THE FAR WEST:

OR,

A TOUR BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS.

EMBRACING

OUTLINES OF WESTERN LIFE AND SCENERY; SKETCHES OF THE PRAIRIES, RIVERS, ANCIENT MOUNDS, EARLY SETTLEMENTS OF THE FRENCH, ETC., ETC.

"If thou be a severe, sour-complexioned man, then I here disallow thee to be a competent judge."—IZAAK WALTON.

"I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry, 'Tis all barren.'"—STERNE.

"Chacun à son stile; le mien, comme vous voyez, n'est pas laconique."—ME. DE SEVIGNE.

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ERRATA.

Page 10, eleven lines from top, for *martlet*-tower, read watch-tower.

" 32, eight	"	*dose*,	,,	doze.
" 62, five	"	bottom, erase *of*, occurring twice.		
" 113, three	"	top, for *sit*,	read	sits.
" 118, fifteen	"	*stopped*,	"	stooped.
" 125, twelve	"	*staving*,	"	starving.
" 137, two	"	bot., *Indian*,	"	India.
" 141, fourteen,	"	*these*,	"	those.

THE FAR WEST.

XXIII.

"Say, ancient edifice, thyself with years
Grown gray, how long upon the hill has stood
Thy weather-braving tower?"

HURDIS.

"An *honourable* murder, if you will;
For naught he did in hate, but all in honour."

"The whole broad earth is beautiful
To minds attuned aright."

ROBT. DALE OWEN.

THE view of St. Charles from the opposite bank of the Missouri is a fine one. The turbid stream rolls along the village nearly parallel with the interval upon which it is situated. A long line of neat edifices, chiefly of brick, with a few ruinous old structures of logs and plastering, relics of French or Spanish taste and domination, extend along the shore; beyond these, a range of bluffs rear themselves proudly above the village, crowned with their academic hall and a neat stone church, its spire surmounted by the cross. Between these structures, upon a spot somewhat more elevated, appears the basement section of "a stern round tower of former days," now a ruin; and, though a very peace-

able pile of limestone and mortar, well-fitted in distant view to conjure up a host of imaginings: like Shenstone's Ruined Abbey, forsooth,

> "Pride of ancient days;
> Now but of use to grace a rural scene,
> Or bound our vistas."

The history of the tower, if tower it may be styled, is briefly this. During the era of Spanish rule in this region, before its cession to France half a century since, this structure was erected as a martlet-tower or magazine. Subsequently it was dismantled, and partially fell to ruins, when the novel project was started to plant a *windmill* upon the foundation. This was done; but either the wind was too high or too low, too frequent or too rare, or neither; or there was no corn to grind, or the projector despaired of success, or some other of the fifty untoward circumstances which suggest themselves came to pass; the windmill ere long fell to pieces, and left the old ruin to the tender mercies of time and tempest, a monument of chance and change.

The evening of my arrival at St. Charles I strolled off at about sunset, and, ascending the bluffs, approached the old ruin. The walls of rough limestone are massively deep, and the altitude cannot now be less than twenty feet. The view from the spot is noble, and peculiarly impressive at the sunset hour. Directly at your feet lies the village, from the midst of which come up the rural sounds of evening; the gladsome laugh of children at their sports; the whistle of the home-plodding labourer; the quiet hum of gossips around the open doors;

while upon the river's brink a huge steam-mill sends forth its ceaseless "boom, boom" upon the still air. Beneath the village ripples the Missouri, with a fine sweep both above and below the town not unlike the letter S; while beyond the stream extends its heavily-timbered bottom: one cluster of trees directly opposite are Titanic in dimensions. Upon the summit of the bluff, in the shadow of the ruin by your side, lies a sunken grave. It is the grave of a *duellist.* Over it trail the long, melancholy branches of a weeping willow. A neat paling once protected the spot from the wanderer's footstep, but it is gone now; only a rotten relic remains. All is still. The sun has long since gone down. One after another the evening sounds have died away in the village at the feet, and one after another the lights have twinkled forth from the casements. A fresh breeze is coming up from the water; the rushing wing of the night-hawk strikes fitfully upon the ear; and yonder sails the beautiful "boat of light," the pale sweet crescent. On that crescent is gazing many a distant friend! What a spot—what an hour to meditate upon the varying destinies of life! I seated myself upon the foot of the grave, which still retained some little elevation from the surrounding soil, and the night-wind sighed through the trailing boughs as if a requiem to him who slumbered beneath. *Requiescat in pace,* in no meaningless ceremony, might be pronounced over him, for his end was a troubled one. Unfortunate man! you have gone to your account; and that tabernacle in which once burned a beautiful flame has long since been mingling with the dust:

but I had rather be even as thou art, cold in an unhonoured grave, than to live on and wear away a miserable remnant of existence, that "guilty thing" with crimsoned hand and brow besprinkled with blood. To drag out a weary length of days and nights; to feel life a bitterness, and all its verdure scathed; to walk about among the ranks of men a being

"Mark'd,
And sign'd, and quoted for a deed of shame;"

to feel a stain upon the palm which not all the waters of ocean could wash away; a smell of blood which not all the perfumes of Arabia could sweeten; ah! give me death rather than this! That the custom of duelling, under the present arrangements of society and code of honour, in some sections of our country, is necessary, is more than problematical; that its practice will continue to exist is certain; but, when death ensues, "'tis the surviver dies."

The stranger has never, perhaps, stood upon the bluffs of St. Charles without casting a glance of anxious interest upon that lone, deserted grave; and there are associated with its existence circumstances of melancholy import. Twenty years ago, he who lies there was a young, accomplished barrister of superior abilities, distinguished rank, and rapidly rising to eminence in the city of St. Louis. Unhappily, for words uttered in the warmth of political controversy, offence was taken; satisfaction demanded; a meeting upon that dark and bloody ground opposite the city ensued; and poor B—— fell, in the sunshine of his spring, lamented by all

who had known him. Agreeable to his request in issue of his death, his remains were conveyed to this spot and interred. Years have since rolled away, and the melancholy event is now among forgotten things; but the old ruin, beneath whose shadow he slumbers, will long remain his monument; and the distant traveller, when he visits St. Charles, will pause and ponder over his lonely grave.*

> "But let no one reproach his memory.
> His life has paid the forfeit of his folly,
> Let that suffice."

Ah! the valuable blood which has steeped the sands of that steril island in the Mississippi opposite St. Louis! Nearly thirty years ago a fatal encounter took place between Dr. F. and Dr. G., in which the latter fell: that between young B. and a Mr. C. I have alluded to, and several other similar combats transpired on the spot at about the same time. The bloody affair between Lieutenants Biddle and Pettis, and that between Lucas and Benton, are of more recent date, and, with several others, are familiar in the memory of all. The spot has been fitly named "Murder" or "Blood Island." Lying in the middle of the stream, it is without the jurisdiction of either of the adjoining states; and deep is the curse which has descended upon its shores!

* One year after the above was written, the author, on a visit to St. Charles, walked out to this spot. The willow was blasted; the relics of the paling were gone; the grave was levelled with the soil, but the old ruin was there still.

The morning star was beaming beautifully forth from the blue eastern heavens when I mounted my horse for a visit to that celebrated spot, "*Les Mamelles*." A pleasant ride of three miles through the forest-path beneath the bluffs brought me at sunrise to the spot. Every tree was wreathed with the wild rose like a rainbow; and the breeze was laden with perfume. It is a little singular, the difficulty with which visiters usually meet in finding this place. The Duke of Saxe Weimar, among other dignitaries, when on his tour of the West several years since, tells us that he lost his way in the neighbouring prairie by pursuing the river road instead of that beneath the bluffs. The natural eminences which have obtained the appropriate appellation of Mamelles, from their striking resemblance to the female breast, are a pair of lofty, conical mounds, from eighty to one hundred feet altitude, swelling up perfectly naked and smooth upon the margin of that celebrated prairie which owes to them a name. So beautifully are they paired and so richly rounded, that it would hardly require a Frenchman's eye or that of an Indian to detect the resemblance designated, remarkable though both races have shown themselves for bestowing upon objects in natural scenery significant names. Though somewhat resembling those artificial earth-heaps which form such an interesting feature of the West, these mounds are, doubtless, but a broken continuation of the Missouri bluffs, which at this point terminate from the south, while those of the Mississippi, commencing at the same point, stretch away at right angles to the west.

The mounds are of an oblong, elliptical outline, parallel to each other, in immediate proximity, and united at the extremities adjoining the range of highlands by a curved elevation somewhat less in height. They are composed entirely of earth, and in their formation are exceedingly uniform and graceful. Numerous springs of water gush out from their base. But an adequate conception of these interesting objects can hardly be conveyed by the pen; at all events, without somewhat more of the quality of patience than chances to be the gift of my own wayward instrument. In brief, then, imagine a huge *spur*, in fashion somewhat like to that of a militia major, with the enormous rowel stretching off to the south, and the heel-bow rounding away to the northeast and northwest, terminated at each extremity by a vast excrescence; imagine all this spread out in the margin of an extended prairie, and a tolerably correct, though inadequate idea of the outline of the Mamelles is obtained. The semicircular area in the bow of the spur between the mounds is a deep dingle, choked up with stunted trees and tangled underbrush of hazels, sumach, and wild-berry, while the range of highlands crowned with forest goes back in the rear. This line of heights extends up the Missouri for some distance, at times rising directly from the water's edge to the height of two hundred feet, rough and ragged, but generally leaving a heavily-timbered bottom several miles in breadth in the interval, and in the rear rolling off into high, undulating prairie. The bluffs of the Mississippi extend to the westward in a similar

manner, but the prairie interval is broader and more liable to inundation. The distance from the Mamelles to the confluence of the rivers is, by their meanderings, about twenty or thirty miles, and is very nearly divided into prairie and timber. The extremity of the point is liable to inundation, and its growth of forest is enormous.

The view from the summit of the Mamelles, as the morning sun was flinging over the landscape his ruddy dyes, was one of eminent, surpassing loveliness. It is celebrated, indeed, as the most beautiful prairie-scene in the Western Valley, and one of the most romantic views in the country. To the right extends the Missouri Bottom, studded with farms of the French villagers, and the river-bank margined with trees which conceal the stream from the eye. Its course is delineated, however, by the blue line of bluffs upon the opposite side, gracefully curving towards the distant Mississippi until the trace fades away at the confluence. In front is spread out the lovely Mamelle Prairie, with its waving ocean of rich flowers of every form, and scent, and hue, while green groves are beheld swelling out into its bosom, and hundreds of cattle are cropping the herbage. In one direction the view is that of a boundless plain of verdure; and at intervals in the deep emerald is caught the gleam from the glassy surface of a lake, of which there are many scattered over the peninsula. All along the northern horizon, curving away in a magnificent sweep of forty miles to the west, rise the hoary cliffs of the Mississippi, in the opposite state, like towers and castles; while

the windings of the stream itself are betrayed by the heavy forest-belt skirting the prairie's edge. It is not many years since this bank of the river was perfectly naked, with not a fringe of wood. Tracing along the bold façade of cliffs on the opposite shore, enveloped in their misty mantle of azure, the eye detects the embouchure of the Illinois and of several smaller streams by the deep-cut openings. To the left extends the prairie for seventy miles, with an average breadth of five from the river, along which, for most of the distance, it stretches. Here and there in the smooth surface stands out a solitary sycamore of enormous size, heaving aloft its gigantic limbs like a monarch of the scene. Upward of fifty thousand acres are here laid open to the eye at a single glance, with a soil of exhaustless fertility and of the easiest culture.

The whole plain spread out at the foot of the Mamelles bears abundant evidence of having once been submerged. The depth of the alluvion is upward of forty feet; and from that depth we are told that logs, leaves, coal, and a stratum of sand and pebbles bearing marks of the attrition of running waters, have been thrown up. Through the middle of the prairie pass several deep canals, apparently ancient channels of the rivers, and which now form the bed of a long irregular lake called *Marais Croche;* there is another lake of considerable extent called *Marais Temps Clair*. This beautiful prairie once, then, formed a portion of that immense lake which at a remote period held possession of the American Bottom; and at the base of the grace-

ful Mamelles these giant rivers merrily mingled their waters, and then rolled onward to the gulf. That ages have since elapsed, the amazing depth of the alluvial and vegetable mould, and the ancient monuments reposing upon some portions of the surface, leave no room for doubt.* By heavy and continued deposites of alluvion, the vast peninsula gradually rose up from the waters; the Missouri was forced back to the bluff La Charbonnière, and the rival stream to the Piasa cliffs of Illinois.

St. Charles, Mo.

XXIV.

"Westward the star of empire holds its way."

BERKELEY.

"Travellers entering here behold around
A large and spacious plain, on every side
Strew'd with beauty, whose fair grassy ground,
Mantled with green, and goodly beautified
With all the ornaments of Flora's pride."

"The flowers, the fair young flowers."

"Ye are the stars of earth."

TEN years ago, and the pleasant little village of St. Charles was regarded as quite the frontier-post of civilized life; now it is a flourishing town, and an early stage in the traveller's route to the Far West. Its origin, with that of most of the early settlements in this section of the valley, is French, and

* See Appendix.

some few of the peculiar characteristics of its founders are yet retained, though hardly to the extent as in some other villages which date back to the same era. The ancient style of some of the buildings, the singular costume, the quick step, the dark complexion, dark eyes and dark hair, and the merry, fluent flow of a nondescript idiom, are, however, at once perceived by the stranger, and indicate a peculiar people. St. Charles was settled in 1769, and for upward of forty years retained its original name, *Les Petites Cotes*. For some time it was under the Spanish government with the rest of the territory, and from this circumstance and a variety of others its population is made up of a heterogeneous mass of people, from almost every nation under the sun. Quite a flood of German emigration has, within six or seven years past, poured into the county. That wizard spell, however, under which all these early French settlements seem to have been lying for more than a century, St. Charles has not, until within a few years past, possessed the energy to throw off, though now the inroads of American enterprise upon the ancient order of things is too palpable to be unobserved or mistaken. The site of the town is high and healthy, upon a bed of limestone extending along the stream, and upon a narrow *plateau* one or two miles in extent beneath the overhanging bluffs. Upon this interval are laid off five streets parallel with the river, only the first of which is lined with buildings. Below the village the alluvion stretches along the margin of the stream for three miles, until, reaching the termination of the

highlands at the Mamelles, it spreads itself out to the north and west into the celebrated prairie I have described. St. Charles has long been a great thoroughfare to the vast region west of the Missouri, and must always continue so to be: a railroad from St. Louis in this direction must pass through the place, as well as the national road now in progress. These circumstances, together with its eligible site for commerce; the exhaustless fertility of the neighbouring region, and the quantities of coal and iron it is believed to contain, must render St. Charles, before many years have passed away, a place of considerable mercantile and manufacturing importance. It has an extensive steam flouring-mill in constant operation; and to such an extent is the cultivation of wheat carried on in the surrounding country, for which the soil is pre-eminently suited, that in this respect alone the place must become important. About six miles south of St. Charles, upon the Booneslick road, is situated a considerable settlement, composed chiefly of gentlemen from the city of Baltimore. The country is exceedingly beautiful, healthy, and fertile; the farms are under high cultivation, and the tone of society is distinguished for its refinement and intelligence.

The citizens of St. Charles are many of them Catholics; and a male and female seminary under their patronage are in successful operation, to say nothing of a nunnery, beneath the shade of which such institutions invariably repose. "St. Charles College," a Protestant institute of two or three years' standing, is well supported, having four pro-

fessors and about a hundred students. Its principal building is a large and elegant structure of brick, and the seminary will doubtless, ere long, become an ornament to the place. At no distant day it may assume the character and standing of its elder brothers east of the Alleghanies; and the muse that ever delights to revel in college-hall may strike her lyre even upon the banks of the far-winding, wilderness Missouri.

Among the heterogeneous population of St. Charles are still numbered a few of those wild, daring spirits, whose lives and exploits are so intimately identified with the early history of the country, and most of whose days are now passed beyond the border, upon the broad buffalo-plains at the base of the Rocky Mountains. Most of them are trappers, hunters, *couriers du bois*, traders to the distant post of Santa Fé, or *engagés* of the American Fur Company. Into the company of one of these remarkable men it was my fortune to fall during my visit at St. Charles; and not a little to my interest and edification did he recount many of his "hairbreadth 'scapes," his "most disastrous chances,"

"His moving accidents by flood and field."

All of this, not to mention sundry sage items on the most approved method of capturing *deer*, *bar*, *buffalo*, and *painters*, I must be permitted to waive. I am no tale-teller, "but your mere traveller, believe me," as Ben Jonson has it. The proper home of the buffalo seems now to be the vast

plains south and west of the Missouri border, called the Platte country, compared with which the prairies east of the Mississippi are mere meadows in miniature. The latter region was, doubtless, once a favourite resort of the animal, and the banks of the "beautiful river" were long his grazing-grounds; but the onward march of civilization has driven him, with the Indian, nearer the setting sun. Upon the plains they now inhabit they rove in herds of thousands; they regularly migrate with change of season, and, in crossing rivers, many are squeezed to death. Dead bodies are sometimes found floating upon the Missouri far down its course.

With the village and county of St. Charles are connected most of the events attending the early settlement of the region west of the Mississippi; and during the late war with Great Britain, the atrocities of the savage tribes were chiefly perpetrated here. Early in that conflict the Sacs and Foxes, Miamis, Pottawattamies, Iowas, and Kickapoo Indians commenced a most savage warfare upon the advanced settlements, and the deeds of daring which distinguished the gallant "rangers" during the two years in which, unaided by government, they sustained, single-handed, the conflict against a crafty foe, are almost unequalled in the history of warfare. St. Charles county and the adjoining county of Booneslick were the principal scene of a conflict in which boldness and barbarity, courage and cruelty, contended long for the mastery. The latter county to which I have alluded

received its name from the celebrated Daniel Boone. After being deprived, by the chicanery of law, of that spot for which he had endured so much and contended so boldly in the beautiful land of his adoption, we find him, at the close of the last century, journeying onward towards the West, there to pass the evening of his days and lay away his bones. Being asked "*why* he had left that dear Kentucke, which he had discovered and won from the wild Indian, for the wilderness of Missouri," his memorable reply betrays the leading feature of his character, the *primum mobile* of the man: "Too crowded! too crowded! I want elbow-room!" At the period of Boone's arrival in 1798, the only form of government which existed in this distant region was that of the "Regulators," a sort of military or hunters' republic, the chief of which was styled *commandant*. To this office the old veteran was at once elected, and continued to exercise its rather arbitrary prerogatives until, like his former home, the country had become subject to other laws and other councils. He continued here to reside, however, until the death of his much-loved wife, partner of all his toils and adventures, in 1813, when he removed to the residence of his son, some miles in the interior. Here he discovered a large and productive salt-lick, long and profitably worked, and which still continues to bear his name and give celebrity to the surrounding country. To this lick was the old hunter accustomed to repair in his aged days, when his sinews were unequal to the chase, and lie in wait for the deer

which frequented the spring. In this occupation and in that of trapping beavers he lived comfortably on until 1818, when he calmly yielded up his adventurous spirit to its God. What an eventful life was that! How varied and wonderful its incidents! How numerous and pregnant its vicissitudes! How strange the varieties of natural character it developed! The name of Boone will never cease to be remembered so long as this Western Valley remains the pride of a continent, and the beautiful streams of his discovery roll on their teeming tribute to the ocean!

Of the Indian tribe which formerly inhabited this pleasant region, and gave a name to the river and state, scarcely a vestige is now to be seen. The only associations connected with the savages are of barbarity and perfidy. Upon the settlers of St. Charles county it was that Black Hawk directed his first efforts; and, until within a few years, a stoccade fort for refuge in emergency has existed in every considerable settlement. Among a variety of traditionary matter related to me relative to the customs of the tribe which formerly resided near St. Charles, the following anecdote from one of the oldest settlers may not prove uninteresting.

"Many years ago, while the Indian yet retained a crumbling foothold upon this pleasant land of his fathers, a certain Cis-atlantic naturalist — so the story goes—overflowing with laudable zeal for the advancement of science, had succeeded in penetrating the wilds of Missouri in pursuit of his favourite study. Early one sunny morning a man in strange

attire was perceived by the simple natives running about their prairie with uplifted face and outspread palms, eagerly in pursuit of certain bright flies and insects, which, when secured, were deposited with manifest satisfaction into a capacious tin box at his girdle. Surprised at a spectacle so novel and extraordinary, a fleet runner was despatched over the prairie to catch the curious animal and conduct him into the village. A council of sober old chiefs was called to *sit upon* the matter, who, after listening attentively to all the phenomena of the case, with a sufficiency of grunting, sagaciously and decidedly pronounced the pale-face a *fool*. It was in vain the unhappy man urged upon the assembled wisdom of the nation the distinction between a *natural* and a naturalist. The council grunted to all he had to offer, but to them the distinction was without a difference; they could comprehend not a syllable he uttered. 'Actions speak louder than words'—so reasoned the old chiefs; and as the custom was to *kill* all their own fools, preparation was forthwith commenced to administer this summary cure for folly upon the unhappy naturalist. At this critical juncture a prudent old Indian suggested the propriety, as the fool belonged to the 'pale faces,' of consulting their 'Great Father' at St. Louis on the subject, and requesting his presence at the execution. The sentence was suspended, therefore, for a few hours, while a deputation was despatched to General Clarke, detailing all the circumstances of the case, and announcing the intention of killing the fool as soon as possible.

The old general listened attentively to the matter, and then quietly advised them, as the *fool* was a *pale face*, not to kill him, but to conduct him safely to St. Louis, that he might dispose of him himself. This proposition was readily acceded to, as the only wish of the Indians was to rid the world of a *fool*. And thus was the worthy naturalist relieved from an unpleasant predicament, not, however, without the loss of his box of bugs; a loss he is said to have bewailed as bitterly as, in anticipation, he had bewailed the loss of his head." For the particulars of this anecdote I am no voucher; I give the tale as told me; but as it doubtless has its origin in fact, it may have suggested to the author of "The Prairie" that amusing character, "Obed Battius, M.D.," especially as the scene of that interesting tale lies in a neighbouring region.

It was a sultry afternoon when I left St. Charles. The road for some miles along the bottom runs parallel with the river, until, ascending a slight elevation, the traveller is on the prairie. Upon this road I had not proceeded many miles before I came fully to the conclusion, that the route I was then pursuing would never conduct me and my horse to the town of Grafton, Illinois, the point of my destination. In this idea I was soon confirmed by a half-breed whom I chanced to meet. Receiving a few general instructions, therefore, touching my route, all of which I had quite forgotten ten minutes after, I pushed forth into the pathless prairie, and was soon in its centre, almost buried, with my horse beneath me, in the monstrous vegetation.

Between the parallel rolls of the prairie, the size of the weeds and undergrowth was stupendous; and the vegetation heaved in masses heavily back and forth in the wind, as if for years it had flourished on in rank, undisturbed luxuriance. Directly before me, along the northern horizon, rose the white cliffs of the Mississippi, which, as they went up to the sheer height, in some places, of several hundred feet, presented a most mountain-like aspect as viewed over the level surface of the plain. Towards a dim column of smoke which curled lazily upward among these cliffs did I now direct my course. The broad disk of the sun was rapidly wheeling down the western heavens; my tired horse could advance through the heavy grass no faster than a walk; the pale bluffs, apparently but a few miles distant, seemed receding like an *ignis fatuus* as I approached them; and there lay the swampy forest to ford, and the "terrible Mississippi" beyond to ferry, before I could hope for food or a resting-place. In simple verity, I began to meditate upon the yielding character of prairie-grass for a couch. And yet, of such surpassing loveliness was the scene spread out around me, that I seemed hardly to realize a situation disagreeable enough, but from which my thoughts were constantly wandering. The grasses and flowering wild-plants of the Mamelle Prairie are far-famed for their exquisite brilliancy of hue and gracefulness of form. Among the flowers my eye detected a species unlike to any I had yet met with, and which seemed indigenous only here. Its fairy-formed co-

rolla was of a bright enamelled crimson, which, in the depths of the dark herbage, glowed like a living coal. How eloquently did this little flower bespeak the being and attributes of its Maker. Ah!

> "There is religion in a flower;
> Mountains and oceans, planets, suns, and systems,
> Bear not the impress of Almighty power
> In characters more legible than those
> Which he has written on the tiniest flower
> Whose light bell bends beneath the dewdrop's weight."

One who has never looked upon the Western prairie in the pride of its blushing bloom can hardly conceive the surpassing loveliness of its summer Flora; and, if the idea is not easy to conceive, still less is it so to convey. The autumn flowers in their richness I have not yet beheld; and in the early days of June, when I first stood upon the prairies, the beauteous sisterhood of spring were all in their graves; and the sweet springtime of the year it is when the gentle race of flowers dance over the teeming earth in gayest guise and profusion. In the first soft days of April, when the tender green of vegetation begins to overspread the soil scathed by the fires of autumn, the *viola*, primrose of the prairie, in all its rare and delicate forms; the *anemone* or wind-flower; the blue dewy harebell; the pale oxlip; the flowering *arbute*, and all the pretty family of the pinks and lilies lie sprinkled, as by the enchantment of a summer shower, or by the tripping footsteps of Titania with her fairies, over the landscape. The blue and the white then tint the perspective, from the most

limpid cerulean of an *iris* to the deep purple of the pink; from the pearly lustre of the cowslip to the golden richness of the buttercup. In early spring-time, too, the island groves of the prairies are also in flower; and the brilliant crimson of the *cercis Canadensis*, or Judas-tree; the delightful fragrance of the *lonicera* or honeysuckle, and the light yellow of the *jasimum*, render the forests as pleasant to the smell as to the eye. But spring-time passes away, and with her pass away the fair young flowers her soft breath had warmed into being. Summer comes over the prairies like a giant; the fiery dog-star rages, and forth leap a host of bright ones to greet his coming. The *heliotrope* and *helianthus*, in all their rich variety; the wild rose, flinging itself around the shrub-oak like a wreath of rainbows; the *orchis*, the balmy thyme, the burgamot, and the asters of every tint and proportion, then prevail, throwing forth their gaudy, sunburnt petals upon the wind, until the whole meadow seems arrayed in the royal livery of a sunset sky. Scarcely does the summer begin to decline, and autumn's golden sunlight to stream in misty magnificence athwart the landscape, than a thousand gorgeous plants of its own mellow hue are nodding in stately beauty over the plain. Yellow is the garniture of the autumnal Flora of the prairies; and the haughty golden-rod, and all the splendid forms of the *gentiana*, commingling with the white and crimson *eupatorium*, and the red spire of the *liatris*, everywhere bespangle the scene; while the trumpet-formed corolla of the *bignonia radicans* glitters

in the sunbeams, amid the luxuriant wreathing of ivy, from the tall capitals of the isolated trees. All the *solidago* species are in their glory, and every variety of the *lobelia;* and the blood-red sumach in the hollows and brakes, and the *sagittaria*, or arrow-head, with its three-leaved calyx and its three white petals darting forth from the recesses of the dark herbage, and all the splendid forms of the aquatic plants, with their broad blossoms and their cool scroll-like leaves, lend a finished richness of hue to the landscape, which fails not well to harmonize with the rainbow glow of the distant forest.

> "——Such beauty, varying in the light
> Of gorgeous nature, cannot be portrayed
> By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
> But is the property of those alone
> Who have beheld it, noted it with care,
> And, in their minds, recorded it with love."

What wonder, then, that, amid a scene like this, where the summer reigned, and young autumn was beginning to anticipate its mellow glories, the traveller should in a measure have forgotten his vocation, and loitered lazily along his way!

Portage des Sioux, Mo.

XXV.

"There's music in the forest leaves
When summer winds are there,
And in the laugh of forest girls
That braid their sunny hair."

HALLECK.

"The forests are around him in their pride,
The green savannas, and the mighty waves;
And isles of flowers, bright floating o'er the tide
That images the fairy world it laves."

HEMANS.

THERE is one feature of the Mamelle Prairie, besides its eminent beauty and its profusion of flowering plants, which distinguishes it from every other with which I have met. I allude to the almost perfect uniformity of its surface. There is little of that undulating, wavelike slope and swell which characterizes the peculiar species of surface called prairie. With the exception of a few lakes, abounding with aquatic plants and birds, and those broad furrows traversing the plain, apparently ancient beds of the rivers, the surface appears smooth as a lawn. This circumstance goes far to corroborate the idea of alluvial origin. And thus it was that, lost in a mazy labyrinth of grass and flowers, I wandered on over the smooth soil of the prairie, quite regardless of the whereabout my steps were conducting me. The sun was just going down when my horse entered a slight footpath leading into a point of woodland upon

the right. This I pursued for some time, heedlessly presuming that it would conduct me to the banks of the river; when, lo! to my surprise, on emerging from the forest, I found myself in the midst of a French village, with its heavy roofs and broad piazzas. Never was the lazy hero of Diedrich Knickerbocker—luckless Rip—more sadly bewildered, after a twenty years' dose among the Hudson Highlands, than was your loiterer at this unlooked-for apparition. To find one's self suddenly translated from the wild, flowery prairie into the heart of an aged, moss-grown village, of such foreign aspect, withal, was by no means easy to reconcile with one's notions of reality. Of the name, or even the existence of the village, I had been quite as ignorant as if it had never possessed either; and in vain was it that I essayed, in my perplexity, to make myself familiar with these interesting items of intelligence by inquiry of the primitive-looking beings whom I chanced to encounter, as I rode slowly on into the village through the tall stoccades of the narrow streets. Every one stared as I addressed him; but, shaking his head and quickening his pace, pointed me on in the direction I was proceeding, and left me to pursue it in ignorance and single blessedness. This mystery—for thus to my excited fancy did it seem—became at length intolerable. Drawing up my horse before the open door of a cottage, around which, beneath the galleries, were gathered a number of young people of both sexes, I very peremptorily made the demand *where I was*. All stared, and some few took it upon them, graceless youths, to

laugh; until, at length, a dark young fellow, with black eyes and black whiskers, stepped forward, and, in reply to my inquiry repeated, informed me that the village was called "*Portage des Sioux;*" that the place of my destination was upon the opposite bank of the Mississippi, several miles above—too distant to think of regaining my route at that late hour; and very politely the dark young man offered to procure for me accommodation for the night, though the village could boast no inn. Keeping close on the heels of my *conducteur*, I again began to thrid the narrow lanes of the hamlet, from the doors and windows of every cottage of which peeped forth an eager group of dark-eyed women and children, in uncontrolled curiosity at the apparition of a stranger in their streets at such an advanced hour of the day. The little village seemed completely cut off from all the world beside, and as totally unconscious of the proceedings of the community around as if it were a portion of another hemisphere. The place lies buried in forest except upon the south, where it looks out upon the Mamelle Prairie, and to the north is an opening in the belt of woods along the river-bank, through which, beyond the stream, rise the white cliffs in points and pinnacles like the towers and turrets of a castellated town, to the perpendicular altitude of several hundred feet. The scene was one of romantic beauty, as the moonbeams silvered the forest-tops and cliffs, flinging their broad shadows athwart the bosom of the waters, gliding in oily rippling at their base. The site of Portage des Sioux is about seven miles above

the town of Alton, and five below the embouchure of the Illinois. Its landing is good; it contains three or four hundred inhabitants, chiefly French; can boast a few trading establishments, and, as is invariably the case in the villages of this singular people, however inconsiderable, has an ancient Catholic church rearing its gray spire above the low-roofed cottages. Attached to it, also, is a "common field" of twelve hundred *arpens*—something less than as many acres—stretching out into the prairie. The soil is, of course, incomparably fertile. The garden-plats around each door were dark with vegetation, overtopping the pickets of the enclosures; and away to the south into the prairie swept the broad maize-fields, nodding and rustling in all the gorgeous garniture of summer.

My *conducteur* stopped, at length, at the gate of a small brick tenement, the only one in the village, whose modern air contrasted strangely enough with the venerable aspect of everything else; and having made known my necessities through the medium of sundry Babel gibberings and gesticulations, he left me with the promise to call early in the morning and see me on my way.

"What's your *name*, any how?" was the courteous salutation of mine host, as I placed my foot across his threshold, after attending to the necessities of the faithful animal which had been my companion through the fatigues of the day. He was a dark-browed, swarthy-looking man, with exceedingly black hair, and an eye which one might have suspected of Indian origin but for the genuine cun-

ning—the "lurking devil"—of its expression. Replying to the unceremonious interrogatory with a smile, which by no means modified the haughty moroseness of my landlord's visage, another equally civil query was proposed, to which I received the hurried reply, "Jean Paul de ——." From this *amiable* personage I learned, by dint of questioning, that the village of Portage des Sioux had been standing about half a century: that it was originally settled by a colony from Cahokia: that its importance now was as considerable as it ever had been: that it was terribly shaken in the great earthquakes of 1811, many of the old cottages having been thrown down and his own house rent from "turret to foundation-stone"—the chasm in the brick wall yet remaining—and, finally, that the village owed its name to the stratagem of a band of Sioux Indians, in an expedition against the Missouris. The legend is as follows: "The Sioux being at war with a tribe of the Missouris, a party descended the Upper Mississippi on an expedition for pillage. The Missouris, apprized of their approach, laid in ambush in the woods at the mouth of the river, intending to take their enemies by surprise as their canoes doubled the point to ascend. The Sioux, in the depths of Indian subtlety, apprehending such a manoeuvre, instead of descending to the confluence, landed at the Portage, took their canoes upon their backs, and crossed the prairie to the Indian village on the Missouri, several miles above. By this stratagem the design of their expedition was accomplished, and they had returned to their canoes in safety with their plunder long

before the Missouris, who were anxiously awaiting them at their ambuscade, were aware of their first approach."

Supper was soon served up, prepared in the neatest French fashion. While at table a circumstance transpired which afforded me some little diversion. Several of the villagers dropped in during the progress of the meal, who, having seated themselves at the board, a spirited colloquy ensued in the *patois* of these old hamlets—a species of *gumbo-French*, which a genuine native of *La Belle France* would probably manage to unravel quite as well as a Northern Yankee. From a few expressions, however, the meaning of which were obvious, together with sundry furtive glances of the eye, and divers confused withdrawals of the gaze, it was not very difficult to detect some pretty free remarks upon the stranger-guest. All this was suffered to pass with undisturbed *nonchalance*, until the meal was concluded; when the hitherto mute traveller, turning to the negro attendant, demanded in familiar French a glass of water. *Presto!* the effect was electric. Such visages of ludicrous distress! such stealthy glancing of dark eyes! such glowing of sallow cheeks! The swarthy landlord at length hurriedly ejaculated, "*Parlez vous Français?*" while the dark-haired hostess could only falter "*Pardonnez moi!*" A hearty laugh on my own part served rather to increase than diminish the *empressement*, as it confirmed the suspicion that their guest had realized to the full extent their hospitable remarks. Rising from the table to put an end to rather an awkward

scene, I took my *portfeuille* and seated myself in the gallery to sketch the events of the day. But the dark landlord looked with no favouring eye upon the proceeding; and, as he was by no means the man to stand for ceremony, he presently let drop a civil hint of the propriety of *retiring;* the propriety of complying with which civil hint was at once perceived, early as was the hour; and soon the whole house and village was buried in slumber. And then "the stranger within their gates" rose quietly from his couch, and in a few moments was luxuriating in the fresh night-wind, laden with perfumes from the flowerets of the prairie it swept. And beautifully was the wan moonlight playing over forest, and prairie, and rustling maize-field, and over the gray church spire, and the old village in its slumbering. And the giant cliffs rose white and ghastly beyond the dark waters of the endless river, as it rolled on in calm magnificence, "for ever flowing and the same for ever." And associations of the scene with other times and other men thronged "thick and fast" upon the fancy.

