'Miah Kemp. 'Miah wuz a stun-mason, the best there wuz in the deestrik, an' the harnsomet boy there tew,—though I say it thet shouldn't say it,—he hed close-curlin' black hair, an' an arm it done ye good ter lean on. Wal, one spring-night,—I mind it well,—we wuz walkin' deown the lane together, an' the wind wuz blowin', the laylocks wuz in bloom, an' all overhead the lane wuz

rustlin' 'ith the great purple plumes in the moonlight, an' the air wuz sweeter 'ith their breath than any air I've ever taken sence, an' ez we wuz walkin', 'Miah wuz askin' me fur ter fix eour weddin'-day. Wal, w'en he left me at the bars, I agreed we'd be merried the fifteenth day uv July comin', an' I walked hum; an' I mind heow I wondered ef Eve wuz so happy in Paradise, or ef Paradise wuz half so beautiful ez thet scented lane. The nex' mornin', ez I wuz milkin', the ceow tuk fright an' begun ter cut up, an' she cut up so thet I run an' she arter me,—an' the long an' the short uv it wuz thet she tossed me, an' w'en they got me up they foun' I hedn't but one eye. Wal, uv course, my looks wuz sp'iled,—fur I'd been ez pretty'z Emerline wuz,—you wuz pretty once, Emerline,—an' I sent 'Miah Kemp word I'd hev no more ter du 'ith him nor any one else neow. 'Miah, he come ter see me; but I wuz detarmined, an' I stuck ter my word. He did an' said everything thet mortal man could,—thet he loved me better'n ever, an' thet 't would be the death uv him, an' tuk on drefful. But w'en he'd got through, I giv' him the same answer, though betwixt ourselves it a'most broke my heart ter say it. I kep' a stiff upper-lip, an' he grew desp'rate, an' tuk all sorts uv dangerous jobs, blastin' rocks an' haulin' stuns. One night,—'t wuz jest a year from the night I'd walked 'ith him in thet lane,—I wuz stan'in' by the door, an' all ter once I heerd a noise an' crash ez ef all the thunderbolts in the Almighty's hand hed fallen together, an' I run deown the lane an' met the men bringin' up sunthin' on an old door. They hed been blastin' Elder Payson's rock, half-way deown the new well, an' the mine hedn't

worked, an' 'Miah'd gone deown ter see w'at wuz in it; an' jest ez he got up ag'in, off it went, an' here he wuz 'ith a great splinter in his chist,—ef the rest uv it wuz him. They couldn't kerry him no furder, an' sot him deown; an' there wuz all the trees a-wavin' overhead ag'in, an' all the sweet scents a-beatin' about the air, jest uz it wuz a year ago w'en he parted from me so strong an' whole an' harnsome; all the fleowers wuz a-blossomin', all the winds wuz blowin' an' this lump uv torn flesh an' broken bones wuz 'Miah. I laid deown on the grass beside him, an' put my lips close to hisn, an' I could feel the breath jest stirrin' between; an' the doctor came an' said 't warn't no use; an' they threw a blanket over us, an' there I laid till the sun rose an' sparkled in the dew an' the green leaves an' the purple bunches, an' the air came frolickin' fresh an' sweet about us; an' though I'd knowed it long, layin' there in the dark, neow I see fur sartain thet there warn't no breath on them stiff lips, an' the forehead was cold uz the stuns beneath us, an' the eyes wuz fixed an' glazed in thet las' look uv love an' tortur' an' reproach thet he giv' me. They say I went distracted; an' I *du* b'lieve I've be'n cracked ever sence."

Here Aunt Mimy, who had told her whole story without moving a muscle, commenced rocking violently back and forth.

"I don't often remember all this," says she, after a little, "but las' spring it all flushed over me; an' w'en I heerd heow Emerline'd be'n sick,—I hear a gre't many things ye do' no' nothin' about, children,—I thought I'd tell her, fust time I see her."

"What made you think of it last spring?" asked Stephen.

"The laylocks wuz in bloom," said Miss Mirny,— "the laylocks wuz in bloom."