The first vermeil flush of morning was firing the eastern forest-tops, when a single horseman was to be seen issuing from the narrow lanes of the ancient village of Portage des Sioux, whose inhabitants had not yet shaken off the drowsiness of slumber, and winding slowly along beneath the huge trees skirting the prairie's margin. After an hour of irregular wandering through the heavy meadow-grass, drenched and dripping in the dews, and glistening in the morning sunlight, he plunges into the

old woods on his right, and in a few moments stands beneath the vineclad sycamores, with the brilliant, trumpet-formed flower of the *bignonia* suspended from the branches upon the margin of a stream. It is the "Father of Waters," and beyond its bounding bosom lies the little hamlet of Grafton, slumbering in quiet beauty beneath the cliffs. The scene is a lovely one: the mighty river rolling calmly and majestically on—the moss-tasselled forest upon its bank—the isles of brightness around which it ripples—the craggy precipice, rearing its bald, broad forehead beyond—the smoking cottages at the base, and the balmy breath of morning, with fragrance curling the blue waters, are outlines of a portraiture which imagination alone can fill up.

Blast after blast from the throat of a huge horn suspended from the limb of an aged cotton-wood, went pealing over the waters; but all the echoes in the surrounding forest had been awakened, and an hour was gone by, before a float, propelled by the sturdy sinews of a single brace of arms, had obeyed the summons. And so the traveller sat himself quietly down upon the bank beneath the tree-shade, and luxuriated on the feast of natural scenery spread out before him.

The site of the town of Grafton is an elevated strip of bottom-land, stretching along beneath the bluffs, and in this respect somewhat resembling Alton, fifteen or twenty miles below. The *locale* of the village is, however, far more delightful than that of its neighbour, whatever the relative advantages for commerce they may boast, though those of the

former are neither few nor small. Situated at the *mouth* of the Illinois as to navigation; possessing an excellent landing for steamers, an extensive and fertile interior, rapidly populating, and inexhaustible quarries for the builder, the town, though recently laid off, is going on in the march of improvement; and, with an hundred other villages of the West, bids fair to become a nucleus of wealth and commerce.

Grafton, Ill.

XXVI.

"When breath and sense have left this clay,
In yon damp vault, oh lay me not;
But kindly bear my bones away
To some lone, green, and sunny spot."

"Away to the prairie! away!
Where the sun-gilt flowers are waving,
When awaked from their couch at the breaking of day,
O'er the emerald lawn the gay zephyrs play,
And their pinions in dewdrops are laving."

On the morning of my arrival at Grafton, while my brisk little hostess was making ready for my necessities, I stepped out to survey the place, and availed myself of an hour of leisure to visit a somewhat remarkable cavern among the cliffs, a little below the village, the entrance of which had caught my attention while awaiting the movements of the ferryman on the opposite bank of the Mississippi. It is approached by a rough footpath along the

river-margin, piled up with huge masses of limestone, which have been toppled from the beetling crags above : these, at this point, as before stated, are some hundred feet in perpendicular height. The orifice of the cave is elliptical in outline, and somewhat regular, being an excavation by the whirling of waters apparently in the surface of the smooth escarpment; it is about twenty feet in altitude, and as many in width. Passing the threshold of the entrance, an immediate expansion takes place into a spacious apartment some forty or fifty feet in depth, and about the same in extreme height: nearly in the centre a huge perpendicular column of solid rock rears itself from the floor to the roof. From this point the cavern lengthens itself away into a series of apartments to the distance of several hundred feet, with two lesser entrances in the same line with that in the middle, and at regular intervals. The walls of the cave, like everything of a geological character in this region, are composed of a secondary limestone, abounding in testaceous fossils. The spot exhibits conclusive evidence of having once been subject to diluvial action; and the cavern itself, as I have observed, seems little else than an excavation from the heart of an enormous mass of marine petrifaction. Large quantities of human bones of all sizes have been found in this cavern, leaving little doubt that, by the former dwellers in this fair land, the spot was employed as a catacomb. I myself picked up the *sincipital* section of a scull, which would have ecstasied a virtuoso beyond measure; and

several of the *lumbar vertebræ*, which, if they prove nothing else, abundantly demonstrate the aboriginal natives of North America to have been no pigmy race. The spot is now desecrated by the presence of a party of sturdy coopers, who could not, however, have chosen a more delightful apartment for their handicraft; rather more taste than piety, however, has been betrayed in the selection. The view of the water and the opposite forest from the elevated mouth of the cavern is very fine, and three or four broad-leafed sycamores fling over the whole a delightful shade. The waters of the river flow onward in a deep current at the base, and the fish throw themselves into the warm sunlight from the surface. What a charming retreat from the fiery fervour of a midsummer noon!

The heavy bluffs which overhang the village, and over which winds the great road to the north, though not a little wearisome to surmount, command from the summit a vast and beautiful landscape. A series of inclined planes are talked of by the worthy people of Grafton to overcome these bluffs, and render their village less difficult of inland ingress and regress; and though the idea is not a little amusing, of rail-cars running off at an angle of forty-five degrees, yet when we consider that this place, if it ever becomes of *any* importance, must become a grand thoroughfare and dépôt on the route from St. Louis and the agricultural regions of the Missouri to the northern counties of Illinois, the design seems less chimerical *than it might be*. A charter, indeed, for a railroad

from Grafton, through Carrolton to Springfield, has been obtained, a company organized, and a portion of the stock subscribed; while another corporation is to erect a splendid hotel. The traveller over the bluffs, long before he stands upon their summit, heartily covets any species of locomotion other than the back of a quadruped. But the scenery, as he ascends, caught at glimpses through the forest, is increasingly beautiful. Upon one of the loftiest eminences to the right stand the ruins of a huge stone-heap; the tumulus, perchance, of some red-browed chieftain of other days. It was a beautiful custom of these simple-hearted sons of the wilderness to lay away the relics of their loved and honoured ones even upon the loftiest, greenest spots of the whole earth; where the freed spirit might often rise to look abroad over the glories of that pleasant forest-home where once it roved in the chase or bounded forth upon the path of war. And it is a circumstance not a little worthy of notice, that veneration for the dead is a feeling universally betrayed by uncivilized nations. The Indian widow of Florida annually despoils herself of her luxuriant tresses to wreathe the headstone beneath which reposes the bones of her husband. The Canadian mother, when her infant is torn from her bosom by the chill hand of death, and, with a heart almost breaking, she has been forced to lay him away beneath the sod, is said, in the touching intensity of her affection, to bathe the tombstone of her little one with that genial flood which Nature poured through her veins for his nourish-

ment while living. The Oriential nations, it is well known, whether civilized or savage, have ever, from deepest antiquity, manifested an eloquent solicitude for the sepulchres of their dead. The expiring Israelite, we are always told, "was gathered to his fathers;" and the tombs of the Jewish monarchs, some of which exist even to the present day, were gorgeously magnificent. The nations of modern Turkey and India wreathe the tombs of their departed friends with the gayest and most beautiful flowers of the season; while the very atmosphere around is refreshed by fountains.

From the site of the stone-heap of which I have spoken, and which may or may *not* have been erected to the memory of some Indian chieftain, a glorious cosmorama of the whole adjacent region, miles in circumference, is unfolded to the eye. At your feet, far below, flow on the checkered waters of the Mississippi, gliding in ripples among their emerald islands; while at intervals, as the broad stream comes winding on from the west, is caught the flashing sheen of its surface through the dense old woods that fringe its margin. Beyond these, to the south, lies spread the broad and beautiful Mamelle Prairie, even to its faint blue blending with the distant horizon laid open to the eye, rolling and heaving its heavy herbage in the breeze to the sunlight like the long wave of ocean. And the bright green island-groves, the cape-like forest-strips swelling out upon its bosom, the flashing surface of lakes and water-sheets, almost buried in the luxuriance of vegetation, with thousands of

aquatic birds wheeling their broad flight over them, all contribute to fill up the lineaments of a scene of beauty which fails not to enrapture the spectator. Now and then along the smooth meadow, a darker luxuriance of verdure, with the curling cabin-smoke upon its border, and vast herds of domestic cattle in its neighbourhood, betray the presence of man, blending *his* works with the wild and beautiful creations of Nature. On the right, at a distance of two miles, come in the placid waters of the Illinois, from the magnificent bluffs in the back-ground stealing softly and quietly into the great river through the wooded islands at its mouth. The day was a sultry one; the atmosphere was like the breath of a furnace; but over the heights of the bluffs swept the morning air, fresh and cool from the distant prairie. For some miles, as is invariably the case upon the banks of the Western rivers, the road winds along among bluffs and sink-holes; and so constantly does its course vary and diverge, that a pocket compass is anything but a needless appendage. Indeed, all his calculations to the contrary notwithstanding, the traveller throughout the whole of this region describes with his route a complete Virginia fence. The road is not a little celebrated for its tortuosity. At length the traveller emerges upon a prairie. On its edge beneath the forest stands a considerable settlement, bordering on Macoupin Creek, from which it takes a name. In the latter part of 1816 this settlement was commenced, and was then the most northern location of whites in the Territory of Illinois.

It was evening, at the close of a sultry day, that the village of Carrolton appeared before me among the trees. I was struck with the quiet air of simple elegance which seemed to pervade the place, though its general outlines are those of every other Western village I have visited. One broad, regular street extends through the town, upon either side of which stand the stores and better class of private residences; while in the back-ground, scattered promiscuously along the transverse avenues, are log-cabins surrounded by cornfields, much like those in the villages of the French. Three sides of the town are bounded by forest, while the fourth opens upon the prairie called "String Prairie." In the centre of the village, upon the principal street, is reserved a square, in the middle of which stands the courthouse, with other public structures adjacent, and the stores and hotels along its sides. One thing in Carrolton which struck me as a little singular, was the unusual diversity of religious denominations. Of these there are not less than five or six; three of which have churches, and a fourth is setting itself in order to build; and all this in a village of hardly one thousand inhabitants. The courthouse is a handsome edifice of brick, two stories, with a neat spire. The neighbouring region is fertile and healthy; well proportioned with prairie and timber, well watered by the Macoupin and Apple Creeks, and well populated by a sturdy, thriving race of yeomanry. This is, indeed, strictly an agricultural village; and, so far as my own ob-

servation extended, little attention is paid or taste manifested for anything else.

About a dozen miles north of Carrolton is situated the village of Whitehall, a flourishing settlement in the prairie's edge, from the centre of which, some miles distant, it may be seen. Three years ago the spot was an uncultivated waste; the town has now two houses of worship, a school, an incorporation for a seminary, two taverns, six hundred inhabitants, and a steam mill to feed them withal. A few miles from this place, on the outskirts of another small settlement, I was met by a company of emigrants from Western New-York. The women and children were piled upon the top of the household stuff with about as much ceremony as if they constituted a portion thereof, in a huge lumbering baggage-wagon, around which dangled suspended pots and kettles, dutch-ovens and tin-kitchens, cheese-roasters and bread-toasters, all in admired confusion, jangling harsh discord. The cart-wheels themselves, as they gyrated upon the parched axles, like the gates of Milton's hell on their hinges, "grated harsh thunder." In the van of the cavalcade strode soberly on the patriarch of the family, with his elder sons, axe upon shoulder, rifle in hand, a veritable Israel Bush. For six weeks had the wanderers been travelling, and a weary, bedusted-looking race were they, that emigrant family.

The rapidity with which a Western village goes forward, and begins to assume importance among the nations, after having once been born and

christened, is amazing. The mushrooms of a summer's night, the wondrous gourd of Jonah, the astonishing bean of the giant-killer, or the enchantments of the Arabian Nights, are but fit parallels to the growth of the prairie-village of the Far West. Of all this I was forcibly reminded in passing through quite a town upon my route named Manchester, where I dined, and which, if my worthy landlord was not incorrect, two years before could hardly boast a log-cabin. It is now a thriving place, on the northern border of Mark's Prairie, from which it may be seen four or five miles before entering its streets; it is surrounded by a body of excellent timber, always the *magnum desideratum* in Illinois. This scarcity of timber will not, however, be deemed such an insurmountable obstacle to a dense and early population of this state as may have been apprehended, when we consider the unexampled rapidity with which a young growth pushes itself forward into the prairies when once protected from the devastating effects of the autumnal fires; the exhaustless masses of bituminous coal which may be thrown up from the ravines, and creeks, and bluffs of nearly every county in the state; the facility of ditching, by the assistance of blue grass to bind the friable soil, and the luxuriance of hedge-rows for enclosures, as practised almost solely in England, France, and the Netherlands; and, finally, the convenience of manufacturing brick for all the purposes of building. There is not, probably, any quarter of the state destined to become more populous and power-

ful than that section of Morgan county through which I was now passing. On every side, wherever the traveller turns his eye, beautiful farms unfold their broad, wavy prairie-fields of maize and wheat, indicative of affluence and prosperity. The *worst* soil of the prairies is best adapted to wheat; it is *generally* too fertile; the growth too rapid and luxuriant; the stalk so tall and the ear so heavy, that it is lodged before matured for the sickle. Illinois, consequently, can never become a celebrated wheat region, though for corn and coarser grains it is now unequalled.

The rapidity with which this state has been peopled is wonderful, especially its northern counties. In the year 1821, that section of country embraced within the present limits of Morgan county numbered but twenty families; in 1830 its population was nearly fourteen thousand, and cannot now be estimated at less than seventeen thousand! Many of the settlers are natives of the New-England States; and with them have brought those habits of industrious sobriety for which the North has ever been distinguished. In all the enterprise of the age, professing for its object the amelioration of human condition and the advancement of civilization, religion, and the arts, Morgan county stands in advance of all others in the state. What a wonderful revolution have a few fleeting years of active enterprise induced throughout a region once luxuriating in all the savageness of nature; where the wild prairie-rose "blushed unseen," and the wilder forest-son pursued the deer! Fair villa-

ges, like spring violets along the meadow, have leaped forth into being, to bless and to gladden the land, and to render even this beautiful portion of God's beautiful world—though for ages a profitless waste—at length the abode of intelligence, virtue, and peace.

It was near the close of the day that the extent and frequency of the farms on either side, the more finished structure of the houses, the regularity of enclosures, the multitude of vehicles of every description by which I was encountered, and the dusty, hoof-beaten thoroughfare over which I was travelling, all reminded me that I was drawing nigh to Jacksonville, the principal town in Illinois. Passing "Diamond Grove," a beautiful forest-island of nearly a thousand acres, elevated above the surrounding prairie to which it gives a name, and environed by flourishing farms, the traveller catches a view of the distant village stretching away along the northern horizon. He soon enters an extended avenue, perfectly uniform for several miles, leading on to the town. Beautiful meadows and harvest-fields on either side sweep off beyond the reach of the eye, their neat white cottages and palings peeping through the enamelled foliage. To the left, upon a swelling upland at the distance of some miles, are beheld the brick edifices of "Illinois College," relieved by a dark grove of oaks resting against the western sky. These large buildings, together with the numerous other public structures, imposingly situated and strongly relieved, give to the place a dignified, city-like aspect in distant

view. After a ride of more than a mile within the immediate suburbs of the town, the traveller ascends a slight elevation, and the next moment finds himself in the public square, surrounded on every side by stores and dwellings, carts and carriages, market-people, horses, and hotels.

Jacksonville, Ill.

XXVII.

"What a large volume of adventures may be grasped in this little span of life by him who interests his heart in everything, and who, having his eyes to see what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, misses nothing he can *fairly* lay his hands on."—STERNE'S *Sentimental Journal.*

"Take this in good part, whatsoever thou be,
And wish me no worse than I wish unto thee."

TURNER.

IT was a remark of that celebrated British statesman, Horace Walpole, that the vicissitudes of no man's life were too slight to prove interesting, if detailed in the simple order of their occurrence. The idea originated with the poet Gray, if an idea which has suggested itself to the mind of every man may be appropriated by an individual. Assuming the sentiment as true, the author of these SKETCHES has alone presumed to lay his observations and adventures as a traveller before the *majesty of the public;* and upon this principle *solely* must they rely for any interest they may

claim. A mere glance at those which have preceded must convince the reader that their object has been by no means exact geographical and statistical information. Errors and omissions have, doubtless, often occurred in the hasty view which has been taken: partially through negligence, sometimes through lack of knowledge, misinformation, or attempt at brevity, but never through aforethought or malice prepense. Upon the whole, the writer admits himself completely laid open to criticism; and, should any public-spirited worthy deem it his duty to rise up in judgment and avenge the wrongs of literature and the community, he has undoubted right so to do: nathless, he is most veritably forewarned that he will hardly gather up his "labour for his pains!" But *allons*.

It is only ten or twelve years since the town site of Jacksonville, now, perhaps, the most flourishing inland village in Illinois, was first *laid off;* and it is but within the past five years that its present unprecedented advancement can be dated. Its site is a broad elevated roll in the midst of a beautiful prairie; and, from whatever point it is approached, few places present a more delightful prospect. The spot seems marked and noted by Nature for the abode of man. The neighbouring prairie is undulating, and the soil uncommonly rich, even in this land of fertility. It is mostly under high cultivation, and upon its northern and western edge is environed by pleasant groves, watered by many a "sweet and curious brook." The public square in the centre of the town is of noble dimensions,

occupied by a handsome courthouse and a market, both of brick, and its sides filled up with dwelling-houses, stores, law-offices, a church, bank, and hotel. From this point radiate streets and avenues in all directions: one through each side of every angle near its vertex, and one through the middle of every side; so that the town-plat is completely cut up into rectangles. If I mistake not in my description, it will be perceived that the public square of Jacksonville may be entered at no less than twelve distinct avenues. In addition to the spacious courthouse, the public buildings consist of three or four churches. One of these, belonging to the Congregational order, betrays much correct taste; and its pulpit is the most simply elegant I remember ever to have seen. It consists merely of a broad platform in the chancel of the building, richly carpeted; a dark mahogany bar without drapery, highly polished; and a neat sofa of the same material in a plain back-ground. The outline and proportion are perfect; and, like the doctrines of the sect which worships here, there is an air of severe, dignified elegance about the whole structure, pleasing as it is rare. The number of Congregational churches in the West is exceedingly small; and as it is always pleasant for the stranger in a strange land to meet the peculiarities of that worship to which from childhood-days he has been attached, so it is peculiarly grateful to the New-England emigrant to recognise in this distant spot the simple faith and ceremony of the Pilgrims. Jacksonville is largely made up of emigrants from

the North; and they have brought with them many of their customs and peculiarities. The State of Illinois may, indeed, be truly considered the New-England of the West. In many respects it is more congenial than any other to the character and prejudices of the Northern emigrant. It is not a slave state; internal improvement is the grand feature of its civil polity; and measures for the universal diffusion of intellectual, moral, and religious culture are in active progression. In Henry county, in the northern section of the state, two town-plats have within the past year been laid off for colonies of emigrants from Connecticut, which intend removing in the ensuing fall, accompanied each by their minister, physician, lawyer, and with all the various artisans of mechanical labour necessary for such communities. The settlements are to be called Wethersfield and Andover. Active measures for securing the blessings of education, religion, temperance, etc., have already been taken.*

The edifices of "Illinois College," to which I have before alluded, are situated upon a beautiful eminence one mile west of the village, formerly known as "Wilson's Grove." The site is truly delightful. In the rear lies a dense green clump of oaks, and in front is spread out the village, with a boundless extent of prairie beyond, covered for miles with cultivation. Away to the south, the wild-flower flashes as gayly in the sunlight, and

* Since the above was written, the emigrants have removed.

waves as gracefully when swept by the breeze, as centuries ago, when no eye of man looked upon its loveliness. During my stay at Jacksonville I visited several times this pleasant spot, and always with renewed delight at the glorious scenery it presented. Connected with the college buildings are extensive grounds; and students, at their option, may devote a portion of each day to manual labour in the workshop or on the farm. Some individuals have, it is said, in this manner defrayed all the expenses of their education. This system of instruction cannot be too highly recommended. Apart from the benefits derived in acquiring a knowledge of the use of mechanical instruments, and the development of mechanical genius, there are others of a higher nature which every one who has been educated at a public institution will appreciate. Who has not gazed with anguish on the sunken cheek and the emaciated frame of the young aspirant for literary distinction? Who has not beheld the funeral fires of intellect while the lamp of life was fading, flaming yet more beautifully forth, only to be dimmed for ever! The lyre is soon to be crushed; but, ere its hour is come, it flings forth notes of melody sweet beyond expression! Who does not know that protracted, unremitting intellectual labour is *always* fatal, unaccompanied by corresponding physical exertion; and who cannot perceive that *any* inducement, be it what it may, which can draw forth the student from his retirement, is invaluable. Such an inducement is the lively interest which the cultivated mind

always manifests in the operations of mechanical art.

Illinois College has been founded but five or six years, yet it is now one of the most flourishing institutions west of the mountains. The library consists of nearly two thousand volumes, and its chymical apparatus is sufficient. The faculty are five in number, and its first class was graduated two years since. No one can doubt the vast influence this seminary is destined to exert, not only upon this beautiful region of country and this state, but over the whole great Western Valley. It owes its origin to the noble enterprise of seven young men, graduates of Yale College, whose names another age will enrol among our Harvards and our Bowdoins, our Holworthys, Elliots, and Gores, great and venerable as those names are. And, surely, we cannot but believe that "some divinity has shaped their ends," when we consider the character of the spot upon which a wise Providence has been pleased to succeed their design. From the Northern lakes to the gulf, where may a more eligible site be designated for an institution whose influence shall be wide, and powerful, and salutary, than that same beautiful grove, in that pleasant village of Jacksonville.

To the left of the college buildings is situated the lordly residence of Governor Duncan, surrounded by its extensive grounds. There are other fine edifices scattered here and there upon the eminence, among which the beautiful little cottage of Mr. C., brother to the great orator of the

West, holds a conspicuous station. Society in Jacksonville is said to be superior to any in the state. It is of a cast decidedly moral, and possesses much literary taste. This is betrayed in the number of its schools and churches; its lyceum, circulating library, and periodicals. In fine, there are few spots in the West, and none in Illinois, which to the *Northern* emigrant present stronger attractions than the town of Jacksonville and its vicinity. Located in the heart of a tract of country the most fertile and beautiful in the state; swept by the sweet breath of health throughout the year; tilled by a race of enterprising, intelligent, hardy yeomen; possessing a moral, refined, and enlightened society, the tired wanderer may here find his necessities relieved and his peculiarities respected: he may here find congeniality of feeling and sympathy of heart. And when his memory wanders, as it sometimes must, with melancholy musings, mayhap, over the loved scenes of his own distant New-England, it will be sweet to realize that, though he sees not, indeed, around him the beautiful romance of his native hills, yet many a kindly heart is throbbing near, whose emotions, like his own, were nurtured in their rugged bosom. "*Cœlum non animum mutatur.*" And is it indeed true, as they often tell us, that New-England character, like her own ungenial clime, is cold, penurious, and heartless; while to her brethren, from whom she is separated only by an imaginary boundary, may be ascribed all that is lofty, and honourable, and chivalrous in man! This is an old

calumny, the offspring of prejudice and ignorance, and it were time it were at rest. But it is not for me to contrast the leading features of Northern character with those of the South, or to repel the aspersions which have been heaped upon either. Yet, reader, believe them not; many are false as ever stained the poisoned lip of slander.

It was Saturday evening when I reached the village of Jacksonville, and on the following Sabbath I listened to the sage instruction of that eccentric preacher, but venerable old man, Dr. P. of Philadelphia, since deceased, but then casually present. "*The Young Men of the West*" was a subject which had been presented him for discourse, and worthily was it elaborated. The good people of this little town, in more features than one, present a faithful transcript of New-England; but in none do they betray their Pilgrim origin more decidedly than in their devotedness to the public worship of the sanctuary. Here the young and the old, the great and small, the rich and poor, are all as steadily church-goers as were ever the pious husbandmen of Connecticut—men of the broad breast and giant stride—in the most "high and palmy day" of blue-laws and tythingmen. You smile, reader, yet

"Noble deeds those iron men have done!"

It was these same church-going, psalm-singing husbandmen who planted Liberty's fair tree within our borders, the leaves of which are now for the "healing of the nations," and whosebroad branches are overshadowing the earth; and they watered it—ay, watered it with their blood! The Pilgrim Fathers!—

the elder yeomanry of New-England!—the Patriots of the American Revolution!—great names! they shall live enshrined in the heart of Liberty long after those of many a railer are as if they had never been. And happy, happy would it be for the fair heritage bequeathed by them, were not the present generation degenerate sons of noble sires.

At Jacksonville I tarried only a few days; but during that short period I met with a few things of tramontane origin, strange enough to my Yankee notions. It was the season approaching the annual election of representatives for the state and national councils, and on one of the days to which I have alluded the political candidates of various creeds *addressed the people;* that is—for the benefit of the uninitiated be it stated—each one made manifest what great things he had done for the people in times past, and promised to do greater things, should the dear people, in the overflowing of their kindness, be pleased to let their choice fall upon him. This is a custom of universal prevalence in the Southern and Western states, and much is urged in its support; yet, sure it is, in no way could a Northern candidate more utterly defeat his election than by attempting to pursue the same. The charge of *self-electioneering* is, indeed, a powerful engine often employed by political partisans.

The candidates, upon the occasion of which I am speaking, were six or seven in number: and though I was not permitted to listen to the *eloquence* of all, some of these harangues are said to have been powerful productions, especially that of Mr. S. The day

was exceedingly sultry, and Mr. W., candidate for the state Senate, was on the *stump*, in shape of a huge meat-block at one corner of the market-house, when I entered. He was a broad-faced, farmer-like personage, with features imbrowned by exposure, and hands hardened by honourable toil; with a huge rent, moreover, athwart his left shoulder-blade—a badge of democracy, I presume, and either neglected or produced there for the occasion; much upon the same principle, doubtless, that Quinctilian counselled his disciples to disorder the hair and tumble the toga before they began to speak. Now mind ye, reader, I do not accuse the worthy man of having followed the Roman's instructions, or even of acquaintance therewith, nor any such thing; but, verily, he did, in all charity, seem to have hung on his worst rigging, and that, too, for no other reason than to demonstrate the democracy aforesaid, and his affection for the *sans-culottes*. His speech, though garnished with some little rhodomontade, was, upon the whole, a sensible production. I could hardly restrain a smile, however, at one of the worthy man's figures, in which he likened himself to "the *morning sun*, mounting a stump to scatter the mists which had been gathering around his fair fame." Close upon the heels of this *ruse* followed a beautiful similie—"a people free as the wild breezes of their own broad prairies!" The candidates alternated according to their political creeds, and denounced each other in no very measured terms. The approaching election was found, indeed, to be the prevailing topic of thought and conversation all over the land; inso-

much that the writer, himself an unassuming wayfarer, was more than once, strangely enough, mistaken for a *candidate* as he rode through the country, and was everywhere *catechumened* as to the articles of his political faith. It would be an amusing thing to a solitary traveller in a country like this, could he always detect the curious surmisings to which his presence gives rise in the minds of those among whom he chances to be thrown; especially so when, from any circumstance, his appearance does not betray his definite rank or calling in life, and anything of mystery hangs around his movements. Internal Improvement seems now to be the order of the day in Northern Illinois. This was the hobby of most of the stump-speakers; and the projected railway from Jacksonville to the river was under sober consideration. I became acquainted, while here, with Mr. C., a young gentleman engaged in laying off the route.

It was late in the afternoon when I at length broke away from the hustings, and mounted my horse to pursue my journey to Springfield. The road strikes off from the public square, in a direct line through the prairie, at right angles with that by which I entered, and, *like* that, ornamented by fine farms. I had rode but a few miles from the village, and was leisurely pursuing my way across the dusty plain, when a quick tramping behind attracted my attention, and in a few moments a little, portly, red-faced man at my side, in linsey-woolsey and a broad-brimmed hat, saluted me frankly with the title of "friend," and forthwith announced himself a "Bap-

tist circuit-rider!" I became much interested in the worthy man before his path diverged from my own; and I flatter myself he reciprocated my regard, for he asked all manner of questions, and related all manner of anecdotes, questioned or not. Among other edifying matter, he gave a full-length biography of a "*billards fever*" from which he was just recovering; even from the premonitory symptoms thereof to the relapse and final convalescence.

At nightfall I found myself alone in the heart of an extensive prairie; but the beautiful crescent had now begun to beam forth from the blue heavens; and the wild, fresh breeze of evening, playing among the silvered grass-tops, rendered thehour a delightful one to the traveller. "Spring Island Grove," a thick wood upon an eminence to the right, looked like a region of fairy-land as its dark foliage trembled in the moonlight. The silence and solitude of the prairie was almost startling; and a Herculean figure upon a white horse, as it drew nigh, passed me "on the other side" with a glance of suspicion at my closely-buttoned surtout and muffled mouth, as if to say, "this is too lone a spot to form acquaintance." A few hours—I had crossed the prairie, and was snugly deposited in a pretty little farmhouse in the edge of the grove, with a crusty, surly fellow enough for its master.

Springfield, Ill.

XXVIII.

"Hee is a rite gude creetur, and travels *all* the ground over most faithfully."

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."
—SHAKSPEARE.

IT is a trite remark, that few studies are more pleasing to the inquisitive mind than that of the *nature of man.* But, however this may be, sure it is, few situations in life present greater facilities for watching its developments than that of the ordinary *wayfaring* traveller. Though I fully agree with Edmund Burke, that "the age of chivalry has passed away," with all its rough virtues and its follies, yet am I convinced that, even in this degenerate era of sophisters, economists, and speculators, when a solitary individual, unconnected with any great movements of the day, throws himself upon his horse, and sallies fearlessly forth upon the arena of the world, whether in *quest* of adventure or not, he will be quite sure to meet, at least, with some slight "inklings" thereof. A thousand exhibitions of human character will fling themselves athwart his pathway, inconsiderable indeed in themselves, yet which, as days of the year and seconds of the day, go to make up the lineaments of man; and which, from the observation of the pride, and pomp, and circumstance of wealth and equipage, would of necessity be veiled. Under the eye of the solitary

wanderer, going forth upon a pilgrimage of observation among the ranks of men—who is met but for once, and whose opinion, favourable or otherwise, can be supposed to exert but trifling influence—there is not that necessity for enveloping those petty weaknesses of our nature in the mantle of selfishness which would, under more imposing circumstances, exist. To the mind of delicate sensibility, unschooled in the ways of man, such exhibitions of human heartlessness might, perchance, be anything but *interesting;* but to one who, elevated by independence of character above the ordinary contingencies of situation and circumstance, can smile at the frailties of his race, even when exhibited at his own expense, they can but afford a fund of interest and instruction. The youthful student, when with fresh, unblunted feeling he for the first time enters the dissecting-room of medical science, turns with sickened, revolting sensibilities from the mutilated form stretched out upon the board before him, while the learned professor, with untrembling nerve, lays bare its secrecies with the crimsoned knife of science. Just so is it with the exhibitions of human nature; yet who will say that dissection of the moral character of man is not as indispensable to an intimate acquaintance with its phenomena, as that of his physical organization for a similar purpose.

But, then, there are the brighter features of humanity, which sometimes hang across the wanderer's pathway like the beautiful tints of a summer evening bow; and which, as they are oftenest met reposing beneath the cool, sequestered shades of

retirement, where the roar and tumult of a busy world are as the heavy swing of the distant wave, so there, oftener than elsewhere, they serve to cheer the pilgrim traveller's heart. Ah! it is very sweet, from the dull Rembrandt shades of which human character presents but too much, to turn away and dwell upon these green, beautiful spots in the wastes of humanity; these *oases* in a desert of barrenness; to hope that man, though indeed a depraved, unholy being, is not that *thing* of utter detestation which a troubled bosom had sometimes forced us to believe. At such moments, worth years of coldness and distrust, how inexpressibly grateful is it to feel the young tendrils of the heart springing forth to meet the proffered affection; curling around our race, and binding it closer and closer to ourselves. But your pardon, reader: my wayward pen has betrayed me into an episode upon poor human nature most unwittingly, I do assure thee. I was only endeavouring to present a few ideas circumstances had casually suggested, which I was sure would commend themselves to every thinking mind, and which some incidents of my wayfaring may serve to illustrate, when lo! forth comes an essay on human nature. It remidns one of Sir Hudibras, who *told the clock by algebra*, or of Dr. Young's satirised gentlewoman, who *drank tea by stratagem*.

"How little do men realize the loveliness of this visible world!" is an exclamation which has oftentimes involuntarily left my lips while gazing upon the surpassing splendour of a prairie-sunrise. This is at all times a glorious hour, but to a lonely trav-

eller on these beautiful plains of the departed Illini, it comes on with a charm which words are powerless to express. We call our world a RUIN. Ah! it *is* one in all its moral and physical relations; but, like the elder cities of the Nile, how vast, how magnificent in its desolation! The astronomer, as he wanders with scientific eye along the sparkling galaxy of a summer's night, tells us that among those clustering orbs, far, far away in the clear realms of upper sky, he catches at times a glimpse of *another* world! a region of untold, unutterable brightness! the high empyrean, veiled in mystery! And so is it with our own humbler sphere; the glittering fragment of a world *we* have never known ofttimes glances before us, and then is gone for ever.

Before the dawn I had left the farmhouse where I had passed the night, and was thridding the dark old forest on my route to Springfield. The dusky twilight of morning had been slowly stealing over the landscape; and, just as I emerged once more upon my winding prairie-path, the flaming sunlight was streaming wide and far over the opposite heavens. Along the whole line of eastern horizon reposed the purple dies of morning, shooting rapidly upward into broad pyramidal shafts to the zenith, till at last the dazzling orb came rushing above the plain, bathing the scene in an effulgence of light. The day which succeeded was a fine one, and I journeyed leisurely onward, admiring the mellow glories of woodland and prairie, until near noon, when a flashing cupola above the trees reminded me I was approach-

ing Springfield. Owing to its unfavourable situation and the fewness of its public structures, this town, though one of the most important in the state, presents not that imposing aspect to the stranger's eye which some more inconsiderable villages can boast. Its location is the border of an extensive prairie, adorned with excellent farms, and stretching away on every side to the blue line of distant forest. This town, like Jacksonville, was laid out ten or twelve years since, but for a long while contained only a few scattered log cabins : all its present wealth or importance dates from the last six years. Though inferior in many respects to its neighbour and rival, yet such is its location by nature that it can hardly fail of becoming a place of extensive business and crowded population ; while its geographically central situation seems to designate it as the capital of the state. An elegant statehouse is now erecting, and the seat of government is to be located here in 1840. The public square, a green, pleasant lawn, enclosed by a railing, contains the courthouse and a market, both fine structures of brick : the sides are lined with handsome edifices. Most of the buildings are small, however, and the humble log cabin not unfrequently meets the eye. Among the public structures are a jail, and several houses of worship. Society is said to be excellent, and the place can boast much literary taste. The plan of Internal Improvement projected for the state, when carried out, cannot fail to render Springfield an important place.

It was a cool, beautiful evening when I left Springfield and held my way over the prairie, rolling its

waving verdure on either side of my path. Long after the village had sunk in the horizon, the bright cupola continued to flame in the oblique rays of the setting sun. I passed many extensive farms on my route, and in a few hours had entered the forest and forded Sangamon *River*—so styled out of pure courtesy, I presume, for at the spot I crossed it seemed little more than a respectable creek, with waters clear as crystal, flowing over clean white sand. At periods of higher stages, however, this stream has been navigated nearly to the confluence of its forks, a distance of some hundred miles; and in the spring of 1832 a boat of some size arrived within five miles of Springfield. An inconsiderable expense in removing logs and overhanging trees, it is said, would render this river navigable for keelboats half the year. The advantages of such a communication, through one of the richest agricultural regions on the globe, can hardly be estimated. The Sangamon bottom has a soil of amazing fertility, and rears from its deep, black mould a forest of enormous sycamores; huge, overgrown, unshapely masses, their venerable limbs streaming with moss. When the traveller enters the depths of these dark old woods, a cold chill runs over his frame, and he feels as if he were entering the sepulchre. A cheerless twilight reigns for ever through them: the atmosphere he inhales has an earthy smell, and is filled with floating greenish exhalations: the moist, black mould beneath his horse's hoofs, piled with vegetable decay for many feet, and upon whose festering bosom the cheering light of day has not smiled for

centuries, is rank and yielding: the enormous shafts leaning in all attitudes, their naked old roots enveloped in a green moss of velvet luxuriance, tower a hundred feet above his head, and shut out the heavens from his view: the huge wild-vine leaps forth at their foot and clasps them in its deadly embrace; or the tender ivy and pensile woodbine cluster around the aged giants, and strive to veil with their mantling tapestry the ravages of time. There is much cathedral pomp, much of Gothic magnificence about all this; and one can hardly fling off from his mind the awe and solemnity which gathers over it amid the chill, silent, and mysterious solitude of the scene.

Emerging from the river-bottom, my pathway lay along a tract of elevated land, among beautiful forest-glades of stately oaks, through whose long dim aisles the yellow beams of summer sunset were now richly streaming. Once more upon the broad prairie, and the fragment of an iris was glittering in the eastern heavens: turning back, my eye caught a view of that singular but splendid phenomenon, seldom witnessed—a heavy, distant rain-shower between the spectator and the departing sun.

Nightfall found me at the residence of Mr. D., an intelligent, gentlemanly farmer, with whom I passed an agreeable evening. I was not long in discovering that my host was a candidate for civic honours; and that he, with his friend Mr. L., whose speech I had subsequently the pleasure of perusing, had just returned from Mechanicsburg, a small village in the vicinity, where they had been exerting themselves upon the stump to win the *aura popularis* for the coming election. "*Sic itur ad astra!*"

Before sunrise I had crossed the threshold of my hospitable entertainer; and having wound my solitary way, partially by twilight, over a prairie fifteen miles in extent,

> "Began to feel, as well I might,
> The keen demands of appetite."

Reining up my tired steed at the door of a log cabin in the middle of the plain, the nature and extent of my necessities were soon made known to an aged matron, who had come forth on my approach.

"Some victuals you shall get, *stran-ger;* but you'll just take your *creetur* to the crib and *gin* him his feed; *bekase*, d'ye see, the old man is kind o' *drink-in* to-day; yester' was 'lection, ye know." From the depths of my sympathetic emotions was I moved for the poor old body, who with most dolorous aspect had delivered herself of this message; and I had proceeded forthwith, agreeable to instructions, to satisfy the cravings of my patient animal, when who should appear but my tipsified host, *in propria persona*, at the door. The little old gentleman came tottering towards the spot where I stood, and, warmly squeezing my hand, whispered to me, with a most irresistible serio-comic air, "*that he was drunk;*" and "that he was four hours last night getting home from *'lection*," as he called it. "Now, stran-ger, you won't think hard on me," he continued, in his maudlin manner: "I'm a poor, drunken old fellow! but old Jim wan't al'ays so; old Jim wan't al'ays so!" he exclaimed, with bitterness, burying his face in his toilworn hands, as, having now regained the house, he seated himself with difficulty upon the

doorstep. "Once, my son, old Jim could knock down, drag out, whip, lift, or throw any man in all Sangamon, if he *was* a *leetle* fellow: but *now*—there's the receipt of his disgrace—there," he exclaimed, with vehemence, thrusting forth before my eyes two brawny, gladiator arms, in which the volumed muscles were heaving and contracting with excitement; ironed by labour, but shockingly mutilated. Expressing astonishment at the spectacle, he assured me that these wounds had been torn in the flesh by the teeth of infuriated antagonists in drunken quarrels, though the relation seemed almost too horrible to be true. Endeavouring to divert his mind from this disgusting topic, on which it seemed disposed to linger with ferocious delight, I made some inquiries relative to his farm—which was, indeed, a beautiful one, under high culture—and respecting the habits of the prairie-wolf, a large animal of the species having crossed my path in the prairie in the gray light of dawn. Upon the latter inquiry the old man sat silent a moment with his chin leaning on his hands. Looking up at length with an arch expression, he said, "Stran-ger, I *haint* no *larnin;* I *can't* read; but don't the Book say somewhere about old Jacob and the ring-streaked cattle?" "Yes." "Well, and how old Jake's ring-streaked and round-spotted *creeturs*, after a *leetle*, got the better of all the stock, and overrun the *universal* herd; don't the Book say so?" "Something so." "Well, now for the wolves: they're all colours but ring-streaked and round-spotted; and if the sucker-farmers don't look to it, the prairie-wolves will get

the better of all the geese, turkeys, and *hins* in the barnyard, speckled or no!"

My breakfast was now on the table; a substantial fare of corn-bread, butter, honey, fresh eggs, *fowl*, and *coffee*, which latter are as invariably visitants at an Illinois table as is bacon at a Kentucky one, and that is saying no little. The exhilarating herb tea is rarely seen. An anecdote will illustrate this matter. A young man, journeying in Illinois, stopped one evening at a log cabin with a violent headache, and requested that never-failing antidote, *a cup of tea*. There was none in the house; and, having despatched a boy to a distant grocery to procure a pound, he threw himself upon the bed. In a few hours a beverage was handed him, the first swallow of which nearly excoriated his mouth and throat. In the agony of the moment he dashed down the bowl, and rushed half blinded to the fireplace. Over the blaze was suspended a huge iron kettle, half filled with an inky fluid, seething, and boiling, and bubbling, like the witches' caldron of unutterable things in Macbeth. The good old lady, in her anxiety to give her sick guest a *strong* dish of tea, having never seen the like herself or drank thereof, and supposing it something of the nature of soup, very innocently and ignorantly poured the whole pound into her largest kettle, and set it a boiling. Poultry is the other standing dish of Illinois; and the poor birds seem to realize that their destiny is at hand whenever a traveller draws nigh, for they invariably hide their heads beneath the nearest covert. Indeed, so invariably are poultry and bacon visitants at an Illinois table, that

the story *may* be true, that the first inquiry made of the guest by the village landlord is the following: "Well, stran-ger, what'll ye take: wheat-bread and *chicken fixens*, or corn-bread and *common doins?*" by the latter expressive and elegant soubriquet being signified bacon.

Breakfast being over, my foot was once more in the stirrup. The old man accompanied me to the gateway, and shaking my hand in a boisterous agony of good-nature, pressed me to visit him again when he was *not drunk*. I had proceeded but a few steps on my way when I heard his voice calling after me, and turned my head. "Stran-ger! I say, stran-ger! what do you reckon of sending this young Jack Stewart to Congress?" "Oh, he'll answer." "Well, and that's what I'm a going to vote; and there's a heap o' people always thinks like old Jim does; and that's what made 'em get me groggy last night."

I could not but commiserate this old man as I pursued my journey, reflecting on what had passed. He was evidently no common toper; for some of his remarks evinced a keenness of observation, and a depth and shrewdness of thought, which even the withering blight of drunkenness had not completely deadened; and which, with other habits and other circumstances, might have placed him far above the beck and nod of every demagogue.

Decatur, Ill.

XXIX.

"Ay, but to die, and go we know not where!"
Measure for Measure.

"Plains immense, interminable meads,
And vast savannas, where the wand'ring eye,
Unfix'd, is in a verdant ocean lost."
THOMSON.

"Ye shall have miracles; ay, sound ones too,
Seen, heard, attested, everything but true."
MOORE.

"Call in the barber! If the tale be long,
He'll cut it short, I trust."
MIDDLETON.

THERE are few sentiments of that great man Benjamin Franklin for which he is more to be revered than for those respecting the burial-place of the departed.* The graveyard is, and should ever be deemed, a *holy* spot; consecrated, not by the cold formalities of unmeaning ceremony, but by the solemn sacredness of the heart. Who that has committed to earth's cold bosom the relics of one dearer, perchance, than existence, can ever after pass the burial-ground with a careless heart. There is nothing which more painfully jars upon my own feelings—if I may except that wanton desecration of God's sanctuary in some sections of our land

* "I will never, if possible, pass a night in any place where the graveyard is neglected." Franklin has no monument!

for a public commitia—than to see the graveyard slighted and abused. It is like wounding the memory of a buried friend. And yet it is an assertion which cannot be refuted, that, notwithstanding the reverence which, as a people, we have failed not to manifest for the memory of our dead, the same delicate regard and obsequy is not with us observed in the sacred rites as among the inhabitants of the Eastern hemisphere. If, indeed, we may be permitted to gather up an opinion from circumstances of daily notoriety, it would seem that the plat of ground appropriated as a cemetery in many of the villages of our land was devoted to this most holy of purposes solely because useless for every other; as if, after seizing upon every spot for the benefit of the living, this last poor *remnant* was reluctantly yielded as a resting-place for the departed. And thus has it happened that most of the burial-grounds of our land have either been located in a region so lone and solitary,

"You scarce would start to meet a spirit there,"

or they have been thrust out into the very midst of business, strife, and contention; amid the glare of sunshine, noise, and dust; "the gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day," with hardly a wall of stones to protect them from the inroads of unruly brutes or brutish men. It is as if the rites of sepulture were refused, and the poor boon of a resting-place in the bosom of our common mother denied to her offspring; as if, in our avarice of soul, we grudged even the last narrow house destined for all; and

fain would resume the last, the only gift our departed ones may retain. Who would not dread "*to die*" and have his lifeless clay deposited thus! Who would not, ere the last fleeting particle of existence had "ebbed to its finish," and the feeble breathing had forsaken its tenement for ever, pour forth the anguish of his spirit in the melancholy prayer,

> "When breath and sense have left this clay,
> In yon damp vault, oh lay me not!
> But kindly bear my bones away
> To some lone, green, and sunny spot."

Reverence for the departed is ever a beautiful feature of humanity, and has struck us with admiration for nations of our race who could boast but few redeeming traits beside. It is, moreover, a circumstance not a little remarkable in the history of funeral obsequy, that veneration for the departed has prevailed in a ratio almost inverse to the degree of civilization. Without attempting to account for this circumstance, or to instance the multitude of examples which recur to every mind in its illustration, I would only refer to that deep religion of the soul which Nature has implanted in the heart of her simple child of the Western forests, teaching him to preserve and to honour the bones of his fathers! And those mysterious mausoleums of a former race! do they convey no meaning as they rise in lonely grandeur from our beautiful prairies, and look down upon the noble streams which for ages have dashed their dark floods along their base!

But a few years have passed away since this empire valley of the West was first pressed by the footstep of civilized man; and, if we except those aged sepulchres of the past, the cities of the dead hardly yet range side by side with the cities of the living. But this cannot *always* be; even in this distant, beautiful land, death *must* come; and here it doubtless has come, as many an anguished bosom can witness. Is it not, then, meet, while the busy tide of worldly enterprise is rolling heavily forth over this fair land, and the costly structures of art and opulence are rising on every side, as by the enchantment of Arabian fiction—is it *not* meet that, amid the pauses of excitement, a solitary thought should linger around that spot, which must surely, reader, become the last resting-place of us all!

I have often, in my wanderings through this pleasant land, experienced a thrill of delight which I can hardly describe, to behold, on entering a little Western hamlet, a neat white paling rising up beneath the groves in some green, sequestered spot, whose object none could mistake. Upon some of these, simple as they were, seemed to have been bestowed more than ordinary care; for they betrayed an elaborateness of workmanship and a delicacy of design sought for in vain among the ruder habitations of the living. This is, *surely*, as it should be; and I pity the man whose feelings cannot appreciate such a touching, beautiful expression of the heart. I have alluded to Franklin, and how pleasant it is to detect the kindly, household emotions of our nature throbbing beneath the

starred, dignified breast of philosophy and science. FRANKLIN, the statesman, the sage; he who turned the red lightnings from their wild pathway through the skies, and rocked the iron cradle of the mightiest democracy on the globe! we gaze upon him with awe and astonishment; involuntarily we yield the lofty motto presented by the illustrious Frenchman.* "*Eripuit fulmen cœlo, mox sceptra tyrannis.*" But when we behold that towering intellect descending from its throne, and intermingling its emotions even with those of the lowliest mind, admiration and reverence are lost in *love*.

The preceding remarks, which have lengthened out themselves far beyond my design, were suggested by the loveliness of the site of the graveyard of the little village of Decatur. I was struck with its beauty on entering the place. It was near sunset; in the distance slept the quiet hamlet; upon my right, beneath the grove, peeped out the white paling through the glossy foliage; and as the broad, deep shadows of summer evening streamed lengthening through the trees wide over the landscape, that little spot seemed to my mind the sweetest one in the scene. And should not the burial-ground be ever thus! for who shall tell the emotions which may swell the bosom of many a dying emigrant who here shall find his long, last rest? In that chill hour, how will the thought of home, kindred, friendships, childhood-scenes, come rushing over the memory! and to lay his bones in the

* Thurgot.

quiet graveyard of his own native village, perchance may draw forth many a sorrowing sigh. But this now may never be; yet it will be consoling to the pilgrim-heart to realize that, though the resurrection morn shall find his relics far from the graves of his fathers, he shall yet sleep the long slumber, and at last come forth with those who were kind and near to him in a stranger-land; who laid away his cold clay in no "Potter's Field," but gathered it to their own household sepulchre. The human mind, whatever its philosophy, can never utterly divest itself of the idea that the spirit retains a consciousness of the lifeless body, sympathizing with its honour or neglect, and affected by all that variety of circumstance which may attend its existence: and who shall say how far this belief—superstition though it be—may smooth or trouble the dying pillow! How soothing, too, the reflection to the sorrow of distant friends, that their departed one peacefully and decently was gathered to his rest; that his dust is sleeping quietly in some sweet, lonely spot beneath the dark groves of the far-land; that his turf is often dewed by the tear-drop of sympathy, and around his lowly headstone waves the wild-grass ever green and free! The son, the brother, the loved wanderer from his father's home,

"Is in his grave!
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

The route leading to Decatur from the west lies chiefly through a broad branch of the "Grand Prairie," an immense plain, sweeping diagonally, with

little interruption, through the whole State of Illinois, from the Mississippi to the Wabash. For the first time, in any considerable number, I here met with those singular granite masses, termed familiarly by the settlers "*lost rocks*;" in geology, *boulders*. They are usually of a mammillated, globular figure, the surface perfectly smooth, sometimes six hundred tons in weight, and always lying completely isolated, frequently some hundred miles from a quarry. They rest upon the surface or are slightly imbedded in the soil; and, so far as my own observation extends, are of distinct granitic formation, of various density and composition. Several specimens I obtained are as heavy as metal, and doubtless contain iron. Many of them, however, like those round masses dug from the ancient works in Ohio, are pyritous in character. There is a mystery about these "lost rocks" not easily solved, for no granite quarry has ever yet been discovered in Illinois. Their appearance, in the midst of a vast prairie, is dreary and lonely enough.

The site of the town of Decatur is somewhat depressed, and in the heart of a grove of noble oaks. Long before the traveller reaches it, the whole village is placed before his eye from the rounded summit of a hill, over which winds the road. The neighbouring region is well settled; the prairie high and rolling, and timber abundant. It is not a large place, however; and perhaps there are few circumstances which will render it otherwise for some years. It contains, nevertheless, a few handsome buildings; several trading establishments; a good tavern; is said to be healthy; and, upon the whole, is a far

prettier, neater little village than many others of loftier pretensions through which I have passed in Illinois. The village will be intersected by two of the principal railroads of the state, now projected, which circumstance cannot fail to place it in the first rank as an inland trading town.

My visit at Decatur was a short one; and, after tea, just as the moon was beginning to silver the tops of the eastern oaks, I left the village and rode leisurely through the forest, in order to enter upon the prairie at dawn the following day. A short distance from Decatur I again forded the Sangamon; the same insignificant stream as ever; and, by dint of scrambling, succeeded in attaining the lofty summit of its opposite bank, from which the surrounding scenery of rolling forest-tops was magnificent and sublime. From this elevation the pathway plunged into a thick grove, dark as Erebus, save where lighted up by a few pale moonbeams struggling through a break in the tree-tops, or the deep-red gleamings of the evening sky streaming at intervals along the undergrowth. The hour was a calm and impressive one: its very loneliness made it sweeter; and that beautiful hymn of the Tyrolean peasantry at sunset, as versified by Mrs. Hemans, was forcibly recalled by the scene:

"Come to the sunset tree!
The day is past and gone;
The woodman's axe lies free,
And the reaper's work is done.
Sweet is the hour of rest!
Pleasant the wood's low sigh,
And the gleaming of the west,
And the turf whereon we lie."

After a ride of a few miles my path suddenly emerged from the forest upon the edge of a boundless prairie, from whose dark-rolling herbage, here and there along the distant swells, was thrown back the glorious moonlight, as if from the restless, heaving bosom of the deep. An extensive prairie, beneath a full burst of summer moonlight, is, indeed, a magnificent spectacle. One can hardly persuade himself that he is not upon the ocean-shore. And now a wild, fresh breeze, which all the day had been out playing among the perfumed flowers and riding the green-crested waves, came rolling in from the prairie, producing an undulation of its surface and a murmuring in the heavy forest-boughs perfect in the illusion. All along the low, distant horizon hung a thin mist of silvery gauze, which, as it rose and fell upon the dark herbage, gave an idea of mysterious boundlessness to the scene. Here and there stood out a lonely, weather-beaten tree upon the plain, its trunk shrouded in obscurity, but its leafy top sighing in the night-breeze, and gleaming like a beacon-light in the beams of the cloudless moon. There was a dash of fascinating romance about the scene, which held me involuntarily upon the spot until reminded by the chill dews of night that I had, as yet, no shelter. On casting around my eye, I perceived a low log cabin, half buried in vegetation, standing alone in the skirt of the wood. Although a miserable tenement, necessity compelled me to accept its hospitality, and I entered. It consisted of a single apartment, in which two beds, two stools, a cross-legged deal ta-

ble, and a rough clothes-press, were the only household furniture. A few indispensable iron utensils sat near the fire; the water-pail and gourd stood upon the shelf, and a half-consumed flitch of bacon hung suspended in the chimney; but the superlatives of andirons, shovel and tongs, etc., etc., were all unknown in this primitive abode. A pair of "lost rocks"—*lost*, indeed—supplied the first, and the gnarled branch of an oak was substituted for the latter. The huge old chimney and fireplace were, as usual, fashioned of sticks and bedaubed with clay; yet everything looked neat, yea, *comfortable*, in very despite of poverty itself. A young female with her child, an infant boy, in her arms, was superintending the preparation of the evening meal. Her language and demeanour were superior to the miserable circumstances by which she was surrounded; and though she moved about her narrow demesne with a quiet, satisfied air, I was not long in learning that *affection* alone had transplanted this exotic of the prairie from a more congenial soil. What woman does not love to tell over those passages of her history in which the *heart* has ruled lord of the ascendant? and how very different in this respect is our sex from hers! Man, proud man, "the creature of interest and ambition," often blushes to be reminded that he has a heart, while woman's cheek mantles with the very intensity of its pulsation! The husband in a few minutes came in from attending to my horse; the rough table was spread; a humble fare was produced; all were seated; and then, beneath that miserable roof,

around that meager board, before a morsel of the food, poor as it was, passed the lip of an individual, the iron hand of toil was reverently raised, and a grateful heart called down a blessing from the Mightiest! Ah! thought I, as I beheld the peaceful, satisfied air of that poor man, as he partook his humble evening meal with gratefulness, little does the son of luxury know the calm contentment which fills his breast! And the great God, as he looks down upon his children and reads their hearts, does he not listen to many a warmer, purer thank-offering from beneath the lowly roof-tree of the wilderness, than from all the palaces of opulence and pride? So it has ever been—so it has *ever* been —and so can it never cease to be while the heart of man remains attempered as it is.

The humble repast was soon over; and, without difficulty, I entered into conversation with the father of the family. He informed me that he had been but a few years a resident of Illinois; that he had been unfortunate; and that, recently, his circumstances had become more than usually circumscribed, from his endeavours to save from speculators a pre-emption right of the small farm he was cultivating. This farm was his *all;* and, in his solicitude to retain its possession, he had disposed of every article of the household which would in any way produce money, even of a part of his own and his wife's wardrobe. I found him a man of considerable intelligence, and he imparted to me some facts respecting that singular sect styling themselves Mormonites of which I was previously hardly aware. Immense

crowds of these people had passed his door on the great road from Terre Haute, all with families and household effects stowed away in little one-horse wagons of peculiar construction, and on their journey to Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem, situated near Independence, Jackson county, Missouri! Their observance of the Sabbath was almost pharisaically severe, never permitting themselves to travel upon that day; the men devoting it to hunting, and the females to washing clothes, and other operations of the camp! It was their custom, likewise, to hold a preachment in every village or settlement, whether men would hear or forbear: the latter must have been the case with something of a majority, I think, since no one with whom I have ever met could, for the life of him, give a subsequent expose of *Mormonism*, "though often requested."

> "I never heard or could engage
> A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
> To name, define by speech, or write on page,
> The *doctrines* meant precisely by that word,
> Which surely is exceedingly absurd."

They assert that an angelic messenger has appeared to Joe Smith, announcing the millennial dawn at hand; that a glorious city of the faithful—the New Jerusalem, with streets of gold and gates of pearl—is about to be reared upon Mount Zion, Mo., where the Saviour will descend and establish a kingdom to which there shall be no end; ergo, argue these everlasting livers, it befits all good citizens to get to Independence, Jackson county, aforesaid, as fast as one-horse wagons will convey them! Large quantities of arms and ammunition have, moreover, been

forwarded, so that the item of "the sword being beaten into a ploughshare, and spear into pruning-hook," seems not of probable fulfilment according to these worthies. The truth of the case is, they anticipated a brush with the long-haired "pukes"* before securing a "demise, release, and for ever quit-claim" to Zion Hill, said *pukes* having already at sundry times manifested a refractory spirit, and, from the following anecdote of my good man of the hut, in "rather a ridic'lous manner." I am no voucher for the story: I give it as related; "and," as Ben Jonson says, "what he has possessed me withal, I'll discharge it amply."

"One Sabbath evening, when the services of the congregation of the Mormonites were over, the Rev. Joe Smith, priest and prophet, announced to his expectant tribe that, on the succeeding Sabbath, the baptismal sacrament would take place, when an angel would appear on the opposite bank of the stream. Next Sabbath came, and 'great was the company of the people' to witness the miraculous visitation. The baptism commenced, and was now wellnigh concluded: 'Do our eyes deceive us! can such things *be!* The prophecy! the angel!' were exclamations which ran through the multitude, as a fair form, veiled in a loose white garment, with flowing locks and long bright pinions, stood suddenly before the assembled multitude upon the opposite shore, and then disappeared! All was amazement, consternation, awe! But where is Joe Smith? In a few moments Joe Smith was with them, and their faith was confirmed.

* Missourians.

"Again was a baptism appointed—again was the angel announced—a larger congregation assembled —and yet again did the angel appear. At that moment two powerful men sprang from a thicket, rushed upon the angelic visitant, and, amid mingling exclamations of horror and *execrations* of piety from the spectators, tore away his long white wings, his hair and robe, and plunged him into the stream! By some unaccountable metamorphosis, the angel emerged from the river honest Joe Smith, priest of Mormon, finder of the golden plates, etc., etc., and the magi of the enchantment were revealed in the persons of two brawny *pukes*." Since then, the story concludes, not an angel has been seen all about Mount Zion! The miracle of walking upon water was afterward essayed, but failed by the removal, by some impious wags, of the *benches* prepared for the occasion. It is truly astonishing to what lengths superstition has run in some sections of this same Illinois. Not long since, a knowing farmer in the county of Macon conceived himself ordained of heaven a promulgator to the world of a system of "New Light," so styled, upon "a plan entirely new." No sooner did the idea strike his fancy, than, leaving the plough in the middle of the furrow, away sallies he to the nearest village, and admonishes every one, everywhere, forthwith to be baptized by his heaven-appointed hands, and become a regenerate man on the spot. Many believed—was there ever faith too preposterous to obtain proselytes? the doctrine, in popular phrase, "took mightily;" and, it must be confessed, the whole world, men, women, and children, were

in a fair way for regeneration. Unfortunately for that desirable consummation, at this crisis certain simple-hearted people thereabouts, by some freak of fancy or other, took it into their heads that the priest himself manifested hardly that *quantum* of the regenerated spirit that beseemed so considerable a functionary. Among other peccadilloes, he had unhappily fallen into a habit every Sabbath morning, when he rode in from his farmhouse—a neat little edifice which the good people had erected for his benefit in the outskirts of the village—of trotting solemnly up before the grocery-door upon his horse, receiving a glass of some dark-coloured liquid, character unknown, drinking it off with considerable gusto, dropping a *picayune* into the tumbler, then proceeding to the pulpit, and, on the inspiration of the mysterious potation, holding vehemently forth. Sundry other misdeeds of the reverend man near about the same time came to light, so that at length the old women pronounced that terrible fiat, "the preacher was no *better* than he should be;" which means, as everybody knows, that he was a good deal *worse*. And so the men, old and young, chimed in, and the priest was politely advised to decamp before the doctrine should get unsavoury. Thus ended the glorious discovery of New-lightism!

It is a humiliating thing to review the aberrations of the human mind: and, believe me, reader, my intention in reviewing these instances of religious fanaticism has been not to excite a smile of transient merriment, nor for a moment to call in question the

reality of true devotion. My intention has been to show to what extremes of preposterous folly man may be hurried when he once resigns himself to the vagaries of fancy upon a subject which demands the severest deductions of reason. It is, indeed, a *melancholy* consideration, that, in a country like our own, which we fondly look upon as the hope of the world, and amid the full-orbed effulgence of the nineteenth century, there should exist a body of men, more than twelve thousand in number, as is estimated, professing belief in a faith so unutterably absurd as that styled Mormonism; a faith which would have disgraced the darkest hour of the darkest era of our race.* But it is not for me to read the human *heart*.

Shelbyville, Ill.

* For a year after the above was written, the cause of Mormonism seemed to have received a salutary check. It has since revived, and thousands during the past summer have been flocking to their Mount Zion on the outskirts of Missouri. The late Mormon difficulties in Missouri have been made too notorious by the public prints of the day to require notice.

XXX.

"The day is lowering; stilly black
Sleeps the grim waste, while heaven's rack,
Dispersed and wild, 'tween earth and sky
Hangs like a shatter'd canopy!"

Fire-worshippers.

"Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
By fits effulgent gilds the illumined fields,
And black by fits the shadows sweep along."

THOMSON.

"The bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush."

Lear, Act 2.

"These are the Gardens of the Desert."

BRYANT.

MERRILY, merrily did the wild night-wind howl, and whistle, and rave around the little low cabin beneath whose humble roof-tree the traveller had lain himself to rest. Now it would roar and rumble down the huge wooden chimney, and anon sigh along the tall grass-tops and through the crannies like the wail of some lost one of the waste. The moonbeams, at intervals darkened by the drifting clouds and again pouring gloriously forth, streamed in long threads of silver through the shattered walls; while the shaggy forest in the back-ground, tossing its heavy branches against the troubled sky,

roared forth a deep chorus to the storm. It was a wild night, and so complete was the illusion that, in the fitful lullings of the tempest, one almost imagined himself on the ocean-beach, listening to the confused weltering of the surge. There was much of high sublimity in all this; and hours passed away before the traveller, weary as he was, could quiet his mind to slumber. There are seasons when every chord, and nerve, and sinew of the system seems wound up to its severest tension; and a morbid, unnatural excitement broods over the mind, forbidding all approach to quietude. Every one has *experienced* this under peculiar circumstances; few can *describe* it.

The night wore tediously away, and at the dawn the traveller was again in the saddle, pushing forth like a "pilgrim-bark" upon the swelling ocean-waste, sweeping even to the broad curve of undulating horizon beyond. There is always something singularly unpleasant in the idea of going out upon one of these vast prairies *alone;* and such the sense of utter loneliness, that the solitary traveller never fails to cast back a lingering gaze upon the last low tenement he is leaving. The winds were still up, and the rack and clouds were scudding in wild confusion along the darkened sky;

> "Here, flying loosely as the mane
> Of a young war-horse in the blast;
> There, roll'd in masses dark and swelling,
> As proud to be the thunder's dwelling!"

From time to time a heavy blast would come ca-

reering with resistless fury along the heaving plain, almost tearing the rider from his horse. The celebrated "Grand Prairie," upon which I was now entering, stretched itself away to the south thirty miles, a vast, unbroken meadow; and one may conceive, not describe, the terrible fury of a storm-wind sweeping over a surface like this. As the morning advanced, the violence of the tempest lulled into fitful gusts; and, as the centre of the vast amphitheatre was attained, a scene of grandeur and magnificence opened to my eye such as it never before had looked upon. Elevated upon a full roll of the prairie, the glance ranged over a scene of seemingly limitless extent; for upon every side, for the first time in my ramble, the deep blue line of the horizon and the darker hue of the waving verdure blended into one.

The touching, delicate loveliness of the lesser prairies, so resplendent in brilliancy of hue and beauty of outline, I have often dwelt upon with delight. The graceful undulation of slope and swell; the exquisite richness and freshness of the verdure flashing in native magnificence; the gorgeous dies of the matchless and many-coloured flowers dallying with the winds; the beautiful woodland points and promontories shooting forth into the mimic sea; the far-retreating, shadowy *coves*, going back in long vistas into the green wood; the curved outline of the dim, distant horizon, caught at intervals through the openings of the forest; and the whole gloriously lighted up by the early radiance of morning, as with rosy footsteps she came dancing

over the dew-gemmed landscape; all these constituted a scene in which beauty unrivalled was the sole ingredient. And then those bright enamelled clumps of living emerald, sleeping upon the wavy surface like the golden Hesperides of classic fiction, or, like another cluster of Fortunate Isles in the dark-blue waters, breathing a fragrance as from oriental bowers; the wild-deer bounding in startled beauty from his bed, and the merry note of the sky-lark, whistling, with speckled vest and dew-wet wing, upon the resin-weed, lent the last touchings to Nature's *chef d'œuvre.*

> "Oh, beautiful, still beautiful,
> Though long and lone the way."

But the scene amid which I was now standing could boast an aspect little like this. Here, indeed, were the rare and delicate flowers; and life, in all its fresh and beautiful forms, was leaping forth in wild and sportive luxuriance at my feet. But all was vast, measureless, Titanic; and the loveliness of the picture was lost in its grandeur. Here was no magnificence of *beauty*, no *gorgeousness* of vegetation, no *splendour* of the wilderness;

> "Green isles and circling shores *ne'er* blended here
> In wild reality!"

All was bold and impressive, reposing in the stern, majestic solitude of Nature. On every side the earth heaved and rolled like the swell of troubled waters; now sweeping away in the long heavy wave of ocean, and now rocking and curling like the abrupt, broken bay-billow tumbling around the

crag. Between the lengthened parallel ridges stretch the ravines by which the prairie is drained; and, owing to the depth and tenacity of the soil, they are sometimes almost impassable. Ascending from these, the elevation swells so gradually as to be almost imperceptible to the traveller, until he finds himself upon the summit, and the immense landscape is spread out around him.

> "The clouds
> Sweep over with their shadows, and beneath,
> The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
> Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
> The sunny ridges."

The diversity of light and shade upon the swells and depressions at the hour of sunrise, or when at midday clouds are drifting along the sky, is endless. A few points here and there are thrown into prominent relief; while others, deeply retreating, constitute an imaginary back-ground perfect in its kind. And then the sunlight, constantly changing its position, is received upon such a variety of angles, and these, too, so rapidly vary as the breeze rolls over the surface, that it gives the scene a wild and shifting aspect to the eye at times, barely reconcilable with the idea of reality.

As the sun reached the meridian the winds went down, and then the stillness of death hung over the prairie. The utter desolateness of such a scene is indescribable. Not a solitary tree to intercept the vision or to break the monotony; not a sound to cheer the ear or relieve the desolation; not a living

thing in all that vast wild plain to tell the traveller that he was not

> "Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide, wide sea!"

It is at such a season that the question presents itself with more than ordinary vehemence to the mind, *To what circumstance do these vast prairies owe their origin?* Amid what terrible convulsion of the elements did these great ocean-plains heave themselves into being? What mighty voice has rolled this heaped-up surface into tumult, and then, amid the storm and the tempest, bid the curling billows stand, and fixed them there?

> "The hand that built the firmament hath heaved
> And smooth'd these verdant swells."

The origin of the prairie has given rise to much speculation. Some contend that we are to regard these vast plains in the same light as mountains, valleys, forests, and other grand features of Nature's workmanship. And, it is very true, plains of a character not dissimilar are to be met with all over our earth; at every degree of elevation of every extent, and of every stage of fertility, from the exhaustless fecundity of the delta of the Nile to the barren sterility of the sands of the desert. Northern Asia has her boundless *pastures* and *steppes*, where the wild Tartar feeds his flock; Africa may boast her Bedouin *sands*, her *table-lands*, and her *karroos;* South America her grassy *llanos* and *pampas;* Europe her purple *heather;* India her *jungles;* the southern sections of our own land their beautiful *savannas;* and wherefore not the

vast regions of the "Far West" their broad-rolling *prairies?* The word is of French derivation, signifying *meadow;* and is applied to every description of surface destitute of timber and clothed with grass. It was, then, upon their own fair prairies of Judea and Mesopotamia that the ancient patriarchs pitched their tents. The tough sward of the prairie, when firmly formed, it is well known, refuses to receive the forest; but, once broken into by the ploughshare or by any other cause, and protected from the autumnal flames, and all is soon rolling with green; and the sumach, the hazel, and the wild-cherry are succeeded by the oak. Such is the argument for the *natural* origin of the prairies, and its cogency none will deny. But, assuming for a moment a *diluvial* origin to these vast plains, as a thousand circumstances concur to indicate, and the phenomena are far more satisfactorily and philosophically resolved. In a soil so exhaustlessly fertile, the grasses and herbs would first secure possession of the surface. Even now, whenever the earth is thrown up, from whatever depth, it is immediately mossed with verdure by the countless embryos buried in its teeming bosom; a proof incontestable of secondary origin. After the grasses succeeded flowering shrubs; then the larger weeds; eventually, thickets were formed; the surface was baked and hardened by the direct rays of the sun, and the bosom of the soil, bound up as if by bands of brass and iron, utterly refused to receive or nourish the seeds of the forest now strewn over it. This is the unavoidable conclusion wherever nat-

ural causes have held their sway. Upon the borders of rivers, creeks, and overflowing streams, or wherever the soil has become broken, this series of causes was interrupted, and the result we see in the numerous island-groves, and in the forests which invariably fringe the water-courses, great and small. The autumnal fires, too, aboriginal tradition informs us, have annually swept these vast plains from an era which the memory of man faileth to record, scathing and consuming every bush, shrub, or thicket which in the lapse of ages might have aspired to the dignity of a tree; a nucleus around which other trees might have clustered. Here and there, indeed, amid the heaving waste, a desolate, wind-shaken, flame-blackened oak rears its naked branches in the distance; but it is a stricken thing, and only confirms the position assumed. From a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances easily conceived, the solitary seed was received into a genial soil; the tender shrub and the sapling were protected from destruction, and at length it had struggled into the upper air, and defied alike the flames and blasts of the prairie.