Just then mother came down with the apples, and some dip-candles, and a basket of broken victuals; and Miss Mimy tied her cloak and said she believed she must be going. And Stephen went and got his hat and coat, and said,—

"Miss Mimy, wouldn't you like a little company to help you carry your bundles? Come, Emmie, get your shawl."

So I ran and put on my things, and Stephen and I went home with Aunt Mimy.

"Emmie," says Stephen, as we were coming back, and he'd got hold of my hand in his, where I'd taken his arm, "what do you think of Aunt Mimy now?"

"Oh," says I, "I'm sorry I've ever been sharp with her."

"I don't know," said Stephen. "'Ta'n't in human nature not to pity her; but then she brought her own trouble on herself, you see."

"Yes," said I.

"I don't know how to blast rocks," says Stephen, when we'd walked a little while without saying anything,— "but I suppose there is something as desperate that I can do."

"Oh, you needn't go to threatening me!" thinks I; and, true enough, he hadn't any need to.

"Emmie," says he, "if you say 'No,' when I ask you to have me, I sha'n't ask you again."

"Well?" says I, after a step or two, seeing he didn't speak.

"Well?" says he.

"I can't say 'Yes' or 'No' either, till you ask me," said I.

He stopped under the starlight and looked in my eyes.

"Emmie," says he, "did you ever doubt that I loved you?"

"Once I thought you did," said I; "but it's different now."

"I *do* love you," said he, "and you know it."

"Me, Stephen?" said I,— "with my face like a speckled sparrow's egg?"

"Yes, you," said he; and he bent down and kissed me, and then we walked on.

By-and-by Stephen said, When would I come and be the life of his house and the light of his eyes? That was rather a speech for Stephen; and I said, I would go whenever he wanted me. And then we went home very comfortably, and Stephen told mother it was all right, and mother and Lurindy did what they'd got very much into the habit of doing,—cried; and I said, I should think I was going to be buried, instead of married; and Stephen took my knitting-work away, and said, as I had knit all our trouble and all our joy into that thing, he meant to keep it just as it was; and that was the end of my knitting sale-socks.

I suppose, now I've told you so far, you'd maybe like to know the rest. Well, Lurindy and John were married Thanksgiving morning; and just as they moved aside, Stephen and I stepped up and took John and Aunt Mimy rather by surprise by being married too.

"Wal," says Aunt Mimy, "ef ever you hang eout another red flag, 't won't be because Lurindy's nussin' Stephen!"

I don't suppose there's a happier little woman in the State than me. I should like to see her, if there is. I go over home pretty often; and Aunt Mimy makes just as much of my baby—I've named him John—as mother does; and that's enough to ruin any child that wasn't a cherub born. And Miss Mimy always has a bottle of some new nostrum of her own stilling every time she sees any of us; we've got enough to swim a ship, on the top shelf of the pantry to-day, if it was all put together. As for Stephen, there he comes now through the huckleberry-pasture, with the baby on his arm; he seems to think there never was a baby before; and sometimes—Stephen's such a homebody—I'm tempted to think that maybe I've married my own shadow, after all. However, I wouldn't have it other than it is. Lurindy, she lives at home the most of the time; and once in a while, when Stephen and mother and I and she are all together, and as gay as larks, and the baby is creeping round, swallowing pins and hooks and eyes as if they were blueberries, and the fire is burning, and the kettle singing, and the hearth swept clean, it seems as if heaven had actually come down, or we'd all gone up without waiting for our robes; it seems as if it was altogether too much happiness for one family. And I've made Stephen take a paper on purpose to watch the ship-news; for John sails captain of a fruiter to the Mediterranean, and, sure enough, its little gilt figure-head that goes dipping in the foam is nothing else than the Sister of

Charity.

SCUPPAUG

The crowd was decidedly a heterogeneous one on the edge of which I stood at eight o'clock, A.M., one scorching July morning, under an awning at the end of a rickety pier, waiting for the excursion-steamer which was to convey us to the distant sand-banks over which the clear waters lap, away down below the green-sloped highlands of Neversink,—sea-shoal banks, from which silvery fishes were warning us off with their waving fins.