The argument of *analogy* for the *natural origin* of the prairie may also be fairly questioned, since careful examination of the subject must convince any unprejudiced mind that the similarity of feature between these plains and others with which we are acquainted is not sufficiently striking to warrant comparison. The *pampas*, the *steppes*, and the *sand-plains*, though not unlike in the more prominent characteristics, are yet widely different

in configuration, extent, and soil. The prairie combines characteristics of each, exhibiting features of all in *common*, of no one in *particular*. Who would institute comparison between the dark-rolling luxuriance of the North American prairie, and the gloomy moor of Northern Europe, with its heavy, funereal mantle of heather and *ling*. Could the rifest fancy conjure up the *weird sisters*, all "so withered and so wild in their attire," upon these beautiful plains of the departed Illini! Nor do we meet in the thyme-breathing downs of "merry England," the broad rich levels of France, the grape-clad highlands of Spain, or in the golden mellowness of the Italian *Campagna*, with a similitude of feature sufficiently striking to identify our own glorious prairies with them. Europe can boast, indeed, no peculiarity of surface assuming like configuration or exhibiting like phenomena.

When, then, we reflect, that of all those plains which spread out themselves upon our globe, the North American prairie possesses characteristics peculiar to itself, and to be met with nowhere beside; when we consider the demonstrations of a soil of origin incontestably diluvial; when we wander over the heaving, billowy surface, and behold it strewed with the rocky offspring of another region, and, at intervals, encased in the saline crust of the ocean-sediment; when we dive into its fathomless bosom, and bring forth the crumbling relics of man and animal from sepulchres into which, for untold cycles, they have been entombed; and when we linger along those rolling streams by which they

are intersected, and behold upon their banks the mighty indications of whirling, subsiding floods, and behold buried in the heart of the everlasting rock productions only of the sea, the conviction is forced upon us, almost resistlessly, that here the broad ocean once heaved and roared. To what circumstance, indeed, but a revolution of nature like this, are we to refer that uniform deposition of earthy strata upon the alluvial bottom-land of every stream? to what those deep-cut race-paths which the great streams have, in the lapse of centuries, worn for themselves through the everlasting rock, hundreds of feet? to what those vast salt-plains of Arkansas? those rocky heaps of the same mineral on the Missouri, or those huge isolated masses of limestone, rearing themselves amid the lonely grandeur, a wonder to the savage? Or to what else shall we refer those collections of enormous seashells, heaped upon the soil, or thrown up to its surface from a depth of fifty feet?

Many phenomena in the Valley of the Mississippi concur to confirm the idea that its vast delta-plains, when first forsaken by the waters of the ocean, were possessed by extensive canebrakes, covering, indeed, its entire surface. If, then, we suppose the Indians, who passed from Asia to America in the early centuries of the Christian era, to have commenced the fires in autumn when the reed was like tinder, and the conflagration would sweep over boundless regions, we at once have an hypothesis which accounts for the origin of the prairies. It is at least as plausible as some others. The occasions of the autumnal fires may have been

various. The cane-forests must have presented an insurmountable obstacle in travelling, hunting, agriculture, or even residence; while the friction caused by the tempestuous winds of autumn may have kindled numerous fires among the dry reeds.

The surface peculiar to the prairie is first perceived in the State of Ohio. As we proceed north and west it increases in extent, until, a few hundred miles beyond the Mississippi, it rolls on towards the setting sun, in all the majesty and magnificence of boundlessness, to the base of the Rocky Mountains. Such are the beautiful prairies of the fair Far West; and if, gentle reader, my pen, all rapid though it be, has lingered tediously to thee along their fairy borders, it may yet prove no small consolation to thy weariness to reflect that its errings upon the subject are wellnigh ended.

It was yet early in the day, as I have intimated, when I reached the centre of that broad branch of the Grand Prairie over which I was passing; and, mile after mile, the narrow pathway, almost obliterated here and there by the waving vegetation, continued to wind itself along. With that unreflecting carelessness which characterizes the inexperienced wayfarer, I had left behind me the last human habitation I was for hours to look upon, without the slightest refreshment; and now the demands of unappeased nature, sharpened by exercise, by the keen atmosphere of the prairies, and, probably, by the force of fancy, which never fails to aggravate privations which we know to be remediless, had become absolutely painful. The faithful animal be-

neath me, also, from the total absence of water along our path, was nearly exhausted; and there, before and around, and on every side, not an object met the view but the broad-rolling, limitless prairie, and the dim, misty horizon in the distance. Above, the heavens were calm and blue, and the bright sun was careering on in his giant course as gloriously as if the storm-cloud had never swept his path. League after league the prairie lay behind me, and still swell upon swell, wave after wave, heaved up itself in endless succession before the wearied eye. There *is* a point, reader, in physical, not less than in moral affairs, where forbearance ceases to be a virtue; and, veritably, suggestions bordering on the horrible were beginning to flit athwart the fancy, when, happily, a long, low, wavering, cloud-like line was caught stretching itself upon the extremest verge of the misty horizon. My jaded animal was urged onward; and slowly, *very* slowly, the dim outline undulated upward, and the green forest rose gradually before the gladdened vision! A few miles, the path plunged into the green, fresh woods; crossed a deep creek, which betrayed its meandering by the grove along its banks, and the hungry traveller threw himself from his horse before a log cabin imbowered in the trees. The spot was one of those luxuriant copses in the heart of the prairie, comprising several hundred acres, so common in the northern sections of Illinois. "*Victuals and drink!*" were, of course, the first demand from a female who showed herself at the door; and, "*I judge*" was the laconic but cheer-

ing reply. She stared with uncontrolled curiosity at her stranger-guest. At the moment he must have looked a perfect incarnation of ferocity; a very genius of famine and starvation; but, all in good time, he was luxuriating over a huge fragment of swine's flesh, a bowl of honey, and a loaf of bread; and soon were his *miseries* over. What! honey and hog's flesh not a luxury! Say ye so, reader! Verily, then, were ye never half starved in the heart of a Western prairie!

Salem, Ill.

XXXI.

"No leave take I, for I will ride
As far as land will let me."

"The long sunny lapse of a summer's daylight."

"What fool is this!"

As you Like it.

Among that novel variety of feature which the perspicacity of European tourists in America has enabled them to detect of Cis-atlantic character, two traits seem ever to stand forth in striking relief, and are dwelt upon with very evident satisfaction: I allude to Avarice and Curiosity. Upon the former of these characteristics it is not my purpose to comment; though one can hardly have been a traveller, in any acceptation of the term, or in almost any section of our land, without having arrived at a pretty decided opinion upon the subject. Curios-

ity, however, it will not, I am persuaded, be denied, *does* constitute a feature, and no inconsiderable one, in our national character; nor would it, perhaps, prove a difficult task to lay the finger upon those precise circumstances in our origin and history as a people which have tended to superinduce a trait of this kind—a trait so disgusting in its ultra development; and yet, in its ultimate nature, so indispensably the mainspring of everything efficient in mind. "*Low vice*," as the author of Childe Harold has been pleased to stigmatize it; yet upon this single propellant may, in retrospect, be predicated the cause of more that contributes to man's happiness than perhaps upon any other. *Frailty of a little mind*, as it *may* be, and is often deemed; yet not the less true is it that the omnipotent workings of this passion have ever been, and must, until the nature of the human mind is radically changed, continue to remain, at once the necessary concomitant and the essential element of a vigorous understanding. If it be, then, indeed true, as writers and critics beyond the waters would fain have us believe, that American national character is thus compounded, so far from blushing at the discovery, we would hail it as a leading cause of our unparalleled advancement as a people in the time past, and as an unerring omen of progression in future.

My pen has been insensibly betrayed into these remarks in view of a series of incidents which, during my few months rambling, have from time to time transpired; and which, while they illustrate forcibly to my mind the position I have assumed,

have also demonstrated conclusively the minor consideration, that the passion, in all its *phenomena*, is by no means, as some would have us believe, restricted to any one portion of our land; that it *is*, in verity, a characteristic of the entire Anglo-American race! Thus much for *sage forensic* upon "that low vice, curiosity."

My last number left me luxuriating, with all the gusto of an amateur prairie-wolf fresh from his starving lair, upon the *fat* and *honey* of Illinois. During these blessed moments of trencher devotion, several inmates of the little cabin whose hospitality I was enjoying, who had been labouring in the field, successively made their appearance; and to each individual in turn was the traveller handed over, like a bale of suspected contraband merchandise, for supervision. The interrogatories of each were quite the same, embracing name and nativity, occupation, location, and destination, administered with all the formal exactitude of a county-court lawyer. With the inquiries of none, however, was I more amused than with those of a little corpulent old fellow ycleped "Uncle Bill," with a proboscis of exceeding rubicundity, and eyes red as a weasel's, to say nothing of a voice melodious in note as an asthmatic clarionet. The curiosity of the Northern Yankee is, in all conscience, unconscionable enough when aroused; but, for the genuine quintessence of inquisitiveness, commend your enemy, if you have one, to an army of starving gallinippers, or to a backwoods' family of the Far West who see a traveller twice a year, and don't take the newspaper! Now

mark me, reader! I mention not this as a *fault* of the worthy "Suckers:"* it is rather a misfortune; or, if otherwise, it surely "leans to virtue's side." A *peculiarity*, nevertheless, it certainly is; and a striking one to the stranger. Inquiries are constantly made with most unblushing effrontery, which, under ordinary circumstances, would be deemed but a single remove from insult, but at which, under those to which I refer, a man of sense would not for a moment take exception. It is *true*, as some one somewhere has said, that a degree of inquisitiveness which in the more crowded walks of life would be called impertinent, is perfectly allowable in the wilderness; and nothing is more conceivable than desire for its gratification. As to the people of Illinois, gathered as they are from every "kindred, and nation, and tribe, and language under heaven," there are traits of character among them which one could wish universally possessed. Kind, hospitable, open-hearted, and confiding have I ever found them, whether in the lonely log cabin of the prairie or in the overflowing settlement; and some noble spirits *I* have met whose presence would honour any community or people.

After my humble but delicious meal was concluded, mine host, a tall, well-proportioned, sinewy young fellow, taking down his rifle from the *beckets* in which it was reposing over the rude mantel, very civilly requested me to accompany him on a hunting ramble of a few hours in the vicinity for deer. Having but a short evening ride before me, I readily consented; and, leaving the cabin, we strolled

* Illinoisians.

leisurely through the shady woods, along the banks of the creek I have mentioned, for several miles; but, though indications of deer were abundant, without success. We were again returning to the hut, which was now in sight on the prairie's edge, when, in the middle of a remark upon the propriety of "*disposing of a part of his extensive farm*," the rifle of my companion was suddenly brought to his eye; a sharp crack, and a beautiful doe, which the moment before was bounding over the nodding wild-weeds like the summer wind, lay gasping at our feet.

So agreeable did I find my youthful hunter, that I was wellnigh complying with his request to "tarry with him yet a few days," and try my own hand and eye, all unskilled though they be, in *gentle venerie;* or, at the least, to taste a steak from the fine fat doe. *Sed fugit, interea fugit, irreparabile tempus;* and when the shades of evening were beginning to gather over the landscape, I had passed over a prairie some eight miles in breadth; and, chilled and uncomfortable from the drenching of a heavy shower, was entering the village of Shelbyville through the trees.

This is a pleasant little town enough, situated on the west bank of the Kaskaskia River, in a high and heavily-timbered tract. It is the seat of justice for the county from which it takes its name, which circumstance is fearfully portended by a ragged, bleak-looking structure called a courthouse. Its shattered windows, and flapping doors, and weather-stained bricks, when associated with the object to which it is appropriated, perched up as it is in the

centre of the village, reminds one of a cornfield scarecrow, performing its duty by looking as hideous as possible. *In terrorem*, in sooth. Dame Justice seems indeed to have met with most shameful treatment all over the West, through her legitimate representative the courthouse. The most interesting object in the vicinity of Shelbyville is a huge sulphur-spring, which I did not tarry long enough to visit.

"Will you be pleased, sir, to register your name?" was the modest request of mine host, as, having *settled the bill*, with foot in stirrup, I was about mounting my steed at the door of the little hostelrie of Shelbyville the morning after my arrival. Tortured by the pangs of a curiosity which it was quite evident must now or never be gratified, he had pursued his guest *beyond the threshold* with this *dernier resort* to elicit *a* name and residence. "Register my name, sir!" was the reply. "And pray, let me ask, where do you intend that desirable operation to be performed?" The discomfited publican, with an expression of ludicrous dismay, hastily retreating to the bar-room, soon reappeared gallanting a mysterious-looking little blue-book, with "Register" in ominous characters portrayed upon the back thereof. *A* name as accordingly soon despatched with a pencil, beneath about a dozen others, which the honest man had probably managed to *save* in as many years; and, applying the spur, the last glance of the traveller caught the eager features of his host poring over this new accession to his treasure.

The early air of morning was intensely chilling as I left the village and pursued my solitary way through the old woods; but, as the sun went up the heavens, and the path emerged upon the open prairie, the transition was astonishing. The effect of emerging from the dusky shades of a thick wood upon a prairie on a summer day is delightful and peculiar. I have often remarked it. It impresses one like passing from the damp, gloomy closeness of a cavern into the genial sunshine of a flower-garden. For the first time during my tour in Illinois was my horse now severely troubled by that terrible insect, so notorious all over the West, the large green-bottle prairie-fly, called the "green-head." My attention was first attracted to it by observing several gouts of fresh blood upon the rein; and, glancing at my horse's neck, my surprise was great at beholding an orifice quite as large as that produced by the *fleam*, from which the dark fluid was freely streaming. The instant one of these fearful insects plants itself upon a horse's body, the rider is made aware of the circumstance by a peculiar restlessness of the animal in every limb, which soon becomes a perfect agony, while the sweat flows forth at every pore. The last year* was a remarkable one for countless swarms of these flies; many animals were *killed* by them; and at one season it was even dangerous to venture across the broader prairies except before sunrise or after nightfall. In the early settlement of the county, these insects were so troublesome as in

* 1835.

a great measure to retard the cultivation of the prairies; but, within a few years, a yellow insect larger than the "green-head" has made its appearance wherever the latter was found, and, from its sweeping destruction of the annoying fly, has been called the "horse-guard." These form burrows by penetrating the earth to some depth, and there depositing the slaughtered "green-heads." It is stated that animals become so well aware of the relief afforded by these insects and of their presence, that the traveller recognises their arrival at once by the quiet tranquillity which succeeds the former agitation. Ploughing upon the prairies was formerly much delayed by these insects, and heavy netting was requisite for the protection of the oxen.

At an inconsiderable settlement called *Cold Spring*, after a ride of a dozen miles, I drew up my horse for refreshment. My host, a venerable old gentleman, with brows silvered over by the frosts of sixty winters, from some circumstance unaccountable, presumed his guest a political circuit-rider, and arranged his remarks accordingly. The old man's politics were, however, not a little musty. Henry Clay was spoken of rather as a young aspirant for distinction, just stepping upon the arena of public life, than as the aged statesman about resigning "the seals of office," and, hoary with honour, withdrawing from the world. Nathless, much pleased was I with my host. He was a native of Connecticut, and twenty years had seen him a resident in "the Valley."

Resuming my route, the path conducted through

a high wood, and for the first time since my departure from New-England was my ear charmed by the sweet, melancholy note of the robin, beautiful songster of my own native North. A wanderer can hardly describe his emotions on an occurrence like this. The ornithology of the West, so far as a limited acquaintance will warrant the assertion, embraces many of the most magnificent of the feathered creation. Here is found the jay, in gold and azure, most splendid bird of the forest; here the woodpecker, with flaming crest and snowy capote; the redbird; the cardinal grosbeak, with his mellow whistle, gorgeous in crimson dies; the bluebird, delicate as an iris; the mockbird, unrivalled chorister of our land; the thrush; the wish-ton-wish; the plaintive whippoorwill; and last, yet not the least, the turtle-dove, with her flutelike moaning. How often, on my solitary path, when all was still through the grove, and heaven's own breathings for a season seemed hushed, have I reined up my horse, and, with feelings not to be described, listened to the redundant pathos of that beautiful woodnote swelling on the air! Paley has somewhere* told us, that by nothing has he been so touchingly reminded of the benevolence of Deity as by the quiet happiness of the infant on its mother's breast. To myself there is naught in all Nature's beautiful circle which speaks a richer eloquence of praise to the goodness of our God than the gushing joyousness of the forest-bird!

All day I continued my journey over hill and

* Philosophy, vol. i.

dale, creek and ravine, woodland and prairie, until, near sunset, I reined up my weary animal to rest a while beneath the shade of a broad-boughed oak by the wayside, of whose refreshing hospitality an emigrant, with wagon and family, had already availed himself. The leader of the caravan, rather a young man, was reclining upon the bank, and, according to his own account, none the better for an extra dram. From a few remarks which were elicited from him, I soon discovered—what I had suspected, but which he at first had seemed doggedly intent upon concealing—that he belonged to that singular sect to which I have before alluded, styling themselves Mormonites, and that he was even then on his way to Mount Zion, Jackson county, Mo.! By contriving to throw into my observations a few of those tenets of the sect which, during my wanderings, I had gathered up, the worthy Mormonite was soon persuaded—pardon my insincerity, reader—that he had stumbled upon a veritable brother; and, without reserve or mental reservation, laid open to my cognizance, as we journeyed along, "the reasons of the faith that was in him," and the ultimate, proximate, and intermediate designs of the *party*. And such a chaotic fanfaronade of nonsense, absurdity, nay, madness, was an idle curiosity never before punished with. The most which could be gathered of any possible "*account*" from this confused, disconnected mass of rubbish, was the following: That Joe Smith, or Joe Smith's father, or the devil, or some other great personage, had somewhere dug up the gold-

en plates upon which were graven the "Book of Mormon:" that this all-mysterious and much-to-be-admired book embraced the chronicles of the lost kings of Israel: that it derived its cognomen from one Mormon, its principal hero, son of Lot's daughter, king of the Moabites: that Christ was crucified on the spot where Adam was interred: that the descendants of Cain were all now under the curse, and no one could possibly designate who they were: that the Saviour was about to descend in Jackson county, Missouri; the millennium was dawning, and that all who were not baptized by Joe Smith or his compeers, and forthwith repaired to Mount Zion, Missouri, aforesaid, would assuredly be cut off, and that without remedy. These may, perhaps, serve as a specimen of a host of wild absurdities which fell from the lips of my Mormonite; but, the instant argument upon any point was pressed, away was he a thousand miles into the fields of mysticism; or he laid an immediate embargo on farther proceedings by a barefaced *petitio principii* on the faith of the golden plates; or by asserting that the stranger knew more upon the matter than he! At length the stranger, coming to the conclusion that he could at least boast as *much* of Mormonism, he spurred up, and left the man still jogging onward to Mount Zion. And yet, reader, with all his nonsense, my Mormonite was by no means an ignorant fanatic. He was a native of Virginia, and for fifteen years had been a pedagogue west of the Blue Ridge, from which edifying profession he had at length been

enticed by the eloquence of sundry preachers who had held forth in his schoolhouse. Thereupon taking to himself a brace of wives and two or three braces of children by way of stock in trade for the community at Mount Zion, and having likewise taken to himself a one-horse wagon, into which were bestowed the moveables, not forgetting a certain big-bellied stone bottle which hung ominously dangling in the rear; I say, having done this, and having, moreover, pressed into service a certain raw-boned, unhappy-looking horse, and a certain fat, happy-looking cow, which was driven along beside the wagon, away started he all agog for the promised land.

The grand tabernacle of these fanatics is said to be at a place they call *Kirtland*, upon the shores of Lake Erie, some twenty miles from Cleveland, and numbers no less than four thousand persons. Their leader is Joe Smith, and associated with him is a certain shrewd genius named Sydney Rigdom, a quondam preacher of the doctrine of Campbell. Under the control of these worthies as president and cashier, a banking-house was established, which issued about $150,000, and then deceased. The private residences are small, but the temple is said to be an elegant structure of stone, three stories in height, and nearly square in form. Each of its principal apartments is calculated to contain twelve hundred persons, and has six pulpits arranged gradatim, three at each extremity of the "Aaronic priesthood," and in the same manner with the "priesthood of Melchisedek." The

slips are so constructed as to permit the audience to face either pulpit at pleasure. In the highest seat of the "Aaronic priesthood" sit the venerable sire of the prophet, and below sit his hopeful Joe and Joe's prime minister, Sydney Rigdom. The attic of the temple is occupied for schoolrooms, five in number, where a large number of students are taught the various branches of the English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. The estimated cost of this building is $60,000.* Smith is represented as a quiet, placid-seeming knave, with passionless features, perfectly composed in the midst of his heterogeneous multitude of dupes. Rigdom, on the contrary, has a face full of fire, a fine tenour voice, and a mild and persuasive eloquence of speech. Many of their followers are said to be excellent men. The circumstances of the origin, rise, and progress of this singular sect have been given to the public by the pen of an eccentric but polished writer, and there is nothing material to add.

The close of the day found me once more upon the banks of the Kaskaskia; and early on the succeeding morning, fording the stream, I pursued my route along the great national road towards Terre Haute. This road is projected eighty feet in breadth, with a central carriage-path of thirty feet, elevated above all standing water, and in no instance to exceed three degrees from a perfect level. The work has been commenced along the whole

* Kirtland is now deserted, and the church is occupied for a school.

line, and is under various stages of advancement; for most of the way it is perfectly *direct*. The bridges are to be of limestone, and of massive structure, the base of the abutments being equal in depth to one third their altitude. The work was for a while suspended, for the purpose of investigating former operations, and subsequently through failure of an appropriation from Congress; but a grant has since been voted sufficient to complete the undertaking so far as it is now projected. West of Vandalia the route is not yet located; though repeated surveys with reference to this object have been made. St. Louis, Alton, Beardstown, and divers other places upon the Mississippi and its branches present claims to become the favoured point of its destination. Upon this road I journeyed some miles; and, even in its present unfinished condition, it gives evidence of its enormous character. Compare this grand national work with the crumbling relics of the mound-builders scattered over the land, and remark the contrast: yet how, think you, reader, would an hundred thousand men regard an undertaking like this?

My route at length, to my regret, struck off at right angles from the road, and for many a mile wound away among woods and creeks. As I rode along through the country I was somewhat surprised at meeting people from various quarters, who seemed to be gathering to some rendezvous, all armed with rifles, and with the paraphernalia of hunting suspended from their shoulders. At length, near noon, I passed a log-cabin, around which

were assembled about a hundred men; and, upon inquiry, learned that they had come together for the purpose of "shooting a beeve,"* as the marksmen have it. The regulations I found to be chiefly these: A bull's-eye, with a centre nail, stands at a distance variously of from forty to seventy yards; and those five who, at the close of the contest, have most frequently *driven the nail*, are entitled to a fat ox divided into five portions. Many of the marksmen in the vicinity, I was informed, could drive the nail twice out of every three trials. Reluctantly I was forced to decline a civil invitation to join the party, and to leave before the sport commenced; but, jogging leisurely along through a beautiful region of prairie and woodland interspersed, I reached near nightfall the village of Salem. This place, with its dark, weather-beaten edifices, forcibly recalled to my mind one of those gloomy little seaports sprinkled along the iron-bound coast of New-England, over some of which the ocean-storm has roared and the ocean-eagle shrieked for more than two centuries. The town is situated on the eastern border of the Grand Prairie, upon the stage-route from St. Louis to Vincennes; and, as approached from one quarter, is completely concealed by a bold promontory of timber springing into the plain. It is a quiet, innocent, gossipping little place as ever was, no doubt; never did any harm in all its life, and probably never will do any. This sage conclusion is predicated upon certain items gathered at the village singing-school; at which, ever-notable place, the traveller, agreeable to invi-

* Or "*beef*."

tation, attended, and carolled away most vehemently with about a dozen others of either sex, under the cognizance of a certain worthy personage styled *the Major*, whose vocation seemed to be to wander over these parts for the purpose of "*building up*" the good people in psalmody. To say that I was not more surprised than delighted with the fruits of the honest songster's efforts in Salem, and that I was, moreover, marvellously edified by the brisk airs of the "Missouri Harmony," from whose cheerful pages operations were performed, surely need not be done; therefore, prithee, reader, question me not.

Mt. Vernon, Ill.

XXXII.

"After we are exhausted by a long course of application to business, how delightful are the first moments of indolence and repose! *O che bella coza di far niente!*"—STEWART.

"Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn!"

Falstaff.

THAT distinguished metaphysician Dugald Stewart, in his treatise upon the "Active and Moral Powers," has, in the language of my motto, somewhere* observed, that leisure after continued exertion is a source of happiness perfect in its kind; and

* Philosophy, b. i., chap. 1.

surely, at the moment I am now writing, my own feelings abundantly testify to the force of the remark. For more than one month past have I been urging myself onward from village to village and from hamlet to hamlet, through woodland, and over prairie, river, and rivulet, with almost the celerity of an *avant courier*, and hardly with closer regard to passing scenes and events. My purpose, reader, for I may as well tell you, has been to accomplish, within a portion of time to some degree limited, a "tour over the prairies" previously laid out. This, within the prescribed period, I am now quite certain of fulfilling; and here am I, at length, "taking mine ease in mine inn" at the ancient and venerable French village Kaskaskia.

It is evening now. The long summer sunset is dying away in beauty from the heavens; and alone in my chamber am I gathering up the fragments of events scattered along the pathway of the week that is gone. Last evening at this hour I was entering the town of Pinkneyville, and my last number left me soberly regaling myself upon the harmonious *vocalities* of the sombre little village of Salem. Here, then, may I well enough resume "the thread of my discourse."

During my wanderings in Illinois I have more than once referred to the frequency and violence of the thunder-gusts by which it is visited. I had travelled not many miles the morning after leaving Salem when I was assailed by one of the most terrific storms I remember to have yet encountered. All the morning the atmosphere had been most op-

pressive, the sultriness completely prostrating, and the livid exhalations quivered along the parched-up soil of the prairies, as if over the mouth of an enormous furnace. A gauzy mist of silvery whiteness at length diffused itself over the landscape; an inky cloud came heaving up in the northern horizon, and soon the thunder-peal began to bellow and reverberate along the darkened prairie, and the great raindrops came tumbling to the ground. Fortunately, a shelter was at hand; but hardly had the traveller availed himself of its liberal hospitality, when the heavens were again lighted up by the sunbeams; the sable cloud rolled off to the east, and all was beautiful and calm, as if the angel of desolation in his hurried flight had but for a moment stopped the shade of his dusky wing, and had then swept onward to accomplish elsewhere his terrible bidding. With a reflection like this I was about remounting to pursue my way, when a prolonged, deafening, terrible crash—as if the wild idea of heathen mythology was indeed about to be realized, and the thunder-car of Olympian Jove was dashing through the concave above—caused me to falter with foot in stirrup, and almost involuntarily to turn my eye in the direction from which the bolt seemed to have burst. A few hundred yards from the spot on which I stood a huge elm had been blasted by the lightning; and its enormous shaft towering aloft, torn, mangled, shattered from the very summit to its base, was streaming its long ghastly fragments on the blast. The scene was one startlingly impressive; one of those few scenes in a man's life the remembrance

of which years cannot wholly efface; which he never *forgets*. As I gazed upon this giant forest-son, which the lapse of centuries had perhaps hardly sufficed to rear to perfection, now, even though a ruin, noble, that celebrated passage of the poet Gray, when describing his *bard*, recurred with some force to my mind: in this description Gray is supposed to have had the painting of Raphael at Florence, representing Deity in the vision of Ezekiel, before him:

> "Loose his beard and hoary hair
> Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air," &c.

A ride of a few hours, after the storm had died away, brought me to the pleasant little town of Mt. Vernon. This place is the seat of justice for Jefferson county, and has a courthouse of brick, decent enough to the eye, to be sure, but said to have been so miserably constructed that it is a perilous feat for his honour here to poise the scales. The town itself is an inconsiderable place, but pleasantly situated, in the edge of a prairie, if I forget not, and in every other respect is exactly what every traveller has seen a dozen times elsewhere in Illinois. Like Shelbyville, it is chiefly noted for a remarkable spring in its vicinity, said to be highly medicinal. How this latter item may stand I know not, but I am quite sure that all of the *pure element* it was my own disagreeable necessity to partake of during my brief tarry savoured mightily of medicine or of something akin. Epsom salts and alum seemed the chief substances in solution; and with these minerals all the water in the region appeared heavily charged.

It was a misty, miserable morning when I left Mt. Vernon; and as my route lay chiefly through a dense timbered tract, the dank, heavy atmosphere exhaling from the soil, from the luxuriant vegetation, and from the dense foliage of the overhanging boughs, was anything but agreeable. To endure the pitiless drenching of a summer-shower with equanimity demands but a brief exercise of stoicism: but it is not in the nature of man amiably to withstand the equally pitiless *drenching* of a drizzling, penetrating, everlasting fog, be it of sea origin or of land. At length a thunder-gust—the usual remedy for these desperate cases in Illinois—dissipated the vapour, and the glorious sunlight streamed far and wide athwart a broad prairie, in the edge of which I stood. The route was, in the language of my director, indeed a *blind* one; but, having received special instructions thereupon, I hesitated not to press onward over the swelling, pathless plain towards the *east*. After a few miles, having crossed an arm of the prairie, directions were again sought and received, by which the route became due *south*, pathless as before, and through a tract of woodland rearing itself from a bog perfectly Serbonian. "Muddy Prairie" indeed. On every side rose the enormous shafts of the cypress, the water-oak, and the maple, flinging from their giant branches that gray, pensile, parasitical moss, which, weaving its long funereal fibres into a dusky mantle, almost entangles in the meshes the thin threads of sunlight struggling down from above. It was here for the first time that I met in any considerabel num-

bers with that long-necked, long-legged, long-toed, long-tailed gentry called wild turkeys: and, verily, here was a host ample to atone for all former deficiency, parading in ungainly magnificence through the forest upon every side, or peeping curiously down, with outstretched necks and querulous piping, from their lofty perches on the traveller below. It is by a skilful imitation of this same piping, to say nothing of the melodious gobble that always succeeds it, that the sportsman decoys these sentimental bipeds within his reach. The same method is sometimes employed in hunting the deer—an imitated bleating of the fawn when in distress—thus taking away the gentle mother's life through the medium of her most generous impulses; a most diabolical *modus operandi*, reader, permit me to say.

Emerging at length, by a circuitous path, once more upon the prairie, instructions were again sought for the *direct* route to Pinkneyville, and a course nearly *north* was now pointed out. Think of that; *east*, *south*, *north*, in regular succession too, over a tract of country perfectly uniform, in order to run a *right* line between two given points! This was past all endurance. To a moral certainty with me, the place of my destination lay away just southwest from the spot on which I was then standing. Producing, therefore, my pocket-map and pocket-compass, by means of a little calculation I had soon laid down the prescribed course, determined to pursue none other, the remonstrances, and protestations, and objurgations of men, women, and children to the contrary notwithstanding. Push-

ing boldly forth into the prairie, I had not travelled many miles when I struck a path leading off in the direction I had chosen, and which *proved* the direct route to Pinkneyville! Thus had I been forced to cross, recross, and cross again, a prairie miles in breadth, and to flounder through a swamp other miles in extent, to say nothing of the *depth*, and all because of the utter ignorance of the worthy souls who took upon them *to direct*. I have given this instance in detail for the special edification and benefit of all future wayfarers in Illinois. The only unerring guide on the prairies is the map and the compass. Half famished, and somewhat more than half vexed at the adventures of the morning, I found myself, near noon, at the cabin-door of an honest old Virginian, and was ere long placed in a fair way to relieve my craving appetite. With the little compass which hung at the safety-riband of my watch, and which had done me such rare service during my wanderings, the worthy old gentleman seemed heart-stricken at first sight, and warmly protested that he and the "*stranger*" must have "*a small bit of a tug*" for that *fixen*, a proposition which said stranger by no means as warmly relished. Laying, therefore, before the old farmer a slight outline of my morning's ramble, he readily perceived that with me the "*pretty leetle fixen*" was anything but a superlative. My evening ride was a delightful one along the edge of an extended prairie; but, though repeatedly assured by the worthy settlers upon the route that I could "*catch no diffick*ulty on my way no how," my compass was

my only safe guide. At length, crossing "Mud River" upon a lofty bridge of logs, the town of Pinkneyville was before me just at sunset.

Pinkneyville has but little to commend it to the passing traveller, whether we regard beauty of location, regularity of structure, elegance, size, or proportion of edifices, or the cultivation of the farms in its vicinage. It would, perhaps, be a pleasant town enough were its site more elevated, its buildings larger, and disposed with a little more of mathematical exactness, or its streets less lanelike and less filthy. As it is, it will require some years to give it a standing among its fellows. It is laid out on the roll of a small prairie of moderate fertility, but has quite an extensive settlement of enterprising farmers, a circumstance which will conduce far more to the ultimate prosperity of the place. The most prominent structure is a blood-red jail of brick, standing near the centre of the village; rather a savage-looking concern, and, doubtless, so designed by its sagacious architect for the purpose of frightening evil doers.

Having taken these *observations* from the tavern door during twilight, the traveller retired to his chamber, nothing loath, after a ride of nearly fifty miles, to bestow his tired frame to rest. But, alas! that verity compels him to declare it—

"'Tis true, and pity 'tis 'tis true,"

the "*Traveller's Inn*" was anything, nay, *every*thing but the comfort-giving spot the hospitable cognomen swinging from its signpost seemed to imply. Ah! the fond visions of quietude and re-

pose, of plentiful feeding and hearty sleeping, which those magic words, "*Traveller's Inn*," had conjured up in the weary traveller's fancy when they first delightfully swung before his eye.

> "But human pleasure, what art thou, in sooth!
> The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below! !"

Well—exhausted, worn down, tired out, the traveller yet found it as utterly impossible quietly to rest, as does, doubtless, "a half-assoilzed soul in purgatory;" and, hours before the day had begun to break, he arose and ordered out his horse. Kind reader, hast ever, in the varyings of thy pilgrimage through this troublous world of ours, when faint, and languid, and weary with exertion, by any untoward circumstance, been forced to resist the gentle promptings of "quiet nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," and to count away the tedious hours of the livelong night till thy very existence became a burden to thee; till thy brain whirled and thy nerves twanged like the tense harp-string? And didst thou not, then—didst thou not, from the very depths of thy soul, assever this ill, of all ills mortality is heir to, that one most utterly and unutterably intolerable patiently to endure? 'Tis no very pitiful thing, sure, to consume the midnight taper, "sickly" though it be: we commiserate the sacrifice, but we fail not to appreciate the reward. Around the couch of suffering humanity, who could not outwatch the stars? the recompense is not of *this* world.

> "When youth and pleasure meet,
> To chase the glowing hours with flying feet,"

who asks for "sleep till morn!" But when, in weari-

ness of the flesh and in languidness of spirit, the overspent wayfarer has laid down his wearied frame to rest for the toils of the morrow, it is indeed a *bitter* thing rudely to have that rest broken up! "The sleep of the *wafaring* man is sweet," and to have that slumber obtruded upon by causes too contemptible for a thought, is not in nature with equanimity to bear! Besides, the luckless sufferer meets with no *commiseration:* it is a matter all too ludicrous for pity; and as for fortitude, and firmness, and the like, what warrior ever achieved a laurel in such a war? what glory is to be gained over a host of staving —but I forbear. You are pretty well aware, kind reader, or ought to be, that the situation of your traveller just then was anything but an enviable one. Not so, however, deemed the worthy landlord on this interesting occasion. His blank bewilderment of visage may be better imagined than described, as, aroused from sleep, his eye met the vision of his stranger guest; while the comic amalgamation of distress and pique in the marvellously elongated features of the fair hostess was so truly laughable, that a smile flitted along the traveller's rebellious muscles, serving completely to disturb the serenity of her breast! The good lady was evidently not a little nettled at the *apparent* mirthfulness of her guest under his manifold miseries—I do assure thee, reader, the mirthfulness was only *apparent*— and did not neglect occasion thereupon to let slip a sly remark impugning his "gentle breeding," because, forsooth, dame Nature, in throwing together her "cunning workmanship," had gifted it with a

nervous system not quite of steel. Meanwhile, the honest publican, agreeable to orders, having brought forth the horse, with folded hands all meekly listened to the eloquence of his spouse; but the good man was meditating the while a retaliation in shape of a most unconscionable bill of cost, which was soon presented and was as soon discharged. Then, leaving the interesting pair to their own cogitations, with the very *top* of the morning the traveller flung himself upon his horse and was soon out of sight.