Now the crowd, being a heterogeneous one, as I have said, had the vulgar element pervading it to a dominant extent. It consisted mainly of such "common people," indeed, that no person of exquisite refinement would have thought of feeling his way through it, unless his hands were protected by what Aminadab Sleek calls "little goat-gloves." And yet there is another style of mitten, a large, unshapely, bloated knuckle-fender, stuffed with curled hair, that might be far more appropriate to the operation of shouldering in among such "muscular Christians" as the majority around, on the occasion to which I refer.

In the resorts to which habitual tipplers have recourse for consolation of the spirituous kind, a cheap variety is usually on hand to meet exigencies,—the exigency of a commercial crisis, for instance, when the last lonely dime of the drinker is painfully extracted from the pocket, to be replaced by seven inconsiderable cents. This abomination is termed "all sorts" by the publican and

his indispensable sinner. It is the accumulation of the drainage of innumerable gone drinks,—fancy and otherwise. The exquisite in the "little goat-gloves" would not hob-nob with me in that execrable beverage; no more would I with him; and yet one of its components may be the aristocratic Champagne. In the social elements of a water-excursion-party may be found the "all sorts" of a particular kind of city-life,—the good of it and the bad of it, with a dash of something that is very low. But I am going to talk about the thing as I found it,—the rough side of the social millstone; and, seeing that I have suffered nothing by contact with it, I suppose no harm will come to such as listen to the little I have got to say on the subject.

A benevolent desire to launch far and wide the already well-spread reputation of the New York rowdy impels the present writer to declare his conviction, that, should Physiology offer a premium for the production of a perfect and unmitigated specimen of *polisson*, Experience would seek for it among the choice representatives of the class in question,—ay, and find it, too. Nor would the ardor of search be chilled by the suggestion of scarcity conveyed in the practical sarcasm of the sly old cynic, when he scorched human nature with a horn lantern by instituting a search with it on the sun-bright highways for an unauthenticated type of man. And yet the rowdy, like many another ugly and repulsive thing, may have his use. In the East Indies, it is customary to keep a live turtle in the wayside water-tanks which are so precious in that thirsty land, the movements

of the animal, as well as the industry with which it devours all noxious particles which chance may have conveyed into the waters, serving to keep them in a condition of purity and health. The rowdy is the turtle in the tank,—so far, at least, as being an ugly beast to look at and a great promoter of commotion,—by which latter service he keeps the community alive to the presence of impure particles in the social element, if he does not assist in getting rid of them. An alligator in an aquarium might furnish a better comparison for him in other respects.

Of this class there are many branches; but the one with which I have to deal at present is to be studied to most advantage by visiting some pier of the great river-frontage of New York, to which excursion-boats rush emulously at appointed hours, crossing and jostling each other with proper respect for their individual rights as free commoners of the well-tilled waters. Here, as, with audacious disregard of the chance-medley of smashed guards and obliterated paddle-boxes, the great water-wagons graze wheels upon the ripple-paved turnpike of the river, the steamboat-runner, squalidly red from the effects of last night's carouse, and reeking sensibly of the alcoholic "morning call," may be recognized by the native manner in which he makes the pier peculiarly his own,—by the inflammatory character—which unremitting dissipation has imparted to the inhaling apparatus of his unclassical features,—by the filthy splendor of his linen, which a low-buttoning waistcoat, gorgeous and dirty likewise, unbosoms disadvantageously to the gaze of the

beholder,—by the invariable "diamond" pin, of gift-book style, with which the juncture of the first-mentioned integument is effected, if not adorned,—and, above all, by the massive guards and guy-chains with which his watch is hitched on to the belaying arrangements of Chatham Street garments, the original texture and tint of which have long been superseded by predominant grease. Hand and elbow with the professional city-rowdy the steamboat-runner is ever to be found: at the cribs, where the second-rate men of the "fancy" hold their secret meetings; clinging about the doors of the Court of Sessions, where, as eavesdroppers,—for they are known to the door-keeper, and rejected from the friendship of that stern officer,—they strive, with ear at keyhole, to catch a word or two which may give them a clue to the probable fate of "Jim," who is in the dock there, on his trial for homicide or some such light peccadillo; loitering round the dog-pit institutions, where the quadrupeds look so amazingly like men and the men like quadrupeds,—especially in that one where the eye of taste may be gratified by the supernatural symmetry of the stuffed bull-terriers in glass cases, the enormity of which specimens is accounted for by the gentlemanly proprietor, who tells us that "the man as stuffed 'em never stuffed anythink else afore, only howls."

I suppose it must have been the tacit acknowledgment of some superiority by me inappreciable, that accorded to one individual of the small assemblage of roughs under notice a decidedly influential position among the congenial spirits hovering around.

The superior blanchness of this person's linen would seem to indicate that his association with mere runners was but occasional and for commercial ends. Also might that conclusion have been deduced from the immaculacy of his cream-white Panama hat. That was a jaunty article, with upturned brim, the pride of which was discernible in the very simplicity with which it sat, unadulterated by band or trimmings, upon the closely cropped, mole-colored head of the wearer. Thirty dollars, at least, must have been its marketable value. Instead of being fitted with chain-tackle, the watch of this superior person maintained its connection with the open air by means of a broad watered ribbon plummeted straight down his leg with a seal hardly inferior in size to a deep-sea lead. This daring recurrence to first principles is much to be observed, of late, among the choice spirits of the so-called "sporting" fraternity of New York.

This man, as I supposed, and as I subsequently heard from my friend Locus, of the police, who came upon the pier, was not a runner now, but had risen from that respectable rank by large exercise of the virtues so intimately associated with it. In attributing an exalted position to him I was right. He was the keeper of a house of entertainment for emigrants in one of the down-town tributaries to Broadway, where tickets could also be had for California and most other parts of the world, at an advance of not more than one-third on the rates charged at the regular steamboat-offices. Considering the respectability of this person's occupation, I was surprised when Locus referred to him,

familiarly, as "Flashy Joe," adding that he was widely known, if not respected, and that he would, probably, be entitled some day to have his portrait placed in a gallery of which he, Locus, knew, but into which my aesthetic researches have not hitherto led me.

There was another noticeable character in the rough part of the heterogeneous crowd. This man, while on a footing of the greatest intimacy with the runners, was far inferior to them in the matter of dress. Locus, in reply to my queries, informed me that he was a professional oyster-opener; but, judging from his appearance in general, I should have guessed that he was a professional oyster-catcher also,—a human dredge, employed chiefly at the bottom of the sea. A perfect Hercules in build, "Lobster Bob," as Locus called him, made his appearance on the wharf with two enormous creels of oysters, one balanced on each hip, with the careless ease of unconscious strength. His costume consisted solely of a ragged blue cotton shirt and trousers, immense knobby cowskin boots white with age, and a mouldy drab felt hat. The button-less blue shirt flapped widely open from his brawny chest; and his shirt-sleeves, rolled up to the shoulder, gave full display to a pair of arms of a mould not usually to be found outside the prize-ring, and but seldom within the sanctuary of that magic circle. As if in compensation for the merely nominal allowance of costume tolerated by this crustacean professor, his chest and arms were entirely covered with a wild arabesque of tattoo-work, in blue and red. Many and original artists must have been employed in the embellishment

of Robert's tawny hide. The one to whose sense of the fitness of things was intrusted the illustration of his right arm had seized boldly upon the oval protuberance of the biceps, a few skilfully disposed dots and dashes upon which had converted it into a face which was no bad reproduction of Bob's own. On the broad flexors of his sun-bronzed fore-arm there blazed a grand device which might have puzzled a whole college of heralds to interpret,—a combination of eagles and banners and shields, coruscating with stars and radiant with stripes. But more suggestive than any of these shams was the stern reality of a purple scar which ran round the back of his neck, from ear to ear. More than one man must have been hurt, when that scar was made.