Kaskaskia, Ill.

XXXIII.

"Stranger, if thou hast learn'd a truth which needs
Experience more than reason, that the world
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast known
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares
To tire thee of it; enter this wild wood,
And view the haunts of Nature."

Bryant.

The moon had gone down; the last star had burned out in the firmament; and that deep darkness which precedes the dawn was brooding over the earth as the traveller turned away from the little inn at the village of Pinkneyville. Fortunately he had, the previous evening, while surveying the face of the region from the door of the hostelrie, gained some general idea of the route to

Kaskaskia; and now, dropping the reins upon his horse's neck, he began floundering along through a blackness of darkness perfectly Cimmerian. It was, indeed, a gloomy night. The early mists were rising, damp and chill, from the soil saturated with the showers of the preceding day; and the darkness had become of a density almost palpable to the sense. Crossing a narrow arm of the prairie in the direction presumed to be correct, my horse carried me into a dense wood, and, if possible, the darkness increased. I had penetrated some miles into the heart of the forest, and was advancing slowly upon my way, when my attention was suddenly arrested by a low, whispering, rustling sound in the depths of the wood at my right; this gradually increasing, was almost immediately succeeded by a crashing, thundering, rushing report, till every echo far and wide in that dark old wood was wakened, and the whole forest for miles around resounded with the roar. My horse, terrified at the noise, leaped and plunged like a mad creature. An enormous forest-tree had fallen within a dozen rods of the spot on which I stood. As I left the noble ruin and resumed my lonely way, my mind brooded over the event, and I thought I could perceive in the occurrence a powerful feature of the sublime. The fall of an aged tree in the noiseless lapse of time is ever an event not unworthy of notice; but, at a moment like this, it was surely so in an eminent degree. Ages since—long ere the first white man had pressed the soil of this Western world, and while the untamed denizens of the wil-

derness roamed in the freedom of primitive creation—ages since had seen the germe of that mighty tree lifting up its young, green leaf from the sod, beneath the genial warmth of the sunlight and the summer wind. An age passed away. The tender stem had reared itself into a gigantic pillar, and proudly tossed its green head amid the upper skies: that young leaf, expanded and developed, had spread itself abroad, until, at length, the beasts of the earth had sought out its shade, and the tree stood up the monarch of the forest. Another age is gone, and the hoary moss of time is flaunting to the winds from its venerable branches. Long ago the thunderbolt had consecrated its lofty top with the baptismal of fire, and, sere and rifted, the storm-cloud now sings through its naked limbs. Like an aged man, its head is bleached with years, while the strength and verdure of ripened maturity yet girdle its trunk. But the worm is at the root: rottenness at the heart is doing its work. Its day and its hour are appointed, and their bounds it may not pass. That hour, that moment is come! and in the deep, pulseless stillness of the nighttime, when slumber falleth upon man and Nature pauses in her working, the offspring of centuries is laid low, and bows himself along the earth. Yet another age is gone; but the traveller comes not to muse over the relics of the once-glorious ruin. Long ago has each been mouldering away, and their dust has mingled with the common mother of us all. Ah! there is a *moral* in the falling of an aged tree!

I was dwelling with rather melancholy reflections upon this casual occurrence, when a quick panting close at my side attracted my attention; a large, gaunt-looking prairie-wolf had just turned on his *heel* and was trotting off into the shade. The gray dawn had now begun to flicker along the sky, and, crossing a beautiful prairie and grove, I found myself at the pleasant farmhouse of a settler of some twenty or thirty years' standing; and dismounting, after a ride of eighteen miles, I partook, with little reluctance or ceremony, of an early breakfast. Thus much for the *night adventures of a traveller* in the woods and wilds of Illinois! My host, the old gentleman to whom I have referred, very sagely mistook his guest for a physician, owing to a peculiarly convenient structure of those indispensables ycleped saddle-bags; and was just about consulting his fancied man of medicines respecting the ailings of his "woman," who was reclining on a bed, when, to his admiration, he was undeceived.

Passing through an inconsiderable village on the north side of the Little Vermillion called Georgetown, my route lay through an extended range of hills and *barrens*. Among the former were some most intolerably tedious, especially to a horseman beneath a broiling sun, who had passed a sleepless night: but the sweep of scenery from their summits was beautiful and extensive. At length the traveller stood upon the "heights of Chester," and the broad Mississippi was rolling on its turbid floods a hundred yards beneath. The view is here a no-

ble one, not unlike that from the Alton or Grafton bluffs at the other extremity of the "American Bottom," though less extensive. Directly at the feet of the spectator, scattered along a low, narrow interval, lies the village of Chester. Upon the opposite bank the forest rolls away to the horizon in unbroken magnificence, excepting that here and there along the bottom the hand of cultivation is betrayed by the dark luxuriance of waving maize-fields. A beautiful island, with lofty trees and green smiling meadows, stretches itself along in the middle of the stream before the town, adding not a little to the picturesqueness of the scene, and, in all probability, destined to add something more to the future importance of the place. To the right, at a short distance, come in the soft-flowing waters of the Kaskaskia through deeply-wooded banks; and nearly in the same direction winds away the mirror-surface of the Mississippi for twenty miles, to accomplish a direct passage of but four, an occurrence by no means unusual in its course. As I stood gazing upon the scene, a steamer appeared sweeping around the bend, and, puffing lazily along with the current past the town, soon disappeared in the distance. From the heights an exceedingly precipitous pathway leads down to the village. Chester is one of the new places of Illinois, and, of course, can boast but little to interest the stranger apart from the highly scenic beauty of its situation. It has been mostly erected within the few years past; and, for its extent, is a flourishing business place. Its landing is excellent, location healthy,

adjacent region fertile, and, for aught I know to the contrary, may, in course of years, rival even the far-famed Alton. Its landing, I was informed, is the only one for many miles upon the river, above or below, suitable for a place of extensive commerce.

From Chester, in a direction not far from north, a narrow pathway winds along beneath the bluffs, among the tall cane-brakes of the bottom. Leaving the Mississippi at the mouth of the Kaskaskia, it runs along the low banks of the latter stream, and begins to assume an aspect truly delightful. Upon either side rise the shafts of enormous sycamores to the altitude of an hundred feet, and then, flinging abroad and interlacing their long branches, form a living arch of exquisite beauty, stretching away in unbroken luxuriance for miles. Beneath springs from the rich loam a dense undergrowth of canes; a profusion of wild vines and bushes clustering with fruit serving effectually to exclude the sunbeams, except a few checkered spots here and there playing upon the foliage, while at intervals through the dark verdure is caught the flashing sheen of the moving waters. Upon the right, at the distance of only a few yards, go up the bluffs to the sheer height of some hundred feet, densely clothed with woods. The path, though exceedingly narrow and serpentine, is for the most part a hard-trodden, smooth, and excellent one when dry. The coolness and fragrance of these deep, old, shadowy woodlands has always for me a resistless charm. There is so much of quiet seclusion from the feverish turmoil of ordinary life within

their peaceful avenues, that, to one not wedded to the world, they are ever inexpressibly grateful.

> "The calm shade
> Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet breeze,
> That makes the green leaves dance, shall waft a balm
> To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing here
> Of all that pain'd thee in the haunts of men,
> And made thee loathe thy life."

In the wild, fierce glaring of a summer noontide, when amid "the haunts of men" all is parched up, and dusty, and scathed, how refreshingly cool are the still depths of the forest! The clear crystal streamlet gushes forth with perennial laughter from the rock, seeming to exult in its happy existence; the bright enamelled mosses of a century creep along the gnarled old roots, and life in all its fairy forms trips forth to greet the eremite heart and charm it from the world. But there was one feature of the scene through which I was passing that struck me as peculiarly imposing, and to which I have not yet referred. I allude to the enormous, almost preternatural magnitude of the wild-grape vine, and its tortuosity. I have more than once, in the course of my wanderings, remarked the peculiarities of these vast parasites; but such is the unrivalled fertility, and the depth of soil of the Kaskaskia bottom, that vegetation of every kind there attains a size and proportion elsewhere almost unknown. Six or seven of these vast vegetable serpents are usually beheld leaping forth with a broad whirl from the mould at the root of a tree, and then, writhing, and twining, and twisting

among themselves into all imaginable forms, at length away they start, all at once and together, in different directions for the summit, around which they immediately clasp their bodies, one over the other, and swing depending in festoons on every side. Some of these vines, when old and dried up by the elements, are amazingly strong; more so, perhaps, than a hempen hawser of the same diameter.

Having but a short ride before me the evening I left Chester, I alighted from my horse, and leisurely strolled along through this beautiful bower I have been attempting to describe. What a charming spot, thought I, for a Romeo and Juliet!—pardon my roving fancy, sober reader—but really, with all my own sobriety, I could not but imagine this a delightful scene for a "Meet me by moonlight alone," or any other *improper* thing of the kind, whether or not a trip to Gretna Green subsequently ensued. And if, in coming years, when the little city of Chester shall have become all that it now seems to promise, and the venerable Kaskaskia, having cast her slough, having rejuvenated her withered energies, and recalled the days of her pristine *traditionary* glory; if then, I say, the young men and maidens make not this the consecrated spot of the long summer-evening ramble and the trysting-place of the heart, reader, believe us not; in the dignified *parlance* of the *corps editorial*, believe *us* not.

Some portions of the Kaskaskia bottom have formerly, at different times, been cleared and cultivated; but nothing now remains but the ruins of

tenements to acquaint one with the circumstance. The spot must have been exceedingly unhealthy in its wild state. There is, however, one beautiful and extensive farm under high cultivation nearly opposite Kaskaskia, which no traveller can fail to observe and admire. It is the residence of Colonel M——, a French gentleman of wealth, who has done everything a cultivated taste could dictate to render it a delightful spot. A fine, airy farm-house stands beneath the bluffs, built after the French style, with heavy roof, broad balconies, and with a rare luxury in this region—green Venetian blinds. The outhouses, most of them substantially constructed of stone, are surpassed in beauty and extent only by the residence itself. Fields yellow with golden harvest, orchards loaded with fruit, and groves, and parks, and pastures sprinkled with grazing cattle, spread out themselves on every side. In the back-ground rise the wooded bluffs, gracefully rounded to their summits, while in front roams the gentle Kaskaskia, beyond which, peacefully reposing in the sunlight, lay the place of my destination.

Kaskaskia, Ill.

XXXIV.

"Protected by the divinity they adored, supported by the earth which they cultivated, and at peace with themselves, they enjoyed the sweets of life without dreading or desiring dissolution."—Numa Pompilius.

"A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye."
Castle of Indolence.

In a country like our own, where everything is fresh and recent, and where nothing has yet been swept by the mellowing touch of departed time, any object which can lay but the most indifferent claim to antiquity fails not to be hailed with delighted attention. "You have," say they of the other hemisphere, "no ivy-mantled towers; no moss-grown, castellated ruins; no donjon-keeps rearing in dark sublimity their massive walls and age-bleached battlements; nothing to span the mighty chasm of bygone years, and to lead down the fancy into the shadowy realms of the past; and, *therefore*, your country is steril in moral interest." Now, though this *corollary* is undoubtedly false, I yet believe the proposition in the main to be *true:* especially is this the case with regard to that region which lies west of the Alleghany range. Little as there may be in the elder sections of our Atlantic states to demand veneration for the past, no sooner does the traveller find himself gliding along the silvery wave

of the "beautiful river," than at the same moment he finds himself forsaking all that the fairy creations of genius have ever consecrated, or the roll of the historian chronicled for coming time. All is NEW. The very soil on which he treads, fertile beyond comparison, and festering beneath the undisturbed vegetation of centuries; the rolling forests, bright, luxuriant, gorgeous as on the dawn of creation; the endless streams pouring onward in their fresh magnificence to the ocean, all seem new. The inhabitants are emigrants late from other lands, and every operation of human skill on which the eye may rest betrays a recent origin. There is but a single exception to these remarks—those mysterious monuments of a race whom we know not of!

In consideration, therefore, of the circumstance that antiquities in this blessed land of ours are, indeed, very few and far between, I deem it the serious duty of every traveller, be he virtuoso or be he not, whenever once so happy as to lay his grasp upon an antique "in any form, in any shape," just to hold fast to the best of his ability! Such, reader, be it known, was my own praiseworthy determination when drawing nigh to the eastern shore of the stream opposite the ancient French village Kaskaskia. The sun was going down, and as I approached the sandy edge of the sea-green water, a gay bevy of young folks were whirling the long, narrow, skiff-like ferry-boat like a bird across the stream, by means of a hawser to which it was attached, and which extended from shore to shore. In my own turn I stepped into the boat, and in a few moments the old French

negro had forced it half across the river, at this spot about three or four hundred yards in width. For one who has ever visited Kaskaskia in the last beautiful days of summer, a pen like my own need hardly be employed to delineate the loveliness of the scene which now opened upon the view. For miles the gleamy surface of the gentle Kaskaskia might be seen retreating from the eye, till lost at length in its windings through the forests of its banks, resting their deep shadows on the stream in all the calm magnificence of inanimate nature. The shore I was leaving swelled gracefully up from the water's edge, clothed in forests until it reached the bluffs, which towered abrupt and loftily; while here and there along the landscape the low roof of a log cabin could be caught peeping forth from the dark shrubbery. The bank of the stream I was approaching presented an aspect entirely the reverse; less lovely, but more picturesque. A low sandy beach stretched itself more than a mile along the river, destitute of trees, and rounding itself gently away into a broad green plain. Upon this plain—a portion of the American Bottom—at the distance of a few hundred yards from the water, is situated all that now remains of "old Kaskaskia." From the centre rises a tall Gothic spire, hoary with time, surmounted by an iron cross; and around this nucleus are clustered irregularly, at various intervals, the heavy-roofed, time-stained cottages of the French inhabitants. These houses are usually like those of the West Indian planters—but a single story in height—and the surface which they occupy is,

of course, in the larger class, proportionably increased. They are constructed, some of rough limestone, some of timber, framed in every variety of position—horizontal, perpendicular, oblique, or all united—thus retaining their shape till they rot to the ground, with the interstices stuffed with the fragments of stone, and the external surface stuccoed with mortar; others—a few only—are framed, boarded, etc., in modern style. Nearly all have galleries in front, some of them spacious, running around the whole building, and all have garden-plats enclosed by stone walls or stoccades. Some of these curious-looking structures are old, having bided the storm-winds of more than a century. It is this circumstance which throws over the place that antiquated, venerable aspect to which I have alluded, and which equally applies to all the other villages of this peculiar people I have yet spoken of. The city of Philadelphia and this neglected village of Kaskaskia are, as regards age, the same to a year; but while every object which, in the one, meets the eye, looks fresh as if but yesterday touched by the last chiselling of the architect, in the latter the thoughts are carried back at least to Noah's ark! Two centuries have rolled by since the "city of the Pilgrims" ceased to be a "cornfield;" but where will you now look for a solitary relic of that olden time? "State-street," the scene where American blood was first poured out by British soldiery; "Old Cornhill;" the site of the "Liberty-tree;" and the wharf from which the tea was poured into the dock, are indeed pointed out to you as spots memorable

in the history of the "Leaguer of Boston;" and yonder frowns the proud height of Bunker's Hill; *there* lay the British battle-ships, and *there* was "burning Charlestown:" but, with almost the solitary exception of the "Old South" Church, with the cannon-ball imbedded in its tower, where shall we look for an *object* around which our associations may cluster? This is not the case with these old villages. A century has looked down upon the same objects, in the same situations and under the same relations, with a change scarcely appreciable. Yon aged church-tower has thrown its venerable shadow alike over the Indian *corn-dance*, the rude *cotillon* of the French villager, the Spanish *fandango*, the Virginia *reel*, and the Yankee *frolic*. Thus, then, when I speak of these places with reference to antiquity, I refer not so much to the actual lapse of years as to the present aspect and age of the individual objects. In this view there are few spots in our country which may lay more undisputed claim to antiquity than these early French settlements in the Western Valley.

There is one feature of these little villages to which I have not at this time alluded, but which is equally amusing and characteristic, and which never fails to arrest the stranger's observation. I refer to the narrowness of those avenues *intended* for streets. It is no very strange thing that in aged Paris structure should be piled upon structure on either side even to the clouds, while hardly a footpath exists between; but that in this vast Western world a custom, in all respects the same, should have pre-

vailed, surpasseth understanding. This must have resulted not surely from lack of *elbow-room*, but from the marvellous sociality of the race, or from that attachment to the customs of their own fatherland which the Frenchman ever betrays. In agriculture and the mechanic arts they are now about as well skilled, notwithstanding the improvements which they must perceive have been going on around them, as on the day their fathers first planted foot on this broad land. The same implements of husbandry and the arts which a century since were seen in France, are now seen here; the very vehicle they drive is the vineyard-car, which is presented us in representations of rustic life in the older provinces of the same land. The same characteristics of feeling and action are here displayed as there, and the Gallic tongue is sacredly transmitted from father to son. But here the parallel ceases. We can trace but little resemblance between the staid, simple-hearted French villager of the Mississippi Valley, and the gay, frivolous, dissolute cotemporary of the fifteenth Louis; still less to the countryman of a Marat or a Robespierre, rocked upon the bloody billow of the "Reign of Terror;" and less than either to the high-minded, polished Frenchman of the nineteenth century. The same fact has been remarked of the Spanish population of Florida and Mexico; their resemblance to their ancestors, who have been slumbering for more than three centuries in their graves, is far more striking than to their present brethren of "Old Castile." The cause of this is not difficult to detect. The customs, the

manners, the very idioms of nations never remain for any considerable period of time invariably the same : other men, other times, other circumstances, when assisted by civil or religious revolutions, produce surprising changes in the parent land, while the scanty colony, separated by mountains and seas, not more from the roar and commotion than from the influenced sphere of these events, slumbers quietly on from century to century, handing down from father to son those peculiarities, unaltered, which migrated with them. Climate, soil, location, though far from exclusive, are by no means inconsiderable agents in affecting character in all its relations of intellect, temperament, and physical feature. And thus has it chanced that we now look upon a race of men separated but a few centuries from the parent stock, yet exhibiting characteristics in which there are few traits common to both.

It was through one of these long, narrow, lane-like streets to which I have alluded, and, withal, a most unconscionably filthy one, that I rode from the landing of the ferry to the inn. The low-roofed, broad-galleried cottages on either side seemed well stocked with a race of dark-eyed, dark-haired, swarthy-looking people, all, from the least unto the tallest, luxuriating in the mellow atmosphere of evening ; all, as if by the same right, staring most unceremoniously at the stranger ; and all apparently summing up, but in the uncouthest style imaginable, their divers surmises respecting his country, lineage, occupation, etc., etc. The forms and features of these French villagers are perfectly unique, at least in our

country, and one can hardly fail distinguishing them at first sight, even among a crowd, once having seen them. Their peculiarities are far more striking than those of our German or Irish population. A few well-dressed, *genteel* gentlemen were lounging about the piazza of the inn as I drew nigh, and a polite landlord, courteously pressing forward, held the stirrup of the traveller and requested him to alight. Something of a contrast, this, to the attention a stranger usually is blessed with from not more than nine tenths of the worthy publicans of Illinois. Alas! for the aristocracy of the nineteenth century! But *n'importe*. With the easy air of gentility and taste which seemed to pervade the inn at Kaskaskia in all its departments, few could have failed to be pleased. For myself, I was also surprised. Everything about the establishment was in the French style, and here was spread the handsomest *table d'hôte* it has been my fortune to witness in Illinois.

The moon was pouring gloriously down in misty mellowness upon the low-roofed tenements of this antiquated village, when, leaving my chamber, I stepped from the inn for a leisure stroll through its streets and lanes. Passing the gray old church, bathed in the dim, melting moonlight of a summer night, such as for more than a century had smiled upon its consecrated walls as one year had chased away another, the next considerable structure which arrested my attention was a huge, ungainly edifice of brick, like Joseph's coat, *of many colours*, forsooth, and, withal, sadly ruinous as regards the item of windows. This latter circumstance, aside from

every other, agreeable to all observed precedent, would have notified me of the fact that this was neither more nor less than a western courthouse. Continuing my careless ramble among the cottages, I passed several whose piazzas were thronged with young people; and at intervals from the midst rang out, on the mild evening air, the gay fresh laugh, and the sweet, soft tones of woman. A stately structure of stone, buried in foliage, next stood beside me, and from its open doors and windows issued the tumultuous melody of the piano. A few steps, and the innocent merriment of two young girls hanging upon a gentleman's arms struck my ear. They passed me. Both were young; and one, a gazelle-eyed brunette, in the pale moonlight, was beautiful. The blithe creatures were full of frolic and fun, and the light Gallic tongue seemed strangely musical from those bright lips. But enough—enough of my evening's ramble—nay, more than enough: I am waxing sentimental. It was at a late hour, after encountering divers untold adventures, that I found myself once more at my hotel. The gallery was thronged with French gentlemen, and it was some hours before the laugh and chatter had died away, and the old village was buried in slumber.

Kaskaskia, Ill.

XXXV.

"Glanced many a light caïque along the foam,
Danced on the shore the daughters of the land."

BYRON.

"How changed the scene since merry Jean Baptiste
Paddled his pirouge on La Belle Rivière,
And from its banks some lone Loyola priest
Echoed the night song of the voyageur."

IT is now more than a century and a half since the sturdy Canadian voyageurs, treading in the footsteps of the adventurous Sieur la Salle, forsaking the bleak shores and wintry skies of the St. Lawrence, first planted themselves upon the beautiful hunting-grounds of the peaceful Illini. Long before the Pilgrim Fathers of New-England, or the distressed exiles of Jamestown, scattered along the steril shores of the Atlantic, had formed even a conception of the beautiful valley beyond the mountains—while this vast North American continent was yet but a wilderness, and the nations of Christendom, ignorant of its character or of its extent, knew not by whom of right it should be appropriated—a few French Jesuit priests had ascended in their bark canoes a distance of three thousand miles from the mouth of the "endless river," and had explored its tributaries to their fountains. It is with admiration almost bordering on astonishment that we view the bold adventures of these daring men.*

* Hall.

The cause of their fearless undertaking was, we are told, to investigate the truth of an idea which at that era was prevalent among the Canadian French, that a western passage through the American continent existed to the Pacific Ocean. The Indian hunters had spoken of a vast stream far away to the west, which on their long excursions they had seen, but of whose source, course, or termination they could tell nothing. This river was supposed to disgorge itself into the Pacific Seas; and, to prosecute the inquiry, Father Marquette, a recollet monk, and Sieur Joliet, an Indian trader of Quebec, by authority of M. Talon, Intendant of New France, a man of singular enterprise, entered upon the expedition. Thridding the great chain of the Northern Lakes in their slender skiffs, and pursuing the Ouisconsin River, on the 17th of June, 1673, the first European descended the "Father of Waters." By the natives whom they met they were kindly received, and entertained with a deference due only to superior beings. Among these Indians, the Illini, then residing on both sides of the Mississippi, were chief, and their nation was made up of seven distinct tribes: the Miamies, Michigamies, Mascotins, Kaskaskias, Kahokias, Peorias, and Taumarwaus, a peaceful, benevolent, unwarlike race. A village was found at the mouth of the Illinois. Descending the Mississippi, the French voyageurs were dissuaded from their design of exploring the Missouri by a tradition of the natives that near its mouth dwelt a *Manito*, whose residence no human being could pass with life: nor did the Indians fail to tell the legend of

the *Piasa* cliff above. Turning up the Illinois, therefore, they glided with amazement through the green woodlands and over the silvery wave of that beautiful stream. It is, perhaps, at this distant day, and in the present era of "speculators and economists," hardly possible to conceive the delighted emotions which must then have swelled the bosoms of those simple-hearted men. Sieur Joliet, on his return to Canada, published an account of his adventures, in which narrative language seems almost too meager for description of the golden land he had seen. Father Marquette remained a missionary among the peaceful Indians. To the river partially explored was given the name of the celebrated Colbert, Minister of Marine, by Count de Frontenac; and to the trader Joliet, as a reward, was granted the island of Anticosti in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Years passed away, and no enterprising spirit rose up to prosecute the discoveries already made. The missionary Marquette died among the Indians two years after, and Joliet took possession of his island. At length appears M. Robert, Cavalier de la Salle, a native of Rouen in Normandy, celebrated as the birthplace of Fontenelle and the two Corneilles, and for the martyrdom of the heroic Maid of Orleans more than two centuries before. La Salle was a man of bold talents and dauntless enterprise. Ambitious of fame and wealth, he emigrated to Canada; listened to the wonderful tales of the *endless river;* conceived the idea of a Northwest Passage to the East Indies; communicated his views to the commandant of Fort Frontenac on Lake On-

tario, and was advised to lay his plan before the Court of St. Cloud. On his arrival at Paris, under the patronage of the Prince de Conti, La Salle received letters of nobility and extensive grants of land in America. Associating with himself the Chevalier de Tonti, an Italian officer, who had the peculiarity of a copper hand as substitute to one lost in the wars of Sicily, and Father Lewis Hennepin, a Franciscan friar, as historian and missionary, together with about thirty others, the enterprise was immediately entered upon, under special sanction of Louis XIV., king of France. After a variety of fortune, prosperous and adverse, they reached the Illinois, and having descended that beautiful river some distance, discovered an Indian village consisting of five hundred cabins completely deserted. Here, having found a large quantity of corn concealed in the earth under each of the wigwams, the party remained six days. Descending ninety miles, they came to Peoria Lake, where they found two encampments of the natives. At first hostility was manifested, but soon they were on most amicable terms with the voyageurs, and a feasting, and dancing, and rejoicing was kept up for three days. Not long after this the boat containing supplies was lost upon "*Le Baie des Puants*," or Green Bay; and La Salle was forced to erect a fort, which received the appropriate name of "*Creve Cœur*"—broken heart. The site of this fortification is supposed to have been a spot now called "Spring Bay," not far from Peoria, on the Illinois. This is a singular place. It is a broad sand basin, some hundred feet

in diameter, opening upon the river, the waters of which, in the higher stages, fill it to the brim, but when low they retire, and a number of large springs gush copiously forth from three sides of the ridge, and form a stream. "Blue Creek" empties itself just below, crossed by a bridge of earth, while yet farther down is seen a large mound, which has been opened, and found to contain human remains twenty feet from the summit.

At the time of the erection of Fort *Creve Cœur* the Illini were at war with the warlike Iroquois Indians; and the former, anticipating assistance from their friends the French, and receiving none, resolved to destroy La Salle. His boldness and eloquence alone saved him and restored amity. No sooner was this disturbance quelled than a mutiny arose among his own men. On Christmas-day his dinner was poisoned, and powerful medicine alone saved his life.

Preparations were now made to explore the Mississippi. Father Hennepin, with four Frenchmen, two Indians, and M. Dacan, commander, ascended the river to the falls, and named them, in honour of their patron saint, *St. Anthony*. They were here taken prisoners by a party of Sioux, carried one hundred and sixty miles into the interior to their villages, and detained several months, when they regained their liberty. Father Hennepin returned to Canada, and subsequently to France, where he published his travels in splendid style, dedicating the book to the celebrated Colbert. These early writings, though deeply imbued with a spirit of su-

perstition and exaggeration, are yet valuable as the *only* records of the time. The chief of these historians were Hennepin, Tonti, and Charlevoix.* Difficulties arising with the Indians, La Salle resolved to erect antoher fort, which, after infinite difficulty, was completed. The site is described as "a rock, very high, the top of which was even and of convenient space, so that it commanded the river and country round about." This description applies to no place on the Illinois so well as to the "Starved Rock." The fort was called "St. Louis."

La Salle visited Canada, and a crowd of adventurers returned with him. Descending the Illinois and Mississippi, the company stopped for some time at the mouth of the Missouri, then the *Osage* River, and found a village of the Taumarwaus, which was deserted, the natives being on a hunting expedition. In three days they were at the *Oubachi* or Ohio. At the Chicasaw Bluffs a fort called *Prudhomme* was erected, and formal possession of the country first taken, and, in honour of the reigning monarch, named *Louisiana.* Several other forts were erected, and one of them, the ruins of which yet remain, is supposed to have stood between St. Louis and Carondelet. Descending the river on the 7th of April, 1683, La Salle reached the Gulf of Mexico, where a *Te Deum* was sung; a cross, with the arms of France, was suspended from the summit of a lofty tree; and the river, which had occupied three months in its exploration of about one thousand miles, was named "St.

* See Appendix.

Louis." On his return, the associates of La Salle founded the villages of Kaskaskia and Cahokia on the American Bottom, while he hastened on to Canada and thence to France, to obtain a colony for the country at the mouth of the Mississippi. Losing his route on returning with this expedition, he commenced a journey over land to Illinois; but, while on his way, was treacherously assassinated by two of his followers. It is a remarkable fact in the history of retributive justice, that these men soon after dealt death to each other; and two priests of the mutineers became penitent, and confessed all the circumstances of the crime. The burial spot of the noble La Salle is unknown to this day. Marquette, "the apostle of the wilderness," died under circumstances of touching interest on the lonely shores of Lake Michigan while upon his mission. Charlevoix, the historian, throws an interest of melancholy romance over the fate of this venerable man. According to this writer, Father Joseph Marquette was a native of Laon, in Picardy, and of distinguished family. About two years after his discovery of the Mississippi, while engaged in his missionary labours among the savages, he was journeying from Chicago to Michillimackinac, and on the 8th of May, 1675, entered the mouth of a small river emptying into Lake Michigan upon its eastern side, which now bears his name. Here he landed, erected an altar, and said mass. After this ceremony he retired a short distance, and requested the two voyageurs who conducted his canoe to leave him alone for half an hour, while in private

he returned thanks. The period having expired, they went to seek him, and found him dead in the attitude of devotion: the circumstance then recurred to them, that, on entering the river, he had dropped an intimation that he should there end his days. The distance was too great to Michillimackinac to convey there his remains, and the voyageurs accordingly buried them near the bank of the stream, which they called by his name. From that time the river, as if from reverence for the missionary's relics, has continued to retire, and his grave is yet pointed out to the traveller. Thus did the venerable Marquette, at an advanced age, alone with his God, yield up his blameless life to its giver, while engaged in his holy errand of peace to the savage, and amid the magnificent solitudes of the land of his discovery.

Subsequent to these explorations, colonies from Lower Canada rapidly settled the recent villages of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Peoria. But their designs seem not to have been those of the speculators of our own day. Their sole anticipation was to amass opulence by mining in a country then supposed incalculably rich in the precious metals, from its resemblance to the silver region of South America; and we find exclusive grants of extensive tracts bearing this date to Cruzat, Renault, and other individuals. In pursuit of this golden chimera, many expeditions were fitted out at vast expense. In 1699 M. de Seur, an enterprising traveller, with ninety men, descended the Mississippi to a spot six hundred miles above the Illinois, and erected a fort

upon the present site of Fort Armstrong for the purpose of exploring a mine of *terre verte*, said to have been discovered in that beautiful region. It need hardly be said that all these adventurers were disappointed: but the buoyant hilarity of the race did not forsake them, and as boatmen, hunters, *couriers du bois*, Indian traders, and small farmers,* they gained a comfortable subsistence, and merrily did they enjoy it. Most of their lives were passed upon the broad prairies, and in penetrating every section of this vast valley in their birch pirogues wherever a stream presented to them its bosom; and yet with the violin, the grape-juice, and a short pipe, they seemed the blithest mortals on the face of the earth. It was by men such as these that the village of Kaskaskia, in old French chronicles styled "*Notre dame de Cascasquias*," originating in the name and residence of an Indian tribe, first was settled; and in a few years it had become an extensive depôt for the trade in furs. It was probably by the same Indian tribe which originally possessed the site of Kaskaskia that a party of the unfortunate expedition of Ferdinand de Soto, by whom Florida was partially conquered, was almost destroyed about the year 1539. Indeed, there was a tradition still extant upon the arrival of the French, of their having exterminated the first *white faces* they had ever seen. For three years did the chivalrous De Soto, with his nine hundred steel-clad warriors, scour the land in search of the reality of his golden dreams: at length he died; he was an object of hatred and terror to the Indians; and to conceal his death, or to

* "*Petits paysans.*"

preserve from violation his remains, his followers enclosed them in a coffin constructed from the section of a hollow tree, and sunk them beneath the floods of the *eternal river*. His followers, reduced to only two hundred and fifty, returned to Spain. And so the burial-places of the first explorers of the Mississippi are unknown.

The extent of the territory of Kaskaskia was originally very great, stretching from the Kaskaskia River to the Mississippi, a breadth of about two miles, and comprising the area from the confluence of the streams, seven miles below, to the present site of the place. The tract below the town is incalculably fertile, abounding in the plum, the persimmon, the cherry, the delicate *pecan*, the hickory, and the hazel-nut; and for the most part was comprised in one vast "common field," over which herds of wild horses, introduced by the emigrants, long roamed in undisturbed possession. This *common*, consisting of seven thousand acres, was granted "to Kaskaskia and inhabitants for ever" by Vaudreuil, governor of the Province of Louisiana, as early as 1743.* In this arrangement we observe a striking feature in the policy both of the French and Spanish governments, in their early settlements on the Mississippi. The items of door-yards, gardens, stable-yards, etc., and of settling colonies in the compact form of towns and villages, as a protection from the savages and to promote social intercourse, were all matters of special requisition and enactment; while to each

* See Appendix.

settlement was granted two tracts of land for "*common fields*" and "*commons*." This distinction was not, however, invariably observed. The former consisted of several hundred acres, conveniently divided among the individual families, and the whole enclosed by the labour of all the villagers in common. If the enclosure opposite any plat was suffered to become ruinous, the right to the common was forfeited by the offending individual. The seasons, also, for ploughing, sowing, reaping, etc., were by public ordinance simultaneous: yet with these restrictions, each individual, so long as he complied with the necessary regulations, possessed his lot in *franc allieu* —fee simple, subject to sale and transfer. The "*common*" was a far more extended tract, embracing in some instances several thousand acres without enclosure, and reserved for the purpose of wood and pasturage. Here there was no grant of severality, and no individual portion could be appropriated without the special and unanimous consent of the whole village. To the indigent who came to settle among them, and to young married pairs, donations from this tract were often made by the villagers, and, if conveniently situated, might subsequently become a portion of the "*common field*." That such an arrangement, under all the circumstances of the period when instituted, and with such a people as the early French settlers, was the best that could have been made, no one can doubt. But how such a regulation would suit a race of *enterprising* Yankees, fidgeting eternally for *improvements*, or a squad of long-sided Kentuckians, grumbling about elbow-room, is problematical.

The proceedings of our national government towards these ancient villages have been characterized by generosity, whatever may be said of the conduct of individuals. In 1788, an extensive tract lying along the Mississippi was by act of Congress granted to the French inhabitants east of that river; and to those of Kaskaskia was secured for a common field twenty thousand acres. It is under direction of the trustees of the town by provision of the state legislature.