Notwithstanding the bull-dog projection of this formidable giant's lower jaw, there sometimes beamed on his face that good-natured expression often observable in men whose unusual muscular development places them on a footing of physical superiority to those with whom they shoulder along the road of life. When the runners "chaffed" him, nevertheless, it was in a mild way, and with manifest respect for his muscle,—a sentiment in no way diminished when he suddenly clutched one of the least cautious among them by the nape of the neck, and held him out at arm's-length, for some seconds, over the drowny water that kept lazily licking at the green moss on the old stakes of the rickety pier.

Even unto the Prince of Darkness, saith proverbial philosophy, let us concede his due. If, then, a single ray of

good illuminates at some happy moment the dark spirit of these roughs, let it be recorded with that bare, unfledged truth which is so much better a bird than uncandor with the finest of feathers upon him.

Feeling his way into the circle with a stick, there came a poor blind man, of diminutive stature, squeezing beneath his left arm a suffocating accordion, which, every now and then, as he stumbled against the uneven planks of the wharf, gave a querulous squeak, doleful in its cadence as the feeble quavers evoked by Mr. William Davidge, comedian, from the asthmatic clarionet of Jem Bags, in the farce of the "Wandering Minstrel."

"Come, b'hoys!" cried Lobster Bob, "let's have a squeeze of music from Billy, afore the boat comes up"; and, plumping down one of his creels in the middle of the crowd, he lifted up the musician, and seated him upon the rough, cold oysters,—a throne fitter, certainly, for a follower of Neptune than a votary of Apollo. One of the roughs danced an ungraceful measure to the music of the accordion, mimicking, as he did so, the queer contortions into which the musician twisted his features in perfect harmony with his woful strains. All of them were gentle to the blind man, though, as if his darkness had brought to them a ray of light; and presently one of them takes off the musician's cap, drops into it a silver dime, and goes the rounds of the throng with many jocose appeals in favor of the owner, to whom he presently returns it in a condition of silver lining analogous to, but more substantial than that of the poet's cloud.

But now the poor music of the accordion was quite extinguished by the bellowing of the brazen horns of the "cotillon band" on the deck of our expected steamer, as she rounded to from the upper piers at which she had been taking in excursionists. This caused a stir in the crowd under the awning, many of whom were fathers of families taking their wives and children out for a rare holiday. The smallest babies had not been left at home, but were there in all their primary scarletude, set off by the whitest of lace-frilled caps trimmed with the bluest of ribbons. And now came the time for these small choristers to take up the "wondrous tale"; for the big horns had ceased to wrangle, and the crushing and rushing of the crowd woke up infancy to a sense of its wrongs and a consciousness of the necessity for action.

There were some nice-looking girls around, neatly dressed, too, though by no means in their Sunday-best; for *la petite New-Yorkaise* is aware of the mishaps to be encountered by those who venture far out to sea in ships. They had sweethearts with them, for the most part, or brothers, or cousins, mayhap: but they were sadly neglected by these protectors, as we stood under the awning on the pier; for the male mind was full of fishing, and the male hands were employed in making up tackle with a most unscientific kind of skill.

And now the final rush came, as the steamer made fast alongside the outermost of the boats already lying at the pier, across the decks of which our heterogeneous crowd began to

make its way with as little scrambling as possible, on account of the petticoat-hoops, which are capital monitors in a turmoil. Women swayed their babies like balancing-poles, as they tottered along the gangway-plank. Men tried to secure themselves from being brushed into eternity by the powerful sweep of skirts. My own personal reminiscence of this transit from the wharf to the gallant bark of our choice is melancholy and vague, being marked chiefly to memory by the complicated curse bestowed upon me by a hideous old Irish-woman, whose oranges I accidentally upset in the crowd, and by whom I was subsequently derided with buffo song and scurrilous dance as long as the steamer remained within hearing and sight.

Away we are steaming down the bay, at last, a motley party of men, women, and children of all sizes and sorts: husbands, wives, milliners and their lovers; young men who have brought no young women with them, because they have come for fishing and fishing only; and advanced fathers, who, making a virtue of having brought out wife and child for a holiday, now leave them a good deal to take care of themselves, and devote all their energies to being pleasant as remotely from them as circumstances will allow. Roughs, to the number of a dozen or so, mostly steamboat-runners and their congeners, are of the party, headed by Flashy Joe. Lobster Bob has set up his oyster-plank in a central situation. Venders of unfresh-looking refreshments have established themselves on board; and the bar-keeper, near the fore-castle, is preparing himself for the worst.

By-and-by I noticed a good-looking specimen of Young New York on board, and was introduced to him by a cigar. He was a handsome boy, with dark, oval face, and Arabian eyes. The silky black line that just marked the curve of his upper lip gave promise of a splendid moustache; his closely crisped black hair was but just visible below the rim of his jaunty straw hat, the band of which was a tasselled cord of crimson silk; while his lithe figure was suggested rather than displayed by the waving lines of his loose brown jacket with tapering *gigot* sleeves. His low-cut shirt-collar and narrow silken neck-tie were in the style called "English," as quite decidedly, also, were his cross-barred trousers of balloony build; nor, although thus flinging himself for diversion into the vortex of the lower crowd, had he foregone the luxury of tan-colored kid gloves and patent-leather shoes. He was a bright boy, and precocious as a lady-killer; for, already, before we had left far behind us the pleasant slopes of Bay Ridge, with its peeping villa-parapets of brown and white, and its umbrageous masses of chromatic green, he had evidently engaged the affections of an *espiègle* little straw-bonnet-maker, who did her hair something like his own, in a close-curved crop, and had her pretty little person safely shut up in a high-necked dress.

That young lady had a suitor with her, who was clearly not a sweetheart, however, by a good deal, but merely a follower tolerated for the day, and on the score of convenience only. He was a tall, gaunt, pale young man, with long hands and

feet, slouching shoulders and narrow chest, and a strange, indescribable nullity of expression dwelling upon his features. He did not appear to be encouraged much by little Straw-Goods, whose mind was probably occupied with prospective possibilities of being led out to the festive dance by Young New York. Altogether, he was an unsatisfactory-looking young man, his unfinished look reminding one of raw material, though it would have been hard to say for what.

But the band had now ceased mellowing out the favorite medley which begins with "Casta Diva" and runs over into the lovely cadences of "Gentle Annie"; and the abrupt transition from that mournful strain to a light cotillon air warned four hundred holiday-people that the festive dance was about to begin on the wide floor between the engine-room and the saloon. Cotillons are a leading pastime among the people; and as the water was pretty smooth down the bay, and a splendid breeze rushed aft between-decks, many laughing girls and well-dressed matronly women now made their appearance on the floor. Dancing without noise is a luxury as yet uncalled for. Dancers must have music, we know,—and what is music, but wild noise caught and trained? But these cotillons were unnecessarily boisterous, on account of the roughs, who, looked upon as outsiders by the better-behaved portion of the throng, got up a wild war-step of their own on the skirts of the legitimate dance, dishonestly appropriating to their coarse movements the music intended for it alone, as they stamped and shouted, and wheeled

round with a ludicrous affectation of grace, in the space between the dancers and the bulkheads of the deck. One of these roughs, a drunken, young fellow of wiry build, whose hair, face, eyes, nose, ears, and hands were all of the color of tomato-catchup, might have made an excellent low comedian, had destiny led him upon the "boards." He had just been complaining to his companions that his hand had been refused for the dance by a girl at whom he pointed the red finger of wrath,—a pale, but very interesting seamstress, who was whirling about with a much decenter young man than the red one is ever likely to be. And then he nobly took his revenge by the clever, but unprincipled way in which he caricatured the rather remarkable dancing of the young man who was the object of his hate, and whose style of movement it would not be consistent with this writer's duty to deny was amenable to severity, and must, in any society, have subjected him who indulged in it to the scorn of the flouter and the contempt of all high-minded men.