Unlike the policy of all other Europeans who have planted themselves upon the Western continent, that of the French emigrants towards the aborigines, with the single exception of the extermination of the Natchez in the South, has invariably been conciliatory, peaceable, and friendly. This has been the effect rather of debasing themselves than of elevating the natives. Surrounded by everything which could fascinate the eye or delight the fancy, we find these inoffensive foreigners, therefore, unlike the English settlers along the Atlantic and in the elder Western states, at peace with all their savage neighbours; unambitious, contented, and happy, increasing and flourishing; and in a few years, they tell us, Kaskaskia, "the terrestrial paradise," numbered a population of eight thousand souls!* Blessed with a soil of boundless fertility, and prolific in all Nature's luxurious stores to a degree of which less-favoured climes can form no conception: subsisting solely by culture of the little homesteads around their own thresholds, by hunt-

* Doubtless an exaggeration.

ing the wild denizens of their noble forests, or angling upon the calm bosom of their beautiful stream: simple-hearted and peaceful, almost without the *terms* of law, gently ruled by the restraints of a religion they venerated and a priesthood they loved: without commerce, the arts, or the elegances of life; a thousand miles from a community of civilized men; from year to year they went on, and from generation to generation they flourished, until, in that of our own age and our own day, they are found still treading in the steps in which their fathers trod! So long as the peaceful French villager retained the beautiful land of his adoption in undisputed possession, all was flourishing and prosperous. A little more than half a century from its origin, Kaskaskia was capital of Illinois; and on the visit of Charlevoix in 1721, a monastery and Jesuit college was in successful operation, the ruins of the edifice remaining extant even at the present day. This institution was successful in converting a number of the aborigines to its peculiar tenets, and at one period *is said* to have "embraced twenty-five hundred catechumens!!" A most preposterous assertion, most assuredly.

It was in the early part of this century that the scheme of that celebrated projector, John Law, of Edinburgh, on the strength of which he elevated himself to the dignity of Comptroller-general of the Finance of France, was first set on foot with reference to the Valley of the Mississippi. The design, so far as it is now known, was to establish a bank, an East India, and a Mississippi Company, from

the anticipated enormous revenue of which was to be liquidated the national debt of France.* The territory of Louisiana had already acquired a reputation abroad for the boundlessness of the wealth and fertility of its soil; and, to foster the delusion of Law's scheme, descriptions of this beautiful region, tinted with all the rainbow hues of romance, were scattered throughout Europe, until the distant wilderness of *les Illinois* became the paradise of the slumberer's vision. "The Illinois" was the fairy-land of fancy realized. A few years, the vast fabric of fictitious credit crumbled, almost annihilating the finance of France, and burying thousands of families in its ruins. Law was exiled and retired to Venice, where in poverty he soon died. It is a coincidence not a little remarkable, that the same year, 1720, witnessed the same desperate game enacted by the South Sea directors in England. But the attention of France was now directed towards her remote colony in North America; and notwithstanding the failure of Law's scheme, old Kaskaskia continued to flourish beyond all compare. Other villages sprang into existence around; a lucrative fur-trade was carried on by the Canadian voyageurs, and agriculture became the peculiar province of the French villager. The extent and luxuriance of the agriculture at this period may be

* "The idea," says Adam Smith, "of the possibility of multiplying paper money to almost any extent, was the real foundation of what is called the *Mississippi scheme*, the most extravagant project, both of banking and stock-jobbing, that perhaps the world ever saw."

gathered from the fact, that in the single year 1746, eight hundred thousand weight of flour was sent to New-Orleans from these settlements.* At this period there was not a solitary village west of the Mississippi, though the lead-mines then known and worked were resorted to by traders. Twenty years after the failure of Law's scheme, the French government formed the design, almost as chimerical, of securing her immense possessions in the Mississippi Valley by a continuous line of military posts, connecting them with Canada; and vast were the sums of money expended in the undertaking.

A century, and the whole region was ceded to England, thence to our own government in 1783, and now old Kaskaskia is but the wreck of its former prosperity. It makes one almost sad to wander about among these ruinous, deserted habitations, venerable with departed years, and reflect that once they were thronged with population, the seat of hospitality, and the home of kindly feeling. The quiet villagers have been not a little annoyed by the steady and rapid influx of immigration on every side of them, dissimilar in customs, language, religion, and temperament, while the bustling enterprise has fretted and displeased them. Long accustomed, also, to the arbitrary but parental authority of their military commandants and priesthood, they deemed the introduction of the common law among them exceedingly burdensome, and the duties of a citizen of a republic, of which we are so

* Breckenridge.

proud, intolerable drudgery. Many, therefore, of the wealthy and respectable, on cession of their territory to our government, removed to Louisiana, where civil law yet bears sway; others crossed the river and established Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis; while the foreigners returning to the lands from which they had emigrated, few but natives of the country remained behind. The ordinance of 1787, prohibiting involuntary servitude in the region then called the Northwestern Territory, induced many who were desirous of preserving their blacks to remove to the new villages west of the Mississippi, then under Spanish rule. From these and a variety of similar causes, this peaceful, kind-hearted people have within the last thirty years been more than once disturbed in the dwellings of their fathers.

Kaskaskia, Ill.

XXXVI.

"If my readers should at any time remark that I am particularly dull, they may rest assured there is a design under it."—*British Essayist.*

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."

GRAY'S *Elegy.*

FEW things are more difficult, and, consequently, more rarely met, than correct portraiture of character, whether of the individual or of a community. It is easy enough, indeed, to trace out the prominent outlines in the picture; and with a degree of accuracy which shall render it easily recognised, while yet the more delicate shading and lighting is false; just as the artist may have transferred every feature in exact form, size, and proportion to his canvass, while the expression thrown over the whole may be incorrect. This has more than once been the case in descriptions hastily drawn of that singular being, *the French villager of the Mississippi.* One distinguished writer has given an absolute caricature of the race. My own design has been, therefore, merely to throw before the reader those characteristic traits which not even the most careless observer could have failed to detect.

Though betraying but little of that fiery restlessness which distinguishes the Parisian, these men are yet Frenchmen in more respects than mere origin. In their ordinary deportment we view, indeed, rather the calm gravity, the saturnine severity of the Spaniard; and yet in their *fêtes* and amusements, which were formerly far more frequent than at present, they exhibit all the gayety of the native of La Belle France. The calm, quiet tenour of their lives presenting but few objects for enterprise, none for the strivings of ambition, and but little occasion of any kind to elicit the loftier energies of our nature, has imparted to their character, their feelings, their manners, to the very language they speak, a languid softness strongly contrasted by the unquiet restlessness of the emigrant who is succeeding them. Hospitality was formerly, with them, hardly a virtue; it was a matter of course, arising from their peculiarity of situation; and the swinging sign of the tavern is a recent usurpation. The statute-book, the judiciary, courts of law, and the penitentiary, were things little recognised among these simple-hearted people; for where the inequalities of life were unknown, what was the inducement to crime demanding this enginery of punishment? Learning and science, too, were terms scarcely comprehended, their technicalities not at all; for schools were few, and *learned men* still more so; and thus reading, writing, and ciphering are, and ever have been, the acme of scholastic proficiency with the French villager. How many of the honest fellows can do even this,

is not for me to estimate. As to politics and the *affairs of the nation*, which their countrymen on the other side of the water ever seem to think no inconsiderable object of their being, they are too tame, and too lazy, and too quiet to think of the subject. Indeed, the worthy villagers very wisely look upon "earthly dignities" and the like much with the stoicism of Cardinal Wolsey in disgrace,

> "Oh, 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden,
> Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven."

The virtues of these people are said to be many: punctuality and honesty in their dealings; politeness and hospitality to strangers; though, it must be confessed, the manifold impositions practised upon their simplicity of late years has tended to substitute for the latter virtue not a little of coolness and distrust. There is much friendship and warmth of feeling between neighbours and kindred, and the women make affectionate wives, though by no means prone to consider themselves in the light of goods and chattels of their liege-lords, as is not unfrequently the case in more enlightened communities. Indeed, as touching this matter, the Mississippi French villager invariably reverses the sage maxim of the poet,

> "In things of moment on *yourself* depend;"

for he never presumes to depend upon any one but his faithful helpmate, whether things are of moment or not. As to religious faith, all are Catholics; and formerly, more than of late years, were punctilious in observance of the ceremony and dis-

cipline of their church, permitting but few festivals of the calendar to pass unobserved. Their wealth consisted chiefly of personal property, slaves, merchandise, etc.; land being deemed an item of secondary consideration, while lead and peltry constituted the ordinary circulating medium. Rent for houses was a thing hardly known. All this changed long ago, of course; and while real estate has augmented in value many hundred per cent., personal property has somewhat proportionally depreciated.

In the ordinary avocations of the villagers, there is but little variety or distinction even at the present day, and formerly this uniformity of pursuit was yet more observable. The wealthier and more enterprising *habitans* were traders, often with peculiar and exclusive privileges; and they kept a heterogeneous stock of goods in the largest room of their dwelling-houses, by way of being merchants. There are but few who practice the mechanic arts for a livelihood: carpenters, smiths, tailors, shoemakers, etc., as *artisans*, were formerly almost unknown, and there is now in this respect but little change. Now, as then, the mass of the population are agriculturists, while many of the young and enterprising men embrace with pride, as offering a broad field for generous emulation, the occupations of boatmen, traders to the Rocky Mountains—in the vicinity of which most of their lives are passed—*engagés* of the American Fur Company, or hunters and trappers upon the prairies. The bold recklessness of this class has long been notorious.

The *idiom* of these villages, though by no means as pure as it might be, is yet much more so, all things considered, than could be expected. It requires no very close observation or proficiency in the language to detect a difference, especially in pronunciation, from the European French. There is not that nervous, animated *brilliancy* of dialect which distinguishes the latter; and the nasal, lengthened, drawling sound of words, gives their conversation a languid, though by no means a disagreeable movement. It is said to be more soft and euphonious than the vernacular, though very different from the Creole dialect of the West India Islands. There are some provincialisms, and some words which a century ago might have been recognised in some provinces of France, though not now.

As to the item of *costume*, it is still somewhat unique, though formerly, we are told, much more so: that of the men was a coarse blanket-coat, with a cap attached behind in lieu of a cape; and which, from the circumstance of drawing over the head, gave the garment the name of *capote*. Around the head was wreathed a blue handkerchief in place of a hat, and on the feet moccasins instead of shoes and stockings. All this, however, has pretty generally given place to the American garb, though some of the very aged villagers may still be seen in their ancient habiliments, the *capote*, moccasins, blue handkerchief on the head, and an endless queue lengthened out behind. Their chief *amusement* ever has been, and, probably, ever will be, the DANCE, in which all, even from the least to the greatest,

bond and free, unite. Their *slaves* are treated well, if we may judge from appearances; for nowhere in the West have I seen a sleeker, fleshier, happier-looking set of mortals than the blacks of these old villages.

Previous to the cession of Louisiana to our government, the *Laws* of Spain were pretty generally in force throughout the province, so far as related to municipal arrangement and real estate, while the common law of France—*Coutume de Paris*—governed all contracts of a social nature, modified by and interwoven with the customs of the people. Each district had its commandant, and each village its syndic, besides judges in civil affairs for the province, and officers of the *militia*, a small body of which was stationed in every district, though too inconsiderable to afford much protection to the inhabitants. These rulers were appointed by the governor at New-Orleans, to whom there was an appeal; and the lieutenant-governor, who resided at St. Louis, was commander of the troops. Thus the government was a mixture of civil and military; and, though arbitrary to the last degree, yet we are told the rod of domination was so slight as scarcely to be felt.* However this may be, it is pretty certain they did not well relish at first the change in the administration of justice when they came under the jurisdiction of our laws. The delay and uncertainty attendant on trial by jury, and the multifarious technicalities of our jurisprudence, they

* Breckenridge—to whom the author is indebted for other facts relative to these early settlements.

could not well comprehend, either as to import, importance, or utility; and it is not strange they should have preferred the prompt despatch of arbitrary power. Nor is the modern administration of justice the *only* change with which the simple-hearted villager is dissatisfied. On every side of him *improvement*, the watchword of the age, is incessantly ringing in his ears; and if there be one term in all our vocabulary he abhors more than all others, it is this same: and, reader, there is much wisdom in his folly. In 1811 the invention of Fulton's mighty genius was first beheld walking upon the Western waters; and from that hour "the occupation" of the daring, reckless, chivalrous French voyageur "was gone." Again the spirit of improvement declared that the venerable old cottage, gray with a century's years, must give place to the style and material of a more modern date; and lo! the aged dwelling where his fathers lived, and where his eyes opened on the light, is swept away, and its very site is known no more. And then the streets and thoroughfares where his boyhood has frolicked, as the village increases to a city, must be widened, and straightened, and paved, and all for no earthly reason, to his comprehension, but to prevent familiar chat with his opposite neighbour, when sitting on his balcony of a long summer night, and to wear out his poor pony's unshodden hoofs! It is very true that their landed property, where they have managed to retain it from the iron grasp of speculation, has increased in value almost beyond calculation by the change; but they now refuse to

profit by selling. Merchandise, the comforts and luxuries of life, have become cheaper and more easily obtained, and the reward of industrious enterprise is greater. But what is all this to men of their peculiar habits and feelings? Once they were far better contented, even in comparative poverty. There was then a harmony, and cordiality, and unanimity of feeling pervading their society which it never can know again. They were as one family in every village; nearly all were connected either by ties of affinity, consanguinity, propinquity, or friendship: distinction of rank or wealth was little known, and individuals of every class were dressed alike, and met upon equal and familiar footing in the same ballroom. It is needless to say, that now "*Nous avons changé tout cela.*"*

As to the poorer class of these villagers, it is more than doubtful whether they have *at all* been benefited by the change of the past twenty years. We must not forget that, as a race, they are peculiar in character, habits, and feeling; and so utterly distinct from ourselves, that they can with hardly more facility associate in customs with us than can our red brother of the prairie. Formerly the poorest, and the laziest, and the most reckless class was fearless of want or beggary; but now a more enterprising race has seized upon the lands with which they have imprudently parted, perhaps with little remuneration, and they find themselves abridged in many of their former immunities. Their cattle may no longer range at will, nor have they the liber-

* Sganarelle.

ty of appropriating wood for fuel wherever it seemeth good. It cannot be denied, that many a one gains now a precarious subsistence, where formerly he would have lived in comfort. Nearly every one possesses a little cart, two or three diminutive ponies, a few cattle, a cottage, and garden. But in agriculture, the superior industry of the new immigrant can afford them for lease-rent double the result of their toil, while as draymen, labourers, or workmen of any kind, it is not difficult for foreigners to surpass them. In a few years the steamer will have driven the keel-boat from the Western waters, and with it the *voyageur*, the *patron*, and the *courier du bois;* but the occupation of the hunter, trapper, and *engagé*, in which the French villager can never be excelled, must continue so long as the American Fur Company find it profitable to deal in buffalo robes, or enterprising men think proper to go to Santa Fé for gold-dust. Nor will the farmer, however lazy, lose the reward of his labour so long as the market of St. Louis is as little *over*stocked as at present. Nathless, it is pretty certain "*times ain't now as they used to was*" to the French villager, all this to the contrary notwithstanding.

Kaskaskia, Ill.

XXXVII.

"All things have an end.
Churches and cities, that have diseases like to man,
Must have like death that we have."

"Birth has gladden'd it: Death has sanctified it."

"The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the wall
In massy hoariness."

Childe Harold.

In remarking upon the history of the French in the West, and the peculiarities which still continue to characterize them, I am aware I have lingered longer than could have been anticipated; much longer, certainly, than was my original intention. The circumstances which have induced this delay have been somewhat various. The subject *itself* is an interesting one. Apart from the delight we all experience in musing upon the events of by-gone time, and that gratification, so singularly exquisite, of treading amid the scenes of "things departed," there is an interest which every individual who has cast his lot in the great Valley cannot fail to feel in every item, even the most minute, which may pertain to its history. In dwelling, too, upon the features of "old Kaskaskia," my design has been to exemplify the distinguishing characteristics of all these early settlements, both French and Spanish, in the Valley of the Mississippi. The peculiarities of all are the same, as were the cir-

cumstances which first conduced to them. The same customs, the same religion, the same amusements, and the same form of government prevailed among all; and though dissimilar in dialect, and separated by the broad Mississippi, yet, cut off from all the rest of mankind, both the French and the Spanish villagers were glad to smother differences, and to bind themselves to each other in their dependant situation by the tendrils of mutually kind offices and social intercourse. Thus, several of the villages stand opposite each other upon the banks of the Mississippi. Ste. Genevieve is only across the stream from Kaskaskia, and many fine old traditionary legends of these early times are yet extant, and should be treasured up before too late.

But another circumstance which has been not unfavourable to that prolixity into which I have suffered my pen to glide, and without which other inducements might have proved ineffectual, has been the quiet, dreamy seclusion of this old hamlet, so congenial to the workings of the brain. Yesterday was like to-day, and to-morrow will be the transcript of yesterday; and so time's current slips lazily along, like

"The liquid lapse of a murmuring stream."

As to objects of interest, one could hardly have lingered so long as I have within the precincts of this "sleepy hollow" without having met with some incidents worthy of regard for their *novelty*, if for naught else.

There are few situations in Illinois which can

boast advantages for mercantile transaction superior to Kaskaskia. But the villagers are not a commercial, enterprising, money-making people, and the trade of the place is, therefore, very small. The river is said to be navigable for fifty miles from its mouth; the current is gentle, and an inconsiderable expense in clearing the channel of fallen timber would enable small boats to penetrate nearly two hundred miles higher, by the meanderings of the stream, to Vandalia. Measures for this purpose have been entered upon. A land-office for the district is here established. The number of families is seventy or eighty, nearly all French and all Catholics, besides considerable transient population—boatmen, hunters, trappers, who traverse the great rivers and broad prairies of the valley.

Opposite Kaskaskia, on the summit of a lofty crag overlooking the river, once stood a large fortress of massive timber, named Fort Gage. Its form was an oblong quadrangle, the exterior polygon being several hundred yards in circumference. It was burnt to the ground in 1766. About twelve years subsequent to this event, the place was taken by the American troops under Colonel George Rogers Clarke, "Hannibal of the West." After most incredible exertions in the march from Virginia, he arrived before Kaskaskia in the night; and, though fortified, so bewildering was the surprise of the villagers, that not a blow was struck, and the town was taken.

The aged Catholic church at Kaskaskia, among

other relics of the olden time, is well worthy a stranger's visit. It was erected more than a century since upon the ruins of a former structure of similar character, but is still in decent condition, and the only church in the place. It is a huge old pile, extremely awkward and ungainly, with its projecting eaves, its walls of hewn timber perpendicularly planted, and the interstices stuffed with mortar, with its quaint, oldfashioned spire, and its dark, storm-beaten casements. The interior of the edifice is somewhat imposing, notwithstanding the sombre hue of its walls; these are rudely plastered with lime, and decorated with a few dingy paintings. The floor is of loose, rough boards, and the ceiling arched with oaken panels. The altar and the lamp suspended above are very antique, I was informed by the officiating priest, having been used in the former church. The lamp is a singular specimen of superstition illustrated by the arts. But the structure of the *roof* is the most remarkable feature of this venerable edifice. This I discovered in a visit to the belfry of the tower, accomplished at no little expenditure of sinew and muscle, for stairs are an appliance quite unknown to this primitive building. There are frames of two distinct roofs, of massive workmanship, neatly united, comprising a vast number of rafters, buttresses, and braces, crossing each other at every angle, and so ingeniously and accurately arranged by the architect, that it is mathematically impossible that any portion of the structure shall sink until time with a single blow shall level the entire

edifice.* It is related, that when this church was about being erected, the simple villagers, astonished at the immense quantities of timber required for the frame, called a meeting of the citizens, and for a time laid an interdict upon operations, until inquiry respecting the matter should be made. It was with difficulty the architect at length obtained permission to proceed; but, when all was completed, and the material had disappeared, they knew not where, their astonishment surpassed all bounds. The belfry reminded me of one of those ancient monuments of the Druids called *Rocking-stones;* for though it tottered to and fro beneath my weight, and always swings with the bell when it is struck, perhaps the united force of an hundred men could hardly hurl it from its seat. The bell is consecrated by the crucifix cast in its surface, and bears the inscription "*Pour Leglise des Illinois. Normand A. Parachelle*, 1741." The view from this elevation was extremely beautiful: the settlement scattered for miles around, with the quaint little cottages and farms all smiling in the merry sunlight, could hardly fail of the lovely and picturesque.

* The reader will recollect that these notes were sketched two years ago. Since that time some changes in this old edifice have taken place; the whole southwest angle has fallen to the ground, and, agreeable to the text, the entire roof would have followed but for the extraordinary strength of one solitary piece of timber. High mass was in celebration at the time, and the church was crowded, but no accident occurred. The old building has been since dismantled, however; its bell removed from the tower, and the whole structure will soon, probably, be prostrated by "decay's effacing finger."

The churchyard attached to the building is not extensive, but crowded with tenants. It is into this receptacle that for four generations Kaskaskia has poured her entire population. I saw but a few monuments and a pile of stones. The first record on the register belonging to this church is, I was informed by the priest, to the following effect, in French: "1741, *June 7. This morning were brought to the fort three bodies from without, killed by the Renards, to whom we gave sepulture.*" There is here also a baptismal record, embracing the genealogies of the French settlers since 1690, and other choice old chronicles. Some land deeds still remain extant, bearing date as early as 1712, and a memorial also from the villagers to Louis XV., dated 1725, petitioning a grant of "*commons*," etc., in consequence of disasters from the flood of the preceding year, in which their all had been swept away, and they had been forced themselves to flee for life to the bluffs opposite the village.

The Nunnery at Kaskaskia is a large wooden structure, black with age, and formerly a public house. With this institution is connected a female seminary, in high repute throughout this region, and under superintendence of ten of the sisters. A new nunnery of stone is about being erected.

It was a glorious morning, and, with many a lingering step, I left behind me the village of old Kaskaskia. As I rode leisurely along the banks of that placid stream, and among the beautiful farms of the French settlers, I was more than once reminded forcibly of similar scenery high up the Kennebeck,

in a distant section of Maine, known by the name of "*Indian Old Point*," where I once took a ramble with a college classmate during an autumn vacation. The landscape is one of singular beauty; yet, were it otherwise, there is a charm thrown around this distant and lonely spot by its association with an interesting passage in the earliest history of the country. In the expressive language of an eloquent writer, who has made the place the scene of an Indian tale, *the soil is fertilized by the blood of a murdered tribe*. Here, one hundred years ago, stood the village of the Norridgewocks, a tribe of the powerful Abnaquis, who then held undisputed domination over the extensive wilds of the far East. Though possessing not the fierce valour of the Pequods, the sinewy vigour of the Delawares, the serpent-like subtlety of the Penobscots, the bell-toned idiom of the Iroquois, we are yet told they were a powerful tribe for their intelligence and their numbers. The Jesuit missionaries of Canada, while at this era they were gliding upon the beautiful rivers of the distant West, had not neglected the steril rocks of the equally remote East: and the hamlet of the Norridgewocks had early been subjected to the influences of the fascinating ceremony and the lofty ritual of the Catholic faith. Under the guidance of the devoted Sebastian Rasle, a rude church was erected by the natives, and its gray, cross-crowned spire reared up itself among the low-roofed wigwams. Beloved by his savage flock, the venerable Father Rasle lived on in peacefulness and quietude for thirty years in the home of his adoption. During

the troubled period of the "French and Indian War" which ensued, suspicions arose that the Norridgewocks were influenced by their missionary to many of their acts of lawless violence upon a village of English settlers but a few miles distant. In the autumn of 1724 this distrust had augmented to a conviction that the Abnaquis had resolved on the extermination of the white race, and a detachment of soldiers ascended the Kennebeck. It was a bright, beautiful morning of the Sabbath when they approached the Indian hamlet. The sweet-toned bell of the little chapel awoke the echoes with its clear peal, and announced the hour of mass just as the early sunlight was tinting the far-off hill-tops. A few moments, and every living soul in the village was within the church, and had bowed in humbleness before the "Great Spirit." The deep tones of the venerable Rasle were supplicating, "*Ora, ora pro nobis*," when the soldiers rushed in. Terrible and indiscriminate was the massacre that ensued. Not one was spared; not *one!* The pious Rasle poured out his heart's blood upon the altar of his devotion. Those of the natives who escaped from the chapel were either shot down or perished miserably in the river, their bark canoes having been previously perforated by the treachery of their foes.* The drowsy beams of that day's setting sun dreamed beautifully as ever among the fragrant pine-tops and the feathery hemlocks of the river-bank; but his slanting rays smiled upon the ancient hamlet be-

* I give the tradition of the farmers now resident upon the spot. History differs somewhat. See Appendix.

neath whose ashes its exterminated dwellers were slumbering the last sleep!

The grave of Father Rasle, a green mound overlooking the stream, was pointed out to us. A granite obelisk to his memory was erected by Bishop Fenwick, of Boston, a few years since, but was demolished by a party of miscreants soon after its completion. My object in this lengthened episode upon the Norridgewocks, so casually introduced, has been twofold: to illustrate the peaceful policy of the French towards the Indian all over the continent, and to contrast it with that of other Europeans.

The ride from Kaskaskia to Prairie du Rocher in early autumn is truly delightful. Crossing *Aubuchon*, formerly called St. Philippe—a passage from the Mississippi to the Kaskaskia, about four miles above the town, and through which, in high floods, a rapid current passes from one river to the other—the path lay through a tract of astonishing fertility, where the wild fruit flourishes with a luxuriance known to no other soil. Endless thickets of the wild plum* and the blackberry, interlaced and matted together by the young grape-vines streaming with gorgeous clusters, were to be seen stretching for miles along the plain. Such boundless profusion of wild fruit I had never seen before. Vast groves of the ruby crab-apple, the golden persimmon,† the black and white mulberry,‡ and the wild cherry,§ were

* *Prunus Americana.*

† Indian Date, by the French called Placminier, *Diosporus Virginiana.*

‡ *Morus Rubra* and *Alba.* § *Prunus Cerasus Virginia.*

sprinkled with their rainbow hues in isolated masses over the prairie, or extended themselves in long luxurious streaks glowing in the sun. The paw-paw,* too, with its luscious, pulpy fruit; the peach, the pear, and the quince, all thrive in wild luxuriance here; while of the nuts, the pecan or Choctaw nut, the hickory, and the black walnut, are chief. As for grapes, the indigenous vines are prolific; and the fruit is *said* to be so excellent, that wine might be, and even has been, made from them, and has been exported by the early French in such quantities to France, that the trade was prohibited lest the sale of a staple of that kingdom should be injured! But all this is undoubtedly exaggeration, if no more. Although the grape and the wine of southern Illinois have long been the theme of the traveller through that delightful region, from the worthy Father Hennepin, who tells us of the purple clusters lending their rich hues to the gliding wave, to the tourist of the present day, yet from personal observation I am confident they are *now* by no means of much importance, and from good authority am inclined to think they *never* were so. As to the manufacture of wine becoming a matter interesting to commerce, there is no probability of that. A kind of liquor was formerly made in some quantities from what is called the *winter grape*, common to the same latitude in many portions of the United States, but it is said to have been a very indifferent beverage. It was made in the following simple manner: the clusters were heaped in broad, shal-

* Custard apple, *Annona glabra.*

low vessels of wood, and, after being crushed, the juice was expressed through perforations for the purpose in the sides and bottom, by the application of heavy weights, into vessels prepared for its reception. Slight fermentation then completed the process.*

A ride of some hours through this delightful region brought me to the bluffs, which, at this point extending into the plain, confine the bottom to a narrow strip, bounded on the one side by the Mississippi, and on the other by the battlement of the cliffs, upward of an hundred feet in height. Beneath lies the French village of *Prairie du Rocher*, so called from its situation. It is thirteen miles from Kaskaskia, and its low cottages scattered along, like the tents of a nomadic tribe, for miles, are completely overhung by the huge, beetling crags above. From the deep alluvion along the river's verge rises an enormous growth of cottonwood-trees and sycamores, concealing the stream from the view. From the bluffs to this belt of forest stretches away the vast *common field*, rustling with maize. The castor-bean and tobacco-plant are also often seen carpeting the ground with emerald. Around each tenement, as usual, is a plat of cultivated land, and the luxuriance of vegetation is unrivalled. Passing these outskirts, I at length arrived at the body of the village, lying upon a creek or *bayou* of the same name, which winds through its centre, and empties into the Mississippi. This quiet stream was once the scene of a very bloody tragedy. When Illinois first came under territorial government, and courts of civil ju-

* Breckenridge.

dicature were established, the functionaries of the law, in passing one day from Cahokia to Kaskaskia, to hold at the latter place a session, stopped a few moments at this creek to water their horses. The animals had scarcely begun to drink, when a shower of balls from an adjoining thicket laid three of the party weltering in their blood. They had neglected the usual precaution to disguise themselves in the garb of the French villagers; and such was the hostility of the Indian tribes, especially that of the Kickapoos, to our countrymen at the time, that to travel in American costume was almost inevitable death. The Indians at that day had the ascendency in point of population, and the Kaskaskia tribe, as well as others, was powerful.

At Prairie du Rocher, as everywhere else where these ancient villages remain as yet undisturbed in their century slumbers, the peculiarities to which I have so frequently alluded stand forth to the traveller's eye. The narrow lanes, the steep-roofed houses, the picketed enclosures, the piazza, the peculiar dress, manners, and amusements of the villagers, all point back to a former age. At this place I tarried for dinner, and while my olive-browed hostess, a trim, buxom little matron, was "making ready," I strolled forth to the bluffs, having first received most positive injunctions to make my reappearance when the *horn sounded;* and, scrambling up a ravine, soon stood upon the smooth round summit. The whole tract of country over which my route had led was spread out like a map before me; and the little village lay so directly at my feet

I could almost look down its chimneys. Among the crags I obtained some fine petrifactions, which I exhibited to my simple host, much to his astonishment, on my return. Forty years had this man dwelt upon the very spot he then inhabited, the scene of his birth; and almost every day of his life had he ascended the cliffs among which I had been clambering; and yet, though the seashells were standing out in every direction from the surface of the ledge, not the slightest peculiarity of structure had he ever dreamed of. That the great ocean had rolled among these rocks, he could have formed no conception. Experience had told him that when burned they were lime, and he neither knew nor cared to know anything farther of their character or history. This slight incident well exemplifies the simplicity of this singular people. Content to live where his father lived; content to cultivate the spot he tilled; to tread in the steps which he trod; to speak the language he spake, and revere the faith he observed, the French villager is a stranger to the restless cravings of ambition, and acknowledges no inclination to change. At Prairie du Rocher is a little, dark-looking, ancient Catholic church, dedicated to St. Sulpice, formerly "Chapel of Ease" to Fort Chartres, but at present it has no resident priest. The population of the village is about two hundred. Its site is low, and, buried as it is in such enormous vegetation, the spot must be unhealthy: yet, year after year, and generation after generation, have its present inhabitants continued to dwell where death almost inevitable must have awaited an

American. But where will you search for a fleshier, sleeker, swarthier-looking race than these French villagers? Some attribute this phenomenon to diet; some to natural idiosyncrasy; and other some do not attribute at all, but merely stand amazed. The truth of the matter is—and the fact is one well ascertained—that, give a Frenchman a fiddle, a pipe, a glass of claret, and room enough to shake his heels, and, like a mushroom, he'll vegetate on any soil!

La Prairie du Rocher, Ill.

XXXVIII.

"I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The thistle shook there its lonely head: the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows; the rank grass of the wall waved round his head."—Ossian.

"We do love these ancient ruins:
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history."

To those of the present day who are in some degree acquainted with the extent of the vast Western Valley, it is not a little surprising to observe how inadequate the conception with which, by its early proprietors, it was regarded, and the singular measures which their mistaken estimates originated. It is but within a very few years that the extent and resources of this country have become sufficiently developed to be at all appreciated. That the French government was wholly unaware of its

true character in the cession of old Louisiana to Mr. Jefferson in the early part of the present century, and that our own people were at that time little less ignorant of the same fact, need hardly be suggested to one acquainted with the diplomatic negotiations of the day, or with the views and the feelings of the respective powers then expressed.

But there are few circumstances which more definitely betray the exceedingly inadequate idea entertained by France respecting her possessions in North America, than that early article of her policy, of uniting her Canadian colonies, by a continuous chain of military posts, with those upon the Gulf of Mexico. That any ministry should seriously have entertained the idea of a line of fortifications *four thousand miles* in extent, through a waste, howling wilderness such as this valley then was, and along the banks of streams such as the Ohio and Mississippi yet continue to be; and that the design should not only have been projected, but that measures should actually have been entered upon for its accomplishment, seems, at the present day, almost incredible. And yet, from the very discovery of the country, was this scheme designed, and ever afterward was steadily pursued by the government of France. La Salle, in his last visit to Paris, suggested the policy of a *cordon* of posts from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and urged the measure upon Colbert as affording a complete line of defence to the French settlements against those of the English along the Atlantic shore. In furtherance of this design, he sailed to establish a

colony at the mouth of the Mississippi, in prosecution of which expedition he lost his life. A line of fortifications was, however, commenced, and gradually extended along the southern shore of Lake Erie: one stood on the present site of the village of that name; another between that point and the Ohio; a third on the present site of Pittsburgh, named Du Quesne; a fourth at the mouth of the Kentucky River; a fifth on the south bank of the Ohio below; a sixth on the northern bank at the mouth of the Wabash; a seventh at the confluence with the Mississippi; half a dozen others on the latter stream below the junction, and several above upon its banks and along those of the Illinois. Among these last, and the most extensive of the fortifications then erected, was FORT CHARTRES, long the most celebrated military post in North America, now a pile of ruins.

It was a beautiful afternoon, when, leaving the little French hamlet *La Prairie du Rocher*, after a delightful ride of three or four miles through rich groves of the persimmon, the wild apple, and the Chickasaw plum,* I began to believe myself not far from the ruins of this famous old fort. Accosting a French villager whom I chanced to meet, I inquired the site of the ruins. He turned on me his glittering dark eye for a moment, and, pointing away to the dense belt of forest upon the left in a direct line with an enormous black-locust on the right of the pathway, passed on. Not the slightest indication of the object of my inquiry was to be

* *Prunus Angustifolia.*

seen; but deeming it fruitless to attempt gathering farther information from the dark-browed villager, who was now some distance on his way, I turned my horse's head from the path, and, after labouring several rods through the deep, heavy grass of the prairie, entered the wood. The dense undergrowth of bushes and matted vines was undisturbed, and there was not an indication of visiters at the spot for months. All seemed deserted, and silent, and drear. The ruins were completely shrouded in foliage, and gigantic trees were rearing their huge shafts from amid the crumbling heaps of rubbish. Wild grape-vines and other parasites were creeping in all directions over the trembling structures; or, drooping forth in pensile gracefulness from the disjointed walls, seemed striving to bind up the shattered fragments, and to conceal the pitiless ravage of time. The effect of this noble old pile of architecture, reposing thus in ruins, and shrouded in the cathedral duskiness of the forest, was singularly solemn.

> "The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
> O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe.
> Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds
> Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven."

Securing my horse to the trunk of a young sapling rearing up itself beneath the walls, I at length succeeded, by dint of struggling through the rough thickets and the enormous vegetation, in placing myself at a point from which most of the ruins could be taken at a *coup d'œil.* Some portions of the exterior wall are yet in good preservation, and

the whole line of fortification may be easily traced out; but all the structures within the quadrangle are quite dilapidated, and trees of a large size are springing from the ruins: an extensive powder-magazine, however, in a gorge of one of the bastions, yet retains its original form and solidity. The western angle of the fort and an entire bastion was, about fifty years since, undermined and thrown down by a slough from the Mississippi; but the channel is now changed, and is yearly receding, while a young belt of trees has sprung up between the ruins and the water's edge. The prairie in front of the fort was in cultivation not many years since, and was celebrated for its blue grass.

Fort Chartres was erected by the French in 1720, as a link in the chain of posts which I have mentioned, uniting New-Orleans with Quebec; and as a defence for the neighbouring villages against the Spaniards, who were then taking possession of the country on the opposite side of the Mississippi, as well as against the incursion of hostile Indian tribes. The expense of its erection is said to have been enormous, and it was considered the strongest fortification in North America. The material was brought from the bluffs, some four or five miles distant over the bottom by boats across a considerable intervening sheet of water, and from the opposite side of the Mississippi. In 1756 it was rebuilt; and in 1763, when France ceded her possessions east of the Mississippi to England, the adjoining village embraced about forty families, and a church dedicated to St. Anne.