All through the dance, it was a thing to be remembered, how superior in deportment the women were to the men. Probably it was from a natural instinct for grace, and abhorrence of the ludicrous, that they merely skimmed through the figures, without any of the demonstrations displayed by their beaux. It was pleasant to look at the nice little straw-goods damsel with the boyish hair, and to mark the contrast between her kitten glidings and the premeditated atrocities of Raw Material, as he wove and unwove his ungainly legs before her, in a manner

appalling to witness. She had only a common palm-leaf fan, I remarked,—worth, probably, about two cents. But Young New York, as he waited patiently for the deadly ocean-malady to fall upon Raw Material, who was unquestionably a subject for it, and was drinking, besides, drew tightly up his tan-colored gloves, and, twirling with finger and thumb the air just about where it must some day be displaced by the future tendrils of the coming moustache, affirmed upon oath his intention of presenting her with a fan more worthy of her well-kept little hand, ere kind Fortune could have time to drop another excursion-ticket into her work-basket.

Should the solemn question arise as to how I knew that one of these young women was in the straw-bonnet line, another a milliner, a third a dress-maker, and so forth, I will answer it by stating that the left forefinger of the seamstress, long since vulcanized into a little file, furnishes the infallible sign which indicates the class. To the practised eye, the varieties are known by many a token: by the smart little close-grained cereal bonnet which little Straw-Goods put away before she came into the dance; by the spicy creation of silk and ribbons which roosts demurely, like a cedar-bird, on the back hair of the pale girl, who is a milliner; by the superior manner in which the hoops are disguised in the structure surrounding that blonde young wife with the pink baby, who is a dressmaker. Let the lofty read studiously the signs that in the heavens are portentous of storm or of shine; I, who am of commoner clay, must content myself

with deciphering those that are of earth.

But a "sea-change" was upon us. Last night there was a tornado of rain and thunder and wind, and the effects of the latter were now perceptible, as we began to rock through the groundswell off Sandy Hook, and down past the twin light-houses on the high, sunny ridges of Neversink. The music ceased, the dancers deserted the 'tween-decks floor, and, as the rocking of the boat increased, there arose in the direction of the ladies' cabin audible suggestions of woe.

And now the twin beacon-towers of Neversink were far, far behind, having taken a position with regard to us which may be described, in military phrase, as an *échelon* movement upon our flank, and we went surging through a fleet of little green fishing-boats, manned each by a single fisherman in a red shirt, whose two horny hands appeared to be a couple too few for the hauling in of the violet and silver *porgies*, with which the well of his little green craft was alive and flapping. In the middle of this fleet we rounded to, the anchor was let go, and we were hard and fast upon the Fishing-Banks.

The first thing done, on these excursions, by those who come to fish,—which includes nearly all the men,—is to establish a claim somewhere along the railing of the steamer, by attaching to it a strong whip-cord fishing-line, with a leaden sinker and hook of moderate size,—the latter lashed on, in most instances, with a disregard for art which must be intensely disgusting to any man whose piscatorial memories are associated with the wily

salmon and the epicurean trout. Triangular tin boxes are brought along by the fishermen to hold their bait, which consists of soft clams, liberally sprinkled with salt to keep them in a wholesome condition for the afternoon take. Attaching a line to any part of the rail or combings, or to any projecting point of the boat, establishes the *droit de pêche* at that particular spot,—a right respected with such rigorous etiquette, that the owner may then go his way with confidence, to inspect the resources of the bar, or join the gay throng of dancers between-decks.

There must be something singularly fascinating in this curious pastime of fishing with a hand-line from the jumping-off places of a steamboat or pier. Doubtless it is from a defective sympathetic organization that the writer of these pages does not himself "seem to see it." Nevertheless, I look upon the illusion with a respect almost bordering upon fear, although not quite in that spirit of veneration which moves illogical savages to fall down and worship the stranger lunatic whom chance has led to their odorous residences. Dwelling one summer on the New Jersey shore, I used to loiter, day after day, upon a deserted wharf, at the end of which was ever to be seen a broad-beamed fisherman, sitting upon an uncomfortably wooden chair, from which he dabbled perpetually with his whip-cord line in the shallow water that washed the slimy face-timbers of the wharf. There he sat, day after day, and all day, and, for aught I know, all through the summer-night, a big-timbered, sea-worthy man, reading contentedly a daily paper of local growth, and pulling

up never a better bit of sea-luck than the puny, mean-spirited fishling called by unscientific persons the *burgall*. I would at any time have freely given ten cents for the privilege of overhauling old broad-beam's carpet-bag, which he always placed before him on the string-piece, with a view, I suppose, of frustrating anything like a guerrilla plunder-movement upon his widely extended rear. Ay, there must be something strangely entrancing in dragging the shoal waters with a hand-line, for unsuspecting, easily duped members of the acanthopterygian tribe of fishes,—under which alarming denomination come, I believe, nearly all the finny fellows to be met with on these sand-banks, from the bluefish to the burgall. Only think how stuck up they would be above the lowly mollusks of the same waters, if they knew themselves as Acanthopterygii, and were aware that their great-grandfather was an Acanthopteryx before them, and so away back in the age of waters that once were over all! "Very ancient and fish-like" is their genealogy, to be sure!

In the far-away days, when Neversink *was*, but the twin beacon-towers that now watch upon its heights were *not*,—when Sandy Hook was a hook only, and not a telegraph-station, from which the first glimpse of an inward-bound argosy is winked by lightning right in at the window of the down-town office where Mercator sits jingling the coins in his trousers' pockets,—in those days, the only excursion-boats that rocked upon the groundswell over the pale, sandy reaches of the Fishing-Banks were the tiny barklets that shot out on calm days from the sweeping

coves, with their tawny tarred-and-feathered crews: for of such grotesque result of the decorative art of Lynch doth ever remind me the noble Indian warrior in his plumes and paint. Unfitted, by the circumscribed character of their sea-craft, their tackle, and their skill, for pushing their enterprise out into the deeper water, where the shark might haply say to the horse-mackerel,—"Come, old horse, let you and me hook ourselves on, and take these foolish tawny fellows and their brown cockle-shell down into the under-tow,"—they supplied their primitive wants by enticing from the shallows the beautiful, sunny-scaled shoal-fish, well named by ichthyologists *Argyrops*, the "silver-eyed." But the poor Indian, who knew no Greek,—poor old savage, lament for him with a scholarly *eheu!*—called this shiner of the sea, in his own barbarous lingo, *Scuppaug*. Can any master of Indian dialects tell us whether that word, too, means "him of the silver eye"? If it does, revoke, O student, your shrill *eheu* for the Greekless and untrousered savage of the canoe, suppress your feelings, and go steadily into rhabdomancy with several divining-rods, in search of the Pierian spring which must surely exist somewhere among the guttural districts of the Ojibbeway tongue.

And here there is diversion for philologist as well as fisherman; for while the latter is catching the fish, the former may seize on the fact, that in this word, *Scuppaug*, is to be found the origin of the two separate names by which *Argyrops*, the silver-eyed, is miscalled in local vernacular. True to the national proclivity for clipping names, the fishermen of Rhode Island

appeal to him by the first syllable only of his Indian one,—for in the waters thereabout he is talked of by the familiar abbreviation, *Scup*. But to the excursionists and fishermen of New York he is known only as *Porgy*, or *Paugie*, a form as obviously derived from the last syllable of his Indian name as the emphatic "siree" of our greatest orators is from the modest monosyllable "sir." *Porgy* seems to be the accepted form of the word; but letters of the old, unphonetic kind are poor guides to pronunciation. And a beautiful, clean-scaled fish is *Porgy*,—whose *g*, by-the-by, as I learned from a funny man in the heterogeneous crowd, is pronounced "hard, as in 'git eowt.'" A lovely fish is he, as he comes dripping up the side of the vessel from his briny pastures. Silver is the pervading gleam of his oval form; but while he is yet wet and fresh, the silver is flushed with a chromatic radiance of gold, and violet, and pale metallic green, all blending and harmonizing like the mother-o'-pearl lustre in some rare sea-shell. The true value of this fish is not of a commercial kind, for he cannot be deemed particularly exquisite in a gastronomic sense; neither is he staple as a provision of food. His virtue lies in the inducement offered to him by the citizen of moderate means, who, for a trifling outlay, can secure for himself and family the invigorating influence of the salt sea-breezes, by having a run down outside the Hook any fine day in summer, with an object. The average weight of the porgy of these banks may be set down at about a pound.

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