When the English troops took possession of the country, the villagers all removed to the hamlets across the river, then under the French government, having been previously ceded, in the treaty of St. Ildefonso, by Spain to France. The fort was not evacuated, however, until July, 1765, when its commandant, *M. de St. Ange de belle rive*, proceeded to St. Louis with his forces.

While Fort Chartres belonged to France, it was the seat of government for all the neighbouring region; and in 1765, when taken possession of by Captain Sterling, of the Royal Highlanders, it continued to retain its arbitrary character. It was here that the first court of justice, established by Lieutenant-colonel Wilkins, held its sessions. Seven judges were appointed, who came together monthly at the fortress; but their decisions were very ill received by a people who, until then, had been released from all but *arbitrary* restriction.*

The original form of Fort Chartres was an irregular quadrangle, with four bastions; the sides of the exterior polygon being about five hundred feet in extent. The ditch and scarp were commenced, but left uncompleted. The walls, massively constructed of stone, and stuccoed with lime, were upward of two feet in thickness and fifteen feet in height. They still retain this altitude in some portions which are uninjured; and many of the loopholes and the ports for cannon, in the face of the wall and in the flanks of the bastions, are yet to be seen entire. The elegantly dressed freestone, however, which

* See Appendix.

was employed about them, as well as for the cornices and casements of the gate and buildings, has long since been removed. Specimens are to be seen incorporated in some of the elegant structures which have since gone up in the neighbouring city.

The military engineering of the early French fortifications in North America was of the school of Vauban; and the massive structures then erected are now monuments, not less of the skill of their founders than of departed time. The almost indestructible character of their masonry has long been a subject of surprise. The walls of Fort Chartres, though half a century has seen them abandoned to the ravages of the elements and of time, yet remain so imperishable, that in some instances it is not easy to distinguish the limestone from the cement; and the neighbouring villagers, in removing the materials for the purposes of building, have found it almost impossible to separate them one from the other.

The buildings which occupied the square area of Fort Chartres were of the same massive masonry as the walls. They consisted of a commandant's and commissary's residence, both noble structures of stone, and of equal size: two extensive lines of barracks, the magazine of stores, with vaulted cellars, and the *corps de guarde*. Within the gorges of the eastern bastions were the powder-magazine and a bakehouse; in the western, a prison, with dungeons and some smaller buildings. There were two sally-ports to the fortification in the middle of opposite faces of the wall; and a broad avenue passed from one to the other, directly through the square,

along the sides of which were ranged the buildings. A small banquette a few feet in height ran parallel to the loopholes, for the purpose of elevating the troops when discharging musketry at an enemy without.

Such was Fort Chartres in the pride of its early prime; the seat of power, festivity, and taste; the gathering-spot of all the rank, and beauty, and fashion the province could then boast. Many a time, doubtless, have the walls of this stern old citadel rung to the note of revelry; and the light, twinkling footstep of the dark-eyed creole has beat in unison with a heart throbbing in fuller gush from the presence of the young, martial figure at her side! Fort Chartres, in its early years, was doubtless not more the headquarters of arbitration and rule than of gentility and etiquette. The settlers of the early French villages, though many of them indigent, were not all of them rude and illiterate. Induced by anticipations of untold wealth, such as had crowned the adventurers of Spain in the southern section of the Western Continent, grants and charters of immense tracts of territory in these remote regions had been made by the crown of France to responsible individuals; and thus the leaders in these golden enterprises were generally gentlemen of education and talent, whose manners had been formed within the precincts of St. Cloud, then the most elegant court in Europe. Many of these enthusiastic adventurers, it is true, returned to France in disappointment and disgust; and many of them removed to the more genial latitude of Lower Louisiana:

yet a few, astonished at the fertility and extent of a country of which they had never dreamed before; delighted with the variety and delicacy of its fruits, and reminded by the mildness of the climate of the sweetest portions of their own beautiful France, preferred to remain. By the present degenerate race of villagers, those early days are referred to as a "golden age" in their history, and the "old residenters" as *wonderful* beings. Consider the singular situation of these men—a thousand miles from the Atlantic shores, surrounded by savages and by their own countrymen scarce less ignorant, and separated by pathless mountains from a community of civilized man. The higher stations in the French army were at that era, too, more than at present, occupied by men of genius and information, while the Catholic priesthood was equally distinguished for literary attainment. Under circumstances like these, was it other than natural that reciprocity of feeling and congeniality of taste should have sought their gratification by mutual and frequent intercourse? Fort Chartres must, therefore, have been the seat of hospitality, religious celebration, and kindly feeling. Here the fleshy old *habitans* of the neighbouring villages dozed away many an hour of sober jovialness with their "droughty cronies" over the pipe and the claret of their own vineyards; while their dark-haired daughters tripped away on the green sward before them the balmy moonlit summer eve with the graceful officers of the fortress.

Here, too, has been witnessed something of "the pride, and pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."

The *fleur-de-lis* of the Fifteenth Louis has rolled out its heavy folds above these stern old towers; the crimson Lion of England has succeeded; and the stripes and stars of our own republic have floated over both in triumph. The morning gun of the fortress has boomed across the broad prairie, and been reverberated from yonder cliffs: the merry reveille has rose upon the early breeze, and wakened the slumbering echoes of the forest; and the evening bugle from the walls has wailed its long-drawn, melancholy note along those sunset waters of the *Eternal River!*

Such, I repeat, was Fort Chartres in its better days, but such is Fort Chartres no more. I lingered for hours with saddened interest around the old ruins, until the long misty beams of the setting sun, streaming through the forest, reminded me that I had not yet secured a shelter for the coming night. Remounting my horse, I left the spot at a brisk pace, and a ride of a few miles brought me to a dwelling situated upon a mound somewhat elevated from the low, flat bottom-land around, about one mile from the Mississippi, and commanding a view of the distant lake and bluffs to the north. Here, then, I affix the name by which is known all the surrounding region.

Fort Chartres, Ill.

XXXIX.

"I know not how the truth may be,
I tell the tale as told to me."

"Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."
Othello.

Fort Chartres has already detained me longer than was my design. My pen has been unconsciously led on from item to item, and from one topic to another; and now, in leaving this celebrated fortress, I cannot forbear alluding to a few incidents connected with its origin and early history, which have casually presented themselves to my notice. Selection is made from many of a similar character, which at another time and in a different form may employ the writer's pen. The conclusion of my last number attempted a description of the spot from which it was dated; and, reader, a beautiful spot it was, beneath the soft, gentle radiance of a summer evening. Not soon, I ween, shall I forget the wild romance of that moonlit scene as I reclined upon the gray old bench at the door of the farmhouse after the evening meal was over, and listened to the singular events of which that region had been the theatre in other days. More than forty years had seen mine host a resident of the spot, and no one, with diligence more exem-

plary than his own, had gathered up the curious legends of the place, many of them from aged men who had themselves been witnesses of the events they chronicled. By these traditions, whatever may be our inclination to yield them credence at this late period, the origin and history of the fortification of Fort Chartres is by no means devoid of interest. In 1720, when it was resolved on by the crown of France to erect a fortress at this point upon the Mississippi, in continuation of her line of posts uniting Quebec with New-Orleans, and for the defence of her colonies, a military engineer of the school of the celebrated Sebastian Vauban was sent over to project and accomplish the design. To his own discretion, within prescribed limits—so goes the story—was confided the whole undertaking. Far and wide throughout the province resounded the note of preparation. The peaceful villager was summoned from his pipe and his plough; the din of steel and stone broke in upon the solitudes; and at length, at the enormous expenditure of nine millions of livres, arose Fort Chartres; and its battlements frowned over the forests and cast their shadows along the waters of the *Eternal River!* The work was completed, and fondly believed its architect that he had reared for his memory a monument for the generations of coming time. A powerful battery of iron ordnance protruded from the ports, and every department of the fortress was supplied with the most extensive munitions of war. A large number of cannon for many years were laying beneath the walls of the fort, in the early part

of the present century, buried in matted vines and underbrush. The fortress was completed, and the *silver lilies* floated over the walls; but the engineer had far exceeded the limits prescribed in erecting a work of such massive and needless strength, and a missive royal summoned him to St. Cloud. The miserable man, aware that little was to be hoped from the clemency of the warlike Louis XV., poisoned himself upon arriving in his native land, to escape the indignation of his sovereign. Previously, however, to his departure for France, immense sums in gold for defraying the expenses of the fortress had been forwarded him to New-Orleans and sent up the river, but, owing to his subsequent arrest, were never distributed to the labourers. Tradition averreth these vast treasures to have been buried beneath the foundations of the fort. However the truth may be, the number of those who have believed and searched has not been inconsiderable: but unhappily, as is ever the case with these "hidden treasures," the light has gone out just at the critical moment, or some luckless wight, in his zeal, has thought proper to *speak* just as the barrel of money has been struck by the mattock, or some other untoward event has occurred to dissolve the charm of the witch-hazel, and to stir up the wrath of those notable spirits which are always known to stand guard over buried gold! And thus has it happened that the treasure yet reposes in primeval peace; and the big family Bible, always conveyed to the spot on such inquisitorial occasions, has alone prevented consequences most

fatal! Whether the good people of the vicinity in the present unbelieving generation have faith to dig, I know not; but, when I visited the spot, the earth of the powder-magazine to which I have alluded exhibited marvellous indication of having been disturbed at no distant period previous. So much for the origin of Fort Chartres. The story *may* be true, it may *not*. At all events, it will be remembered I do not endorse it.

There is also a tradition yet extant of a stratagem of war by which Fort Chartres was once captured, worthy the genius of Fabius Maximus, and partaking, moreover, somewhat of history in character. The name of George Rogers Clarke is familiar to every one who can claim even indifferent acquaintance with the early border warfare of the West. This extraordinary man, having satisfied himself, like Hannibal of Carthage, that the only way decisively to conquer a crafty and powerful foe was by carrying the war to his own altars and hearths, placed himself at the head of a few hundred of the Virginia militia in 1778, and set forth upon one of the most daring enterprises ever chronicled on the page of military history—the celebrated expedition against the distant post of Fort Vincent, now Vincennes. Our country was then at war with Great Britain, and this fort, together with those upon the lakes and the Mississippi, were in possession of the enemy and their savage allies. Colonel Clarke crossed the mountains with his little band; descended the Monongahela and the Ohio to within sixty miles of the mouth of

the latter, and there concealing his boats, he plunged with his followers through swamps, and creeks, and marshes almost impassable, a distance of one hundred and thirty miles, and in a space of time incredibly short, arrived at night opposite the village of Kaskaskia. So overwhelming was the surprise, that the town, though fortified, was taken without a blow. History goes on to tell us that a detachment of troops, mounted on the horses of the country, was immediately pushed forward to surprise the villages of Fort Chartres and Cahokia, higher up the Mississippi; and that they were all taken without resistance, and the British power in that quarter completely destroyed.* So much for History, now for Tradition. When the little band arrived beneath the walls of Fort Chartres, the numbers of the garrison far exceeding those of the besiegers, the latter, as if in despair of success, shortly took up the line of march and disappeared behind the distant bluffs. Days passed on; diligent examination of the heights was kept up with glasses from the walls, but no enemy returned. At length, when apprehension had begun to die away, early one morning a troop of cavalry appeared winding over the bluffs, their arms glittering in the sunlight, and descended from view apparently into the plain beneath. Hour after hour the march continued; troop after troop, battalion upon battalion, regiment after regiment, with their various ensigns and habiliments of warfare, appeared in lengthened files, wound over the bluffs, and disappeared. Alarmed

* Hall.

and astonished at the countless swarms of the invaders, the garrison hastily evacuated the fortress, and for dear life and liberty, soon placed the broad Mississippi between themselves and the cloud of locusts! Hardly was this precipitate manœuvre well accomplished, when the alarum of drum and fife was heard, and the identical force which but a few days before had raised the siege, and in despair had retreated from beneath the walls, now paraded through the open sally-ports, their rags and tatters fluttering by way of "pomp and circumstance" in the evening breeze. This fortunate *ruse du guerre* had been accomplished through the favourable nature of the ground, a few extra stand of colours manufactured for the occasion, and a variety of uniforms and arms of like character. After winding over the bluffs into the plain beneath, they again ascended through a defile unobserved by the garrison, and once more appeared in different guise and order in rear of their comrades. "Distance," too, cast doubtless not a little "enchantment" over "the view;" and then the fear and trepidation of the worthy garrison probably sharpened their optics to detect all the peril in store for them, and, perchance, somewhat more. Now, reader, you can do as you choose touching belief of all this. And while you are making up a decision on the point, permit me to furnish yet another scrap of *History*, which may, peradventure, assist.

For sixteen days was Col. Clarke employed in his march from Kaskaskia to Vincennes, after the

capture of the military posts upon the Mississippi. At length, after toils incredible, he reached the Wabash. High upon the eastern bank, its base swept by the rolling flood, stood Fort Vincent, the British fortress, at that period garrisoned by a superior corps of soldiery, with an auxiliary force of six hundred Indian warriors, and under the command of a skilful officer, Gov. Hamilton. On the western bank was spread out a broad sheet of alluvion five miles in breadth, completely inundated by the swollen stream. After five days of toil this wilderness of waters was passed; the rolling current of the Wabash was crossed in the night, and the morning sun beheld these daring men before Vincennes. As they approached the town—history goes on to relate—over the broad and beautiful prairie upon which it stands, at the moment his troops were discovered by the enemy, Clarke found himself near a small ancient mound, which concealed part of his force from the foe. Under this covert he countermarched his men in so skilful a manner, that the leading files, which had been seen from the town, were transferred undiscovered to the rear, and made to pass again and again in sight of the enemy, until his whole force had several times been displayed, and his little detachment of jaded troops assumed the appearance of an extended column greatly superior to its actual strength. The garrison was promptly summoned to surrender, and, after a brief defence, Gov. Hamilton struck his flag to a body of men not half as powerful as his own.*

* Hall.

Next in importance to Fort Chartres, of that chain of military posts commenced by the French in the Valley of the Mississippi, was FORT DU QUESNE; and of this celebrated fortress, so notorious in the bloody annals of border warfare, it may not be irrelevant, in concluding the present subject, to add a few sentences. This post was erected on that low tongue of land, at the head of the Ohio and confluence of the Alleghany and Monongahela rivers, where Pittsburgh now stands, commanded on all sides by lofty bluffs. It was built by M. de la Jonquier, at command of the Marquis du Quesne, governor of Canada. In 1754 the bold Contrecœur came down the Alleghany, with a thousand Frenchmen in canoes, and eighteen pieces of artillery; and, dispersing the small colonial force, intrenched himself upon the spot. This was the prologue to that bloody drama, the catastrophe of which deprived France of all her possessions east of the Mississippi. In 1758 Fort du Quesne was taken by Gen. Forbes; a more scientific and extensive fortress was erected on the spot, at an expense of sixty thousand pounds sterling, and, in honour of William Pitt, then Premier of England, named Fort Pitt. It is difficult to conceive what could have been the design of these commanders in erecting such a massive fortress on such a spot, unless to impress the minds of their savage but simple neighbours; for resistance to artillery planted upon the neighbouring heights would have been quite as vain as any attack of the Indians upon its walls with their primitive weapons. The same may be said of

nearly all the early fortifications in the West, and of some of more modern date upon our frontier. Subsequently Fort Pitt came into the possession of our government as part of the estate of the Penn family, and is now only a heap of rubbish. Thus much for early military posts in theValley of the Mississippi.

So deeply interested was I in listening to the "legendary lore" associated with the spot upon which I was sitting, that hours glided unobserved away, and the full moon was culminating in cloudless splendour from the zenith when we retired.

Early the following morning I was in the saddle. The heavy night-mists lay wavering, like a silvery mantle, all over the surface of that broad plain; and the crimson clouds, rolling up the eastern sky, proclaimed the rising sun. After a short ride I reached the former site of St. Philippe, a settlement of the French, since called *Little Village*. Its "common field" is now comprised in the single plantation of Mr. M'David. It was at this point that Philippe Francis Renault—from whom the village received its name, as well as a large section of the neighbouring region, known to this day as "Renault's Tract"—established himself in 1719, with two hundred miners from France, in anticipation of discovering gold and silver. He was disappointed; but is said to have obtained large quantities of lead from the region along the opposite bank of the Mississippi, in the vicinity of Ste. Genevieve; and to have discovered, moreover, a copper mine near Peoria. St. Philippe was once a considerable village. Previous to 1765—when possession of the country was claim-

ed by the English government, and, like the other French settlements, it was abandoned by the villagers—it is said to have comprised twenty or thirty families, a Catholic church, and a water-mill; while the surrounding meadow afforded pasturage for extensive herds of cattle.

Leaving St. Philippe, the winding pathway in a few miles had conducted me into the depths of a forest of gigantic cotton-trees upon the left, encircled by enormous grape-vines, and the ground beneath entangled by a wilderness of underbrush and thickets of wild fruit. In a few moments the forest opened unexpectedly before me, and at my feet rolled on the turbid floods of the Mississippi, beyond which went up the towering cliffs of limestone, hoar and ragged, to the sheer height of some hundred feet from the water's edge. They were the cliffs of Herculaneum, with their shot-towers. For the first time I discovered that I had mistaken my way. Perceiving the low log-cabin of a woodcutter among the trees, I had soon obtained the requisite information, and was retracing my steps; but a weary plod through the deep black loam, and the tall grass weltering in the night-dews, and the thickets of the dripping meadows, was anything but agreeable. There were but few farms along my route, and the tenants of those with whom I chanced to meet betrayed too plainly, by their ghastly visages, and their withered, ague-racked limbs, the deadly influences of the atmosphere they inhaled. As I wandered through this region, where vegetation, towering in all its rank

and monstrous forms, gave evidence of a soil too unnaturally fertile for culture by man, whose bread must be bought by "the sweat of his brow," I thought I could perceive a deadly nausea stealing over my frame, and that every respiration was a draught of the floating pestilence. I urged onward my horse, as if by flight to leave behind me the fatal contagion which seemed hovering on every side; as if to burst through the poisonous vapours which seemed distilling from every giant upas along my path. That this region should be subject to disease and death is a circumstance by no means singular. Indeed, it seems only unaccountable to the traveller that it may be inhabited at all. A soil of such astonishing depth and fertility, veiled from the purifying influences of the sun by the rank luxuriance of its vegetation, in the stifling sultriness of midsummer sends forth vast quantities of mephitic vapour fatal to life; while the decay of the enormous vegetables poisons the atmosphere with putrid exhalations. Cultivation and settlement will, of course, as in the older states, remedy this evil to some extent in time. It is said that the southern border of a lake in this region is less unhealthy than the northern, on account of the prevalence of winds from the former quarter during the summer months; and that the immediate margin of a river, though buried in vegetation, is less liable to disease than the neighbouring bluffs, upon which hang the night and morning vapours. A dry and somewhat elevated spot is preferable to either for a cabin; and it should be well ventilated, and never closely surrounded by

cornfields. The rank and massive foliage shields the earth from the sunbeams, which exhale its poisonous damps; and in its rapid growth, the plant abstracts from the surrounding atmosphere one of its vital ingredients. Indeed, most of the diseases peculiar to the West are superinduced by imprudence, ignorance, or negligence in nursing. Let the recent emigrant avoid the chill, heavy night-dews and the sickening sultriness of the noontide sun; provide a close dwelling, well situated and ventilated, and invariably wear thicker clothing at night than in the day, and he may live on as long and as healthily in the West as in his native village. Bilious intermittents are the most prevalent and fatal diseases in the sickly months of August, September, and October; and in the winter and spring pleurisies are frequent. The genuine phthisic, or pulmonary consumption of New-England, is rarely met. A mysterious disease, called the "*milk* sickness"—because it was supposed to be communicated by that liquid—was once alarmingly prevalent in certain isolated districts of Illinois. Whole villages were depopulated; and though the mystery was often and thoroughly investigated, the cause of the disease was never discovered. By some it was ascribed to the milk or to the flesh of cows feeding upon a certain unknown poisonous plant, found only in certain districts; by others, to certain springs of water, or to the exhalations of certain marshes. The mystery attending its operations and its terrible fatality at one period created a perfect panic in the settlers; nor was this at all wonderful. The disease appears

now to be vanishing. But, of all other epidemics, the "fever and ague" is the scourge of the West. Not that it often terminates fatally, except by superinducing a species of consumption; but, when severe and protracted, it completely shatters the constitution; and, like Mezentius, the victim ever after bears about him a living death. In its lighter form, most of the settlers at some time or other experience it, as it is brought on by exposure: and when I consider that, during my ramble in the West, I have subjected myself to every variety of climate and circumstance; have been drenched by night-dews and morning-dews; by the vapours of marshes and forests, and by the torrents of summer showers; have wandered day after day over the endless prairies beneath a scorching sun, and at its close have laid myself anywhere or nowhere to rest; when I consider this, I cannot but wonder at the escape of a constitution naturally feeble from complete prostration. Yet never was it more vigorous than during this tour on the prairies.

At length, after a ride which seemed interminable, I found myself at the foot of the bluffs; and, drawing up my horse, applied at a cabin attached to an extensive farm for refreshment. A farmer of respectable garb and mien came tottering towards the gateway; and, to my request, informed me that every individual of his family was ill of the "fever and ague." I inquired for the state of his own health, remarking his *shattered* appearance. "Yes, I am shattered," he replied, leaning heavily against the rails for support; "the agues and fevers have terri-

bly racked me; but I am better, I am *better* now." Ah, thought I, as, returning his kind good-morning, I resumed my route, you think, poor man, that health will revisit your shattered frame; but that pallidness of brow, and those sunken temples, tell me that you must die. Consumption's funeral fires were already kindling up in the depths of his piercing eye. At the next cabin, where I was so fortunate as to succeed in obtaining refreshment, I was informed that the poor fellow was in the last stages of a decline brought on by undue exposure to the chill, poisonous night-dews of the bottom. The individual from whom this information was received was himself far from enjoying uninterrupted health, though thirty-five years had seen him a tenant of the spot upon which I met him.

Monroe County, Ill.

XL.

"'Tis many moons ago—a long—long time."
R. H. WILDE.

"Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain:
A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
Falls from its poise, and give the breeze to blow."
The Seasons.

IN the course of my journeying in the regions of the "FAR WEST," it has more than once chanced to me to encounter individuals of that singular class commonly termed "Squatters;" those sturdy pioneers who formed the earliest American settlements along our western frontier. And, in my casual intercourse with them, I have remarked, with not a little surprise, a decision of character, an acuteness of penetration, and a depth and originality of thought betrayed in their observations, strangely enough contrasting with the rude solitude of their life. For more than half a century, mayhap, Nature

"Had been to them a more familiar face
Than that of man;"

and whether, in the present exhibition of intellectual energy, we are to claim an argument for the influence of natural scenery upon character, or may find a corroboration of the theory of diversity of mental ability; or to whatever circumstance it may be at-

tributed, very assuredly it owes not its origin to the improvements of education or the advantages of society. There is also remarked in these rude men a susceptibility and refinement of feeling, and a delicacy of sentiment, which one would suppose hardly compatible with a protracted continuance of their semi-savage life.

It was at the frugal, though well-spread board of an individual of this class that I was pleased to find myself seated, after my tedious morning ramble of several hours through the weltering vegetation of the prairie. Mine host was a man of apparently forty, though in reality some eight or ten years in advance of that age: his form, of medium stature, was symmetrical, erect, and closely knit, betraying considerable capability of endurance, though but little of muscular strength: his countenance, at first sight, was by no means prepossessing; indeed, the features, while in repose, presented an aspect harsh —almost forbidding; but, when lighted up by animation, there was discoverable in their rapid play a mildness which well compared with the benevolent expression of a soft blue eye. Such was the *physique* of my backwoods pioneer, who for forty years had been a wanderer on the outskirts of civilization, and had at length been overtaken by its rapid march.

As I had before me but an easy ride for the day, I proposed to mine host, when our repast was over, that he should accompany me to the summit of the range of bluffs which rose behind his cabin, towering to the height of several hundred feet above the roof. To this he readily assented, and well did

the magnificent view commanded from the top compensate for the toil of the ascent. The scene was grand. "Yonder," said my companion, seating himself on the earth at my side, and stretching out his arm to the southeast, "yonder lies the village of old Kaskaskia, with the bluffs of the river beyond, rising against the sky; while a little to the left you catch the white cliffs of Prairie du Rocher. In that heavy timber to the south are the ruins of Fort Chartres, and to the right, across the lake, fifty years ago stood St. Philippe. The Mississippi is concealed from us, but its windings can be traced by the irregular strip of forest which skirts its margin. Beyond the stream, stretching away to the northwest, the range of heights you view are the celebrated *cornice-cliffs** above Herculaneum; and at intervals you catch a glimpse of a shot-tower, resting like a cloud against the sky, upon the tallest pinnacles. The plain at our feet, which is now sprinkled with cornfields, was once the site of an Indian village. Forty years ago, the ruins of the wigwams and the dancing circle surrounding the war-post could be distinctly traced out: and even now my ploughshare every spring turns up articles of pottery which constituted their domestic utensils, together with axes and mallets of stone, spear and arrow heads and knives of flint, and all their rude instruments of war. Often of a fine evening," continued my companion, after a pause, "when my work for the day is over, and the sun is going down

* Two ranges of cliffs are known by this name. One is below Ste. Genevieve.

in the west, I climb up to this spot and look out over this grand prospect; and it almost makes me sad to think how the tribes that once possessed this beautiful region have faded away. Nearly forty years ago, when I came with my father from old Virginia, this whole state, with its prairies, and forests, and rich bottoms, was the hunting-ground of the Indians. On this spot we built our cabin; and though I have since lived far off on the outskirts of the Missouri frontier, I always had an affection for this old bottom and these bluffs, and have come back to spend here the rest of my days. But the Indians are gone. The round top of every bluff in yonder range is the grave of an Indian chief."

While my singular companion was making these observations, somewhat in the language I have attempted to give, interrupted from time to time by my inquiries, I had myself been abstractedly employed in thrusting a knife which was in my hand into the yielding mould of the mound upon which we sat, when, suddenly, the blade, striking upon a substance somewhat harder than the soil, snapped into fragments. Hastily scraping away the loose mould to the depth of some inches, the *femur* of a human skeleton protruding from the soil was disinterred, and, in a few minutes, with the aid of my companion, the remnants of an entire skeleton were laid bare. Compared with our own limbs, the bones seemed of a size almost gigantic; and from this circumstance, if from no other, it was evident that our melancholy moralizing upon the destinies of the Indians had been indulged upon a very fitting spot—

the grave of one of its chieftains. Originally, the body had no doubt been covered to the depth of many feet, and the shallowness of soil at the present time indicates a lapse of centuries. Still these graves of the bluffs, which doubtless belonged to the ancestors of the present aborigines, will neither be confounded nor compared with the gigantic earth-heaps of the prairies. Strangely enough, this *has* been the case, though a moment's reflection must convince one that they are the monuments of a far later race.

Descending the bluffs by an ancient path in a ravine, *said* to have been made in conveying oak timber to Fort Chartres at the period of its erection, my host conducted me into one of the enclosures of his farm, a spot which had evidently once been the ordinary burial-place of the ancient Indian village. Graves, sufficient, apparently, for hundreds of individuals, were yet to be seen upon every side. They were arranged parallel to each other in uniform ranges, and were each formed by a rough slab of limestone upon either side, and two at the extremities, terminating in an obtuse angle. From several of these old sepulchres we threw out the sand, and, at the depth of about four feet, exhumed fragments of human remains in various stages of preservation, deposited upon a broad slab of limestone at the bottom. When taken together, these slabs form a complete coffin of stone, in which the body originally reposed; and this arrangement, with the silicious nature of the soil, has probably preserved the remains a longer period than would otherwise have been the case. But the circumstance respecting

these ancient graves which chiefly excited my astonishment was their marvellous littleness, none of them exceeding a length of four feet; and the wondrous tales of a "pigmy race of aborigines" once inhabiting the West, which I had often listened to, recurred with considerable force to my memory. Resolved to decide this long-mooted question to my own satisfaction, if possible, the earth from one of the graves, the most perfect to be found, was excavated with care, and upon the bottom were discovered the *femur* and *tibia* of a skeleton in a state of tolerable preservation, being parallel to each other and in immediate proximity. Proof incontestible, this, that the remains were those of no Lilliputian race four feet in stature, and affording a fair presumption that the limbs were forcibly bent in this position at the time of burial, occupying their stone coffin much as the subject for scientific dissection occupies a beef-barrel. In this manner may we satisfactorily account for the ancient "pigmy cemetery" near the town of Fenton, on the Merrimack in Missouri, as well as that on the *Rivière des Pères*, in the same vicinity, already referred to, and those reported to exist in various other sections of the West, in which, owing to the dampness of the soil, the remains have been long resolved to dust, and only the dimensions of the grave have remained.

Among the articles which my host had procured from these old graves, and deemed worthy of preservation, was a singular species of pottery, composed, as appeared from its fracture, of shells calcined and pulverized, mixed with an equal quantity

of clay, and baked in the sun. The clay is of that fine quality with which the waters of the Missouri are charged. The vessels are found moulded into a variety of forms and sizes, capable of containing from a quart to a gallon.* One of these, which my host insisted upon hanging upon the bow of my Spanish saddle as I mounted, was fashioned in the shape of a *turtle*, with the form and features very accurately marked. The handle of the vessel, which was broken off, once formed a tapering tail to the animal, presenting a *rare* specimen of a turtle with that elegant appendage.

Ascending the bluffs by a tortuous though toilsome pathway through the ravines, my route for some miles wound away through a sparse growth of oaks, and over a region which seemed completely excavated into *sink-holes.* Some of these tunnel-shaped hollows were several hundred feet in diameter, and of frightful depth, though of regular outline, as if formed by the whirl of waters subsiding to the level of the plain beneath. They were hundreds in number, yet each was as uniformly circular as if excavated by scientific skill. I have met with none so regular in outline, though I have seen many in the course of my journeyings.

The puissant little village of Waterloo furnished me a very excellent dinner, at a very excellent tavern. The town appeared, from a hasty view in passing through its streets, remarkable for nothing so much as for the warlike *soubriquet* attached to it, if we except a huge *windmill*, which,

* See Appendix.

like a living thing, flings abroad its gigantic arms, and flaunts its ungainly pinions in the midst thereof. The place, moreover, can boast a courthouse, indicative of its judicial character as seat of justice for the county of Monroe; and, withal, is rather pleasantly located than otherwise. About five miles north of the village is situated a large spring, and a settlement called Bellefontaine. This spot is celebrated as the scene of some of the bloodiest atrocities of the Kickapoo Indians and predatory bands of other tribes some fifty years since. Many of the settlers were killed, and others carried into a captivity scarce to be preferred.

An evening ride of a dozen miles, interesting for nothing but a drenching shower, succeeded by a glare of scorching sunshine, which, for a time, threatened perfect fusion to the traveller, or, more properly, an unconditional resolution into fluidity; such an evening ride, under circumstances aforesaid, brought me at sunset to the town of Columbia, a place, as its name denotes, redolent of patriotism. "Hail Columbia!" was the exhilarated expression of my feelings, if not of my lips, as I strode across the threshold of a log-cabin, the appertenance of a certain worthy man with one leg and the moiety of another, who united in his calling the professions of cobbler and publican, as intimated by the sign-board over his door. Hail Columbia! All that it is possible to record touching this patriotic village seems to be that it adds one more to the five hundred previous villages of the selfsame appellation scattered over the land, whose chief

consequence, like that of a Spanish grandee, is concentrated and consists in a title. Every county of almost every state of the Union, it is verily believed, can boast a Columbia. Indeed, the name of the Genoese seems in a fair way of being honoured as much as is that of George Washington; a distinction we are sure to find bestowed upon every bullet-pated, tow-haired little rascal, who, knowing not who his father was, can claim no patronymic less general, having been smuggled into the world nobody can tell when or how: George Washington, "*Father* of his *country*," indeed, if the perpetration of a very poor pun on a venerated name may be pardoned.

The earliest peep of dawn lighted me into the saddle; for, with the unhappy Clarence, *feelingly* could I ejaculate,

"Oh, I have pass'd a miserable night!"

In sober sadness, sleep, gentle sleep, had visited not my eyes, nor slumber mine eyelids; though, with the faith of a saint and the perseverance of a martyr, I had alternated from *bed* to board and from *board* to bed. And throughout that livelong night, be it recorded, even until the morning dawned, did a concert of whippoorwills and catydids keep up their infernal oratorio, seemingly for no other reason than for my own especial torment; until, sinner as I am, I could not but believe myself assoilzed of half the peccadilloes of a foregone life. Happy enough to find myself once more in the saddle, the morning breeze, as I cantered through the forest, fanned

freshly a brow fevered by sleeplessness and vexation. The early beams of the day-god were flinging themselves in lengthened masses far athwart the plains at my feet as I stood upon the bluffs. Descending, I was once more upon the AMERICAN BOTTOM. This name, as already stated, was a distinction appropriated to that celebrated tract so long since as when it constituted the extreme limit in this direction of the Northwestern Territory. Extending northwardly from the embouchure of the Kaskaskia to the confluence of the great rivers, a distance of about one hundred miles, and embracing three hundred thousand acres of land, of fertility unrivalled, it presents, perhaps, second only to the Delta of Egypt, the most remarkable tract of country known. Its breadth varies from three miles to seven. Upon one side it is bounded by a heavy strip of forest a mile or two deep, skirting the Mississippi; and upon the other by an extended range of bluffs, now rising from the plain in a mural escarpment of several hundred feet, as at the village of Prairie du Rocher, and again, as opposite St. Louis, swelling gracefully away into rounded sand-heaps, surmounted by Indian graves. At the base of the latter are exhaustless beds of bituminous coal, lying between parallel strata of limestone. The area between the timber-belt and the bluffs is comprised in one extended meadow, heaving in alternate waves like the ocean after a storm, and interspersed with island-groves, sloughs, bayous, lagoons, and shallow lakes. These expansions of water are numerous, and owe their origin

to that geological feature invariable to the Western rivers—the superior elevation of the immediate bank of the stream to that of the interior plain. The subsidence of the spring-floods is thus precluded; and, as the season advances, some of the ponds, which are more shallow, become entirely dry by evaporation, while others, converted into marshes, stagnate, and exhale *malaria* exceedingly deleterious to health. The poisonous night-dews caused by these marshes, and the miasm of their decomposing and putrefying vegetation, occasion, with the sultriness of the climate, bilious intermittents, and the far-famed, far-dreaded "*fever and ague*," not unfrequently terminating in consumption. This circumstance, indeed, presents the grand obstacle to the settlement of the American Bottom. It is one, however, not impracticable to obviate at slight expense, by the construction of sluices and canals communicating with the rivers, and by the clearing up and cultivation of the soil. The salubrious influence of the latter expedient upon the climate has, indeed, been satisfactorily tested during the ten or twelve years past; and this celebrated alluvion now bids fair, in time, to become the garden of North America. A few of its lakes are beautiful water-sheets, with pebbly shores and sparkling waves, abounding with fish. Among these is one appropriately named "Clear Lake," or the *Grand Marais*, as the French call it, which may be seen from St. Louis of a bright morning, when the sunbeams are playing upon its surface, or at night when the moon is at her full. The

earliest settlements of the Western Valley were planted upon the American Bottom, and the French villagers have continued to live on in health among the sloughs and marshes, where Americans would most assuredly have perished. Geologically analyzed, the soil consists of a silicious or argillaceous loam, as sand or clay forms the predominating constituent. Its fertility seems exhaustless, having continued to produce corn at an average of seventy-five bushels to the acre for more than a hundred years in succession, in the neighbourhood of the old French villages, and without deterioration. Maize seems the appropriate production for the soil; all of the smaller grains, on account of the rank luxuriance of their growth, being liable to *blast* before the harvesting.

Cahokia, Ill.

XLI.

"Gramercy, Sir Traveller, it marvels me how you can carry between one pair of shoulders the weight of your heavy wisdom. Alack, now! would you but discourse me of the wonders you saw ayont the antipodes!"

"Peace, ignoramus! 'tis too good for thy ass's ears to listen to. The world shall get it, caxtonized in a GREAT BOOK."—*Traveller and Simpleton.*

"Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been;
A sound which makes us linger—yet—farewell!"
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

Of the alluvial character of the celebrated American Bottom there can exist no doubt. Logs, shells, fragments of coal, and pebbles, which have been subjected to the abrasion of moving water, are found at a depth of thirty feet from the surface; and the soil throughout seems of unvarying fecundity. Whether this alluvial deposition is to be considered the result of annual floods of the river for ages, or whether the entire bottom once formed the bed of a vast lake, in which the waters of the Mississippi and Missouri mingled on their passage to the Gulf, is a question of some considerable interest. The latter seems the more plausible theory. Indeed, the ancient existence of an immense lake, where now lies the American Bottom, upon the east side of the Mississippi, and the Mamelle Prairie upon the west side, extending seventy

miles northwardly from the mouth of the Missouri where the Bottom ends, appears geologically demonstrable. The southern limit of this vast body of water seems to have been at that remarkable cliff, rising from the bed of the Mississippi about twenty miles below the outlet of the Kaskaskia, and known as the "Grand Tower." There is every indication from the torn and shattered aspect of the cliffs upon either side, and the accumulation of debris, that a grand parapet of limestone at this point once presented a barrier to the heaped-up waters, and formed a cataract scarcely less formidable than that of Niagara. The elevation of the river by this obstacle is estimated at one hundred and thirty feet above the present ordinary water-mark. For more than an hundred miles before reaching this point, the Mississippi now rolls through a broad, deep valley, bounded by an escarpment of cliffs upon either side; and, wherever these present a bold façade to the stream, they are grooved, as at the *cornice-rocks*, by a series of parallel lines, distinctly traced and strikingly uniform. As the river descends, these water-grooves gradually rise along the heights, until, at the Grand Tower, they attain an altitude of more than an hundred feet; below this point the phenomenon is not observed.* This circumstance, and the disruption of the cliffs at the same elevation, clearly indicate the former surface of the lake. Organic remains, petrifactions of madrepores, corallines, concholites, and other fossil testacea, are found imbedded in a stra-

* See Appendix.

tum nearly at the base. Similar phenomena of the water-lines exist upon the cliffs of the Ohio, and a barrier is thought once to have obstructed the stream at a point called *the Narrows*, sixty miles below Louisville, with the same result as upon the Mississippi. The eastern boundary of the expansion of the latter stream must have been the chain of bluffs now confining the American Bottom in that direction, and considered a spur of the Ozark Mountains. This extends northeasterly to the "confluence;" thence, bending away to the northwest, it reaches the Illinois, and forms the eastern bank of that river. Upon the western side, the hills along the Missouri are sufficiently elevated to present a barrier to the lake until they reach the confluence of the rivers. At this point spreads out the Mamelle Prairie, sixty or seventy miles in length, and, upon an average, five or six in breadth. West of this plain, the lake was bounded by the range of bluffs commencing with the celebrated "Mamelles," and stretching north until they strike the river; while the gradual elevation of the country, ascending the Upper Mississippi, presented a limit in that direction.

The event by which this great lake was drained appears to have been of a character either convulsive or volcanic, or to have been the result of the long-continued abrasion of the waters, as at Niagara. The rocks at the Grand Tower are limestone of secondary formation—the stratum being several hundred feet in depth, and imbedding hornstone and marine petrifactions throughout. They

everywhere exhibit indications of having once been subjected to the attrition of rushing water, as do the cliffs bounding the Northern lakes, which have long been chafed by the waves. The evidence of volcanic action, or violent subterranean convulsion of some kind, caused by heat, seems hardly less evident. The former workings of a divulsive power of terrific energy is betrayed, indeed, all over this region. In the immediate vicinity of the Grand Tower, which may be considered the scene of its most fearful operations, huge masses of shattered rock, dipping in every direction, are scattered about; and the whole stratum for twenty miles around lies completely broken up. At the point in the range of bluffs where this confusion is observed to cease, the mural cliff rises abruptly to the altitude of several hundred feet, exhibiting along the façade of its summit deep water-lines and other evidence of having once constituted the boundary of a lake. At the base issues a large spring of fresh water, remarkable for a regular ebb and flow, like the tides of the ocean, once in twenty-four hours.* At this spot, also, situated in the southeastern extremity of St. Clair county, exists an old American settlement, commenced a century since, and called the "*Block-house*," from the circumstance of a stoccade fort for defence against the

* A similar spring is said to issue from *debris* at the foot of the cliffs on the Ohio, in the vicinity of Battery Rock. Its stream is copious, clear, and cold, ebbing and flowing regularly once in six hours. This phenomenon is explained on the principle of the syphon. Similar springs are found among the Alps.

Indians. By a late geological *reconnoisance*, we learn that, from this remarkable *tide-spring* until we reach the Grand Tower, the face of the country has a depressed and sunken aspect, as if once the bed of standing water; and was evidently overlaid by an immense stratum of calcareous rock. A hundred square miles of this massive ledge have, by some tremendous convulsion of Nature, been thrown up and shattered in fragments. The confused accumulation of debris is now sunken and covered with repeated strata of alluvial deposite. Evidence of all this is adduced from the circumstance that huge blocks of limestone are yet frequently to be encountered in this region, some of them protruding twenty or thirty feet above the surface. As we approach the Grand Tower—that focus, around which the convulsed throes of Nature seem to have concentrated their tremendous energy—the number and the magnitude of these massive blocks constantly increase, until, at that point, we behold them piled up in mountain-masses as if by the hand of Omnipotent might. Upon all this vast Valley of the West the terrible impress of Almighty power seems planted in characters too deep to be swept away by the effacing finger of time. We trace them not more palpably in these fearful results of the convulsions of Nature, agonized by the tread of Deity, than in the eternal flow of those gigantic rivers which roll their floods over this wreck of elements, or in those ocean-plains which, upon either side, in billowy grandeur heave away, wave after wave, till lost in the magnificence of

boundless extent. And is there nothing in those vast accumulations of organic fossils—spoils of the sea and the land—the collected wealth of the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds, entombed in the heart of the everlasting hills—is there naught in all this to arouse within the reflecting mind a sentiment of wonder, and elicit an acknowledgment to the grandeur of Deity? Whence came these varied productions of the land and sea, so incongruous in character and so diverse in origin? By what fearful anarchy of elements were they imbedded in these massive cliffs? How many ages have rolled away since they were entombed in these adamantine sepulchres, from which Nature's convulsive throes in later times have caused the resurrection? To such inquiries we receive no answer. The secrecy of untold cycles veils the reply in mystery. The *effect* is before us, but the *cause* rests alone with Omniscience.

How wonderful are the phenomena betrayed in the geological structure of our earth! And scarcely less so are the ignorance and the indifference respecting them manifested by most of our race. "It is marvellous," says the celebrated Buckland, "that mankind should have gone on for so many centuries in ignorance of the fact, which is now so fully demonstrated, that so small a part of the present surface of the earth is derived from the remains of animals that constituted the population of ancient seas. Many extensive plains and massive mountains form, as it were, the great charnel-houses of preceding generations, in which the petrified exuviæ

of extinct races of animals and vegetables are piled into stupendous monuments of the operations of life and death during almost immeasurable periods of past time." "At the sight of a spectacle," says Cuvier, "so imposing, so terrible as that of the wreck of animal life, forming almost the entire soil on which we tread, it is difficult to restrain the imagination from hazarding some conjectures as to the cause by which such great effects have been produced." The deeper we descend into the strata of the earth, the higher do we ascend into the archæological history of past ages of creation. We find successive stages marked by varying forms of animal and vegetable life, and these generally differ more and more widely from existing species as we go farther downward into the receptacle of the wreck of more ancient creations.

That centuries have elapsed since that war of elements by which the great lake of the Mississippi was drained of its waters, the aged forests rearing themselves from its ancient bed, and the venerable monuments resting upon the surface, satisfactorily demonstrate. Remains, also, of a huge animal of graminivorous habits, but differing from the mastodon, have, within a few years, been disinterred from the soil. The theory of the Baron Cuvier, that our earth is but the wreck of other worlds, meets with ample confirmation in the geological character of the Western Valley.

As to agricultural productions, besides those of the more ordinary species, the soil of the American Bottom, in its southern sections, seems eminently

adapted to the cultivation of cotton, hemp, and tobacco, not to mention the castor-bean and the Carolina potato. The tobacco-plant, one of the most sensitively delicate members of the vegetable family, has been cultivated with more than ordinary success; and a quantity inspected at New-Orleans a few years since was pronounced superior to any ever offered at that market.

As I journeyed leisurely onward over this celebrated tract, extensive and beautiful farms spread out themselves around me, waving in all the gorgeous garniture of early autumn. The prairie was carpeted with the luxuriant richness of the *golden rod*, and all the gaudy varieties of the *heliotrope* and *asters*, and the crimson-died leaves of the dwarf-sumach; while here and there upon the extended plain stood out in loneliness, like a landmark of centuries, one of those mysterious tombs of a departed race of which I have already said so much. Some of them were to be seen rearing up their summits from the hearts of extensive maize-fields, crowned with an exuberance of vegetation; and upon one of larger magnitude stood a white farm-house, visible in the distance for miles down the prairie. The number of these ancient mounds upon the American Bottom is estimated at *three hundred;* far more than are to be found upon any other tract of equal extent.

At the old French village of *Prairie du Pont*, situated upon a creek of the same name, I made the necessary tarry for some refreshment, upon which breakfast or dinner might have laid nearly equal

claim to bestow a name. The most striking circumstance which came under my observation during my delay at this place was a very novel mode of producing the metamorphosis of cream into butter pursued by these villagers; a manœuvre executed by beating the cream with a spoon in a shallow basin. This operation I beheld carried on by the dark-browed landlord, much to my ignorance and wonder, with not an idea of its nature, until the substance produced was placed upon the board before me, and called *butter*. Prairie du Pont is one of the dampest, filthiest, most disagreeably ruinous of all the old villages I have ever visited. A few miles to the north is situated Cahokia, one of the earliest settlements in the state, and the ancient residence of the *Caoquias*, one of the tribes of the Illini Indians. The place is supposed to have been settled by the followers of La Salle during his second expedition to the West in 1683, on his return from the mouth of the Mississippi. More than a century and a half has since elapsed; and the river, which then washed the foot of the village, is now more than a mile distant. This removal commenced, we are told, shortly after the first settlement, and well exemplifies the arbitrary character of the Western waters. Formerly, also, a considerable creek, which yet retains the name of the village, passed through its midst, discharging itself into the Mississippi not far below. The outlet is now several miles higher up; and tradition attributes the change to the pique of an irritated villager, who, out of sheer spite to the old place and its in-

habitants, cut a channel from the creek to the river, and turned the waters from their ancient course.

As French immigration at Cahokia increased, the Indian tribe receded, until the last remnant has long since disappeared. Yet it is a singular fact in the history of this settlement, that, notwithstanding the savages were forced to abandon a spot endeared to them by protracted residence and the abundance of game in the neighbouring prairies and lakes, they have ever regarded their successors with feelings of unchanging friendliness. How different, under the same circumstances, was the fate of the settlements of Plymouth and Jamestown; and even here, no sooner did the American race appear among the French, than hostilities commenced.

For many years Cahokia, like old Kaskaskia, was the gathering-spot of a nomadic race of trappers, hunters, miners, voyageurs, engagés, *couriers du bois*, and adventurers, carrying on an extensive and valuable fur-trade with the Indian tribes of the Upper Mississippi. This traffic has long since been transferred to St. Louis, and the village seems now remarkable for nothing but the venerableness of age and decay. All the peculiarities of these old settlements, however, are here to be seen in perfection. The broad-roofed, whitewashed, and galleried cottage; the picketed enclosure; the kitchen garden; the peculiar costumes, customs, poverty, ignorance, and indolence of the race, are here met, precisely as has more than once already been described in these volumes. Here, too, is the gray old Catholic church, in which service is still regu-

larly performed by the officiating priest. Connected with it is now a nunnery and a seminary of education for young ladies. The villagers still retain their ancient activity of heel and suppleness of elbow; and not a week is suffered to pass without a merry-making and a dance. The old "common field" is still under cultivation; and, uncurtailed of its fair proportions, stretches away up the bottom to the village opposite St. Louis. This valuable tract, held in common by the villagers of Cahokia and Prairie du Pont, has been confirmed to them by act of Congress; and, so long since as fifty years, four hundred acres adjoining the former village were, by special act, granted to each family. The number of families is now, as has been the case this century past, about fifty, neither diminishing nor increasing. Very few of the inhabitants are of American origin, and these are liable to annual attacks of fever, owing to the damp site of the place and the noxious effluvia of the numerous marshes in the vicinity. Upon the French villagers these causes of disease exert no effect, favourable or unfavourable. A few acres of corn; a log cabin; a few swarthy responsibilities, and a few cattle; a cracked fiddle, and a few cart-loads of prairie-grass-hay in autumn, seems the very ultimatum of his heart to covet or his industry to obtain.

The road from Cahokia to the city, inasmuch as it is not often conscious of a more dignified equipage than the rude market-cart of the French villager, is of no wonderful celebrity for breadth, or uniformity of track, or excellence of structure. It ex-

tends along the bank of the Mississippi, and is shaded on either side by the strip of forest which skirts the margin. After a tarry of several hours at Cahokia, and an excursion among the mounds of the neighbouring prairie, near sunset I found myself approaching "Illinois-town," opposite St. Louis. It was the calm, soft evening hour; and, as I now advanced briskly over the prairie, the cool breeze was whispering among the perfumed grass-tops, and "night's silvery veil" was slowly gathering along the retreating landscape. The sun went down like a monarch, robed in purple, and the fleecy clouds which had formed his throne rolled themselves in rich luxuriance along the horizon, suffused in the beautiful carmine of the heavens. At intervals an opening in the forest laid bare the scene of splendour as I hastened onward, and then all was dusk again. Winding among the group of mounds reposing in the deepening twilight, and penetrating the grove of pecans, the moon was just beginning to gild the gliding wave at my feet as my horse stood out upon the bank of the stream. Clear and distinct beyond, against the crimson back-ground of the evening sky, were cut the towers, and cupolas, and lofty roofs of the city; while in front, the lengthened line of white warehouses gleamed from the shade along the curving shore: and the eye, as it glanced up the far-retreating vistas of the streets, caught a glimpse of deeper glories along the narrow zone of horizon beyond. The broad sheet which I was now crossing seemed, with the oily gliding of its ripples, completely died in the tender roseate of the

sunset sky. As the shades of evening deepened into night, one after another these delicate hues faded gently away: and the moonlight streamed in full floods of misty magnificence far over the distant forests; the evening-bells of the city pealed out merrily over the waters; the many lights of the steamers cheerfully twinkled along the landing; and, as the last faint glimmer of day had gone out, and night had resumed her sable reign, I found myself once more amid the "crowd and shock of men," threading the long, dusty streets of St. Louis. * * * * * * *

Gentle Reader, the tale is told—our task is ended—

"And what is writ, is writ;
Would it were worthier!"

Our pilgrimage is over, fellow-wanderer. Full many a bright day have we trod together the green prairies, and glided over the far-winding waters of the fair Valley. Together have we paused and pondered beside the mysterious mausoleum of a race departed. We have lingered among the time-stained dwellings of an ancient and peculiar people, and with kindling interest have dwelt upon the early chronicles and the wild legends of the "far-off," beautiful West. But autumn is upon us—shadowy autumn, dark on the mountain-brow. Her purple mistiness is deepening over the distant landscape; and the chill rustle of her evening wind, in melancholy whisperings, wanders among the pen-

noned grass-tops. Our pilgrimage ceases, yet with no unmingled emotions do I say to thee "*pax vobiscum !*"

"Ye ! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A *thought* which once was his, if on ye swell
A *single* recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell :
Farewell !"

St. Louis, Oct., 1837.

APPENDIX.

A. Page 18.

"I cultivated a small farm on that beautiful prairie below St. Charles called 'The Mamelle,' or 'Point prairie.' In my enclosure, and directly back of my house, were two conical mounds of considerable elevation. A hundred paces in front of them was a high bench, making the shore of the 'Marais Croche,' an extensive marsh, and evidently the former bed of the Missouri. In digging a ditch on the margin of this bench, at the depth of four feet, we discovered great quantities of broken pottery, belonging to vessels of all sizes and characters. Some must have been of a size to contain four gallons. This must have been a very populous place. The soil is admirable, the prospect boundless; but, from the scanty number of inhabitants in view, rather lonely. It will one day contain an immense population again."—*Flint's Recollections*, p. 166.

B. Page 149.

M. Tonti, among other writers, speaking of the country, according to Mr. Peck's translation, says:

"The soil is, generally speaking, so fertile, that it produces naturally, without culture, those fruits that nature and art together have much ado to bring forth in Europe. They have two crops every year without any great fatigue. The vines bring extraordinary grapes, without the care of the husbandman, and the fruit-trees need no gardeners to look after them. The air is everywhere temperate. The country is watered with navigable rivers, and delicious brooks and rivulets. It is stocked with all sorts of beasts, as bulls, *orignacs*, wolves, lions, wild asses, stags, goats, sheep, foxes, hares, beavers, otters, dogs, and all sorts of fowl, which afford a plentiful game for the inhabitants."

In another place, this writer gives an amusing account of hunting "wild bulls," which "go always by droves of three or four hundred each." This description answers well for the buffalo, but it is not so easy to determine what animals they mistook for "wild asses, goats, and sheep."

Passing down the Mississippi, Tonti mentions the same animals, and describes the forest-trees with tolerable accuracy, had he not added, "one sees there whole plains covered with pome-

granate-trees, orange-trees, and lemon-trees; and, in one word, with all kinds of fruit-trees." Goats are frequently mentioned by different writers. Hennepin, while narrating the account of an embassy from Fort Frontenac to the Iroquois nation, and the reception the party met with, says: "The younger savages washed our feet, and rubbed them with grease of deer, *wild goats*, and oil of bears." When upset in their boat and cast on the western shore of Lake Michigan, an Indian of their company "killed several stags and wild goats."

Wild goats are named so frequently, and in so many connexions, as hardly to admit of an intentional misrepresentation.

C. Page 153.

Annexed is a copy of the grant of the celebrated *commons* attached to the village of Kaskaskia. It is the earliest title the citizens hold to seven thousand acres of the most fertile land in the West—perhaps in the world.

"Pierre de Rigault de Vaudreuil, Governor and Edme Gatien Salmon Commissary orderer of the Province of Louisiana, seen the petition to us presented on the sixteenth day of June of this present year by the Inhabitants of the Parish of the Immaculate Conception of Kaskaskia dependence of the Illinois, tending to be confirmed in the possession of a common which they have had a long time for the pasturage of their cattle in the Point called *La point de bois*, which runs to the entrance of the River Kaskaskia. We, by virtue of the power to us granted by his Majesty have confirmed and do confirm to the said Inhabitants the possession of the said common on the following conditions—

"First, That the concessions heretofore granted either by the India Company, either by our predecessors or by us in the prairie of Kaskaskia on the side of the point which runs to the entrance of the river, shall terminate at the land granted to a man named *Cavalier*, and in consequence, that all concessions that may have been made on the said point from the land of the said Cavalier forward, on the side of the entrance of the said river shall be null and void and of no effect. In consequence of which, the said Point, as it is above designated, shall remain in common without altering its nature, nevertheless, reserving to us the power whenever the case may require it, of granting the said commons to the inhabitants established and who may establish, and this, on the representations which may be made to us by the commandants and sub-delegates in the said places.

"Secondly, on the road vulgarly called the *Square Line* between the large and small line shall be rendered practicable and maintained for the passage of the Carts and Cattle going into the Common, and this by lack of the proprietors as well of the great as of the small line whose lands border on the roads of the *Square line*. And as to the places which ought to run along the side of the village from the said road of the Square line unto the river, as also

the one on the side of the point running to the Mississippi and to the Kaskaskia river, they shall be made and maintained at the expense of the community, to the end that the cultivated lands be not injured by the cattle.

"Thirdly, To facilitate to the inhabitants the means of making their autumnal harvest, and prevent its being damaged by the cattle, we forbid all persons to leave their cattle range upon cultivated lands—they are, notwithstanding, permitted to graze upon their own proper lands on having them diligently watched.

"Fourthly, Willing that the wood which is on the land granted belong to the proprietors of the said lands, we forbid all persons to cut down any elsewhere than on their own lands, and as to the wood which may be found in the commons to cut down for their own use, either for building or for fire wood, and this shall be the present regulation.

"Read, published and affixed to the end that no person may be ignorant thereof. Given at New-Orleans the fourteenth day of August, 1743. VAUDREUIL.

"SALMON."

D. Page 176.

Most of the historical facts relative to the extermination of the Abnaquis will be found condensed in the subjoined extract from a late valuable work.

"Determined on destroying this assemblage of Indians, which was the headquarters of the whole eastern country at this time, the English, in 1724, sent out a force, consisting of 208 men and three Mohawk Indians, under Captains *Moulton*, *Harman*, and *Bourne*, to humble them. They came upon the village the 23d August, when there was not a man in arms to oppose them. They had left 40 of their men at Teconet Falls, which is now within the town of Winslow, upon the Kennebeck, and about two miles below Waterville College, upon the opposite side of the river. The English had divided themselves into three squadrons: 80, under *Harman*, proceeded by a circuitous route, thinking to surprise some in their cornfields, while *Moulton*, with 80 more, proceeded directly for the village, which, being surrounded by trees, could not be seen until they were close upon it. All were in their wigwams, and the English advanced slowly and in perfect silence. When pretty near, an Indian came out of his wigwam, and, accidentally discovering the English, ran in and seized his gun, and giving the warwhoop, in a few minutes the warriors were all in arms, and advancing to meet them. *Moulton* ordered his men not to fire until the Indians had made the first discharge. This order was obeyed, and, as he expected, they overshot the English, who then fired upon them in their turn, and did great execution. When the Indians had given another volley, they fled with great precipitation to the river, whither the chief of their women and children had also fled during the fight. Some of the English pursued and killed many of them in the river, and others fell to pillaging and

burning the village. *Mogg*, their chief, disdained to fly with the rest, but kept possession of a wigwam, from which he fired upon the pillagers. In one of his discharges he killed a Mohawk, whose brother, observing it, rushed upon and killed him; and thus ended the strife. There were about 60 warriors in the place, about one half of whom were killed.

"The famous *Rasle* shut himself up in his house, from which he fired upon the English; and, having wounded one, Lieutenant *Jaques*, of Newbury, burst open the door, and shot him through the head, although *Moulton* had given orders that none should kill him. He had an English boy with him, about 14 years old, who had been taken some time before from the frontiers, and whom the English reported *Rasle* was about to kill. Great brutality and ferocity are chargeable to the English in this affair, according to their own account; such as killing women and children, and scalping and mangling the body of Father *Rasle*.

"There was here a handsome church, with a bell, on which the English committed a double sacrilege, first robbing it, then setting it on fire; herein surpassing the act of the first English circumnavigator in his depredations upon the Spaniards in South America; for he only took away the gold and silver vessels of a church, and its crucifix, because it was of massy gold, set about with diamonds, and that, too, upon the advice of his chaplain. 'This might pass,' says a reverend author, 'for sea divinity, but justice is quite another thing.' Perhaps it will be as well not to inquire here what kind of *divinity* would authorize the acts recorded in these wars, or, indeed, any wars."

"Upon this memorable event in our early annals, Father *Charlevoix* should be heard. There were not, says he, at the time the attack was made, above 50 warriors at Neridgewok; these seized their arms, and run in disorder, not to defend the place against an enemy who was already in it, but to favour the flight of the women, the old men, and the children, and to give them time to gain the side of the river, which was not yet in possession of the English. Father Rasle, warned by the clamours and tumult, and the danger in which he found his proselytes, ran to present himself to the assailants, hoping to draw all their fury upon him, that thereby he might prove the salvation of his flock. His hope was vain; for hardly had he discovered himself, when the English raised a great shout, which was followed by a shower of shot, by which he fell dead near to the cross which he had erected in the centre of the village: seven Indians who attended him, and who endeavoured to shield him with their own bodies, fell dead at his side. Thus died this charitable pastor, giving his life for his sheep, after 37 years of painful labours.

"Although the English shot near 2000 muskets, they killed but 30 and wounded 40. They spared not the church, which, after they had indignantly profaned its sacred vases and the adorable body of Jesus Christ, they set on fire. They then retired with precipitation, having been seized with a sudden panic. The In-

dians returned immediately into the village; and their first care, while the women sought plants and herbs proper to heal the wounded, was to shed tears upon the body of their holy missionary. They found him pierced with a thousand shot, his scalp taken off, his scull fractured with hatchets, his mouth and eyes filled with dirt, the bones of his legs broken, and all his members mutilated in a hundred different ways.

"Such is the account of the fall of *Rasle*, by a brother of the faith; a deplorable picture, by whomsoever related! Of the truth of its main particulars there can be no doubt, as will be seen by a comparison of the above translation with the account preceding it. There were, besides *Mogg*, other chief Indians who fell that day: 'BOMAZEEN, MOGG, WISSEMEMET, JOB, CARABESETT, and BOMAZEEN'S son-in-law, all famous warriors.' The inhumanity of the English on this occasion, especially to the women and children, cannot be excused. It greatly eclipses the lustre of the victory." *Drake's Book of the Indians*, b. iii., c. 9.

E. Page 187.

Subjoined is a copy of the preliminary proceedings of the first regular court of justice held in Illinois while under the British government. It purports to be transcribed from the state records, and first appeared in a Western newspaper. It lays before the reader a view of the subject, which the most graphic description would fail to present.

"At a Court held at CHARTRES Village, in the Illinois, this sixth day of November, in the eighth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord, George the Third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c., &c., &c., in the year of our Lord Christ one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight, 1768.

"Present, George Morgan, James Remsey, James Campbell, James M'Millar, Jean Baptist Barbeau, and Peter Girardot, Esqrs., Justices. Commissions of the peace granted by John Wilkins, Esqr., Governor and Commandant of the said country, and directed to the gentlemen named, were produced and read.

"Whereupon the said Justices took the several *oaths* of allegiance to his Majesty's person and government, and also the oaths of Justices of the peace; which oaths were administered to them by the Governor and Commandant aforesaid.

"A commission from the said Governor to Dennis M'Croghan, Esq., to be Sheriff of the county aforesaid, was produced by the said Dennis M'Croghan, Esq., and read, who took and subscribed the usual oaths of allegiance to his majesty's person and government, and also the oath of sheriff for said country.

"The Governor and Commandant aforesaid entered into a recognizance in the sum of five hundred pounds lawful money of Great Britain for the said Sheriff's due performance of his office."

It would appear from the following deed, made by a *military sergeant*, executing the office of sheriff under the style of Provost.

under Commandant Hugh Lord, in 1772, that the government in Illinois was then purely *military*.

"Be it remembered that on this nineteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, by virtue of a writ unto me directed, I, Andrew Hoy, Provost, did seize, levy, and distrain upon the dwelling-house and lot of John Baptist Hubardeau, situated in the village of Kaskaskia, for a debt due as *per* note of hand, of the signature of the aforesaid Hubardeau, for the sum of two thousand and forty *livres*, with interest and *damages*. Now, know ye, that the aforesaid writ of *Fieri Facias* was issued by Hugh Lord, Esq., Captain in his Majesty's 18th or Royal Regiment of Ireland, in manner and form following:

"George the Third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

"To Sergeant Hoy, Provost.

"We command you that you cause to be made of the (goods) and chattels of John Baptist Hubardeau, in your bailiwick, two thousand and forty *livres*, which Franks & Company, lately, in our court, before us, at Kaskaskia, recovered against him by virtue of a power of attorney, for a debt, with lawful interest, and damages which they have sustained, occasioned as well by the detaining of the said debt, as for their expenses and costs by them laid out in and about their suit in that behalf, whereof the said Hubardeau is convicted, and have you the money before us at Kaskaskia as soon as the sale of said effects shall admit, to render to the said Franks & Company their debt and damages aforesaid, and have then there this writ.

"Given at Fort Gage, this 19th day of December, 1772.

"Hugh Lord, Commandant of Illinois.

"Andrew Hoy, Provost.

"Moreover, that in consequence of further orders from the commandant aforesaid, I did give general notice of the sale thereof by the following advertisement, which was publicly placed for perusal and knowledge of the inhabitants in general, both here and at the village of Caho.*

"PAR AUTORITE.

"Vendredi, à onse heur du Matin le 29th du mois prochain, sera vendu au porte de L'Eglise, la Maison et Terrain du Sieur Jean Baptist Hubardeau, qui est puis en exécution, payable en Pèlletrie, Bon Argent, lettres de change, ou la bon esclaves, dans le moi de Mai qui vient.

"Au Kas,† Decembre 29th, 1772.

"Andrew Hoy, Provost."

Making allowances for bad French, the following is a translation of this notice:

* Cahokia. † Kaskaskia.

"BY AUTHORITY.

"Wednesday, at eleven o'clock in the morning of the 29th of next month, I shall sell at the gate of the church, the House and lot of Mr. Jean Baptist Hubardeau, which is taken in execution, payable in peltry, good silver, bills of exchange, or in good slaves, in the month of May coming.

"Kaskaskia, Dec. 19th, 1772."

"At the expiration of which time, the aforesaid house was, agreeable to law, justice, and equity, exposed to sale, first at the church gate, and afterwards at different parts of the village, to prevent as much as possible, any persons pleading ignorance of the sale thereof. Now, know ye, in discharge of the duty of my office and the trust reposed, after having kept up the said house and lot from the hours of ten to two at the sum of 3200 *livres*, and no person bidding higher, or likely so to do, that the same was struck off to James Remsey, inhabitant of Kaskaskia, who, by these presents, is invested with full right and title thereto, to have and to hold the said messuage and tenements, and all and singular of the premises above mentioned and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances unto the said James Remsey, his heirs and assigns forever: and I, the said Andrew Hoy, Provost, from myself my heirs, the said messuage and tenement and premises and every part thereof against him and his heirs, and against all and every other person and persons whatever, to the said James Remsey, his heirs and assigns shall and will warrant and forever defend by these presents. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

"ANDREW HOY, Provost. (L. S.)

"Fort Gage, 29th Dec., 1772.

"Signed, sealed, and delivered in presence of

"WILLIAM DUNBAR,

"ISAAC JOHNSON."

"By virtue of the power and authority in me invested, I do hereby grant unto Mr. James Remsey, late Lieut. of his Majesty's 34th Regiment, a certain tract of land containing — acres in part from the river Kaskaskia to the Mississippi, once the property of one La Bacchou, whereon, formerly did stand a water mill, the remains of which are now to be seen. The whole being agreeable to his Majesty's proclamation, confiscated to the King, and is hereby given to said James Remsey, in consideration of His Excellency Gen. Gage's recommendation and for the speedy settlement of his majesty's colony, as likewise the frame of a house with a lot of land thereunto appertaining, opposite the Jesuit's College in the village of Kaskaskia.

"Given under my hand, at Fort Chartres, Nov. 12th, 1767.

"GORDON FORBES,

"Capt. 34th regiment."

This grant of land where the *old mill* stood, is now the site of a speculative *city* called "*Decoigne*," and is about five miles from Kaskaskia on the road to St. Louis.

F. Page 212.

Mr. Flint's remarks respecting the Ancient Pottery found in the West coincides so well with the result of my own more limited observation, that I subjoin them in preference to extended description myself. Preceding these remarks is an interesting notice of the Lilliputian graves on the Merrimac, to which allusion has several times been made.

"At the time the Lilliputian graves were found on the Merrimac, in the county of St. Louis, many people went from that town to satisfy their curiosity by inspecting them. It appears from Mr. Peck that the graves were numerous; that the coffins were of stone; that the bones in some instances were nearly entire; that the length of the bodies was determined by that of the coffins which they filled, and that the bodies in general could not have been more than from three feet and a half to four feet in length. Thus it should seem that the generations of the past in this region were mammoths and pigmies.

"I have examined the pottery, of which I have spoken above, with some attention. It is unbaked, and the glazing very incomplete, since oil will soak through it. It is evident, from slight departure from regularity in the surface, that it was moulded by the hand and not by anything like our lathe. The composition, when fractured, shows many white floccules in the clay that resemble fine snow, and this I judge to be pulverized shells. The basis of the composition appears to be the alluvial clay carried along in the waters of the Mississippi, and called by the French 'terre grasse,' from its greasy feel. Samples of this pottery, more or less perfect, are shown everywhere on the river. Some of the most perfect have been dug from what are called the 'chalk-banks,' below the mouth of the Ohio. The most perfect that I have seen, being, in fact, as entire as when first formed, was a vessel in my possession. It was a drinking jug, like the 'scyphus' of the ancients. It was dug from the chalk-bank. It was smooth, well-moulded, and of the colour of common gray stoneware. It had been rounded with great care, and yet, from slight indentations on the surface, it was manifest that it had been so wrought in the palm of the hand. The model of the form was a simple and obvious one—the bottle-gourd—and it would contain about two quarts. This vessel had been used to hold animal oil; for it had soaked through, and varnished the external surface. Its neck was that of a squaw, known by the clubbing of the hair, after the Indian fashion. The moulder was not an accurate copyist, and had learned neither statuary nor anatomy; for, although the finish was fine, the head was monstrous. There seemed to have been an intention of wit in the outlet. It was the horrible and distorted mouth of a savage, and in drinking you would be obliged to place your lips in contact with those of madam the squaw."—*Flint's Recollections*, p. 173–4.

G. Page 219.

The passage subjoined relative to the *Geological Transformations* which have taken place in the Mississippi Valley, is extracted from "Schoolcraft's Travels in its central portions," and will be found abundantly to corroborate my own observations upon the subject.

"It seems manifest, from various appearances, that the country we have under consideration has been subjected to the influence of water at a comparatively recent period; and it is evident that its peculiar alluvial aspect is the distinct and natural result of the time and the mode in which these waters were exhausted. One striking fact, which appears to have escaped general observation, is, that at some former period there has been an obstruction in the channel of the Mississippi at or near Grand Tower, producing a stagnation of the current at an elevation of about one hundred and thirty feet above the present ordinary water-mark. This appears evident from the general elevation and direction of the hills, which, for several hundred miles above, are separated by a valley from twenty to twenty-five miles wide, which now deeply imbosoms the current of the Mississippi. Wherever these hills disclose rocky and precipitous fronts, a series of distinctly-marked antique water-lines are to be observed. These water-lines preserve a parallelism which is very remarkable, and, what we should expect to find, constantly present their greatest depression towards the sources of the river. At Grand Tower they are elevated about one hundred and thirty feet above the summit level, at which elevation we observe petrifactions of madrepores and various other fossil organic remains which belong to this peculiar era. Here the rocks of dark-coloured limestone, which pervade the country to so great an extent, project towards each other as if they had once united; but, by some convulsion of nature, or, what is still more probable, by the continued action of the water upon a secondary rock, the Mississippi has effected a passage through this barrier, and thus producing an exhaustion of the stagnant waters from the level prairie lands above."—*Schoolcraft's Travels*, p. 218, 219.

THE END.