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THE  
JOURNAL OF  
LATROBE



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HENRY  
LATROBE



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*The*  
**JOURNAL OF LATROBE**

*Being the Notes and Sketches of an Architect, Naturalist and  
Traveler in the United States from 1796 to 1820*

BY

BENJAMIN HENRY LATROBE

Architect of the Capitol at Washington

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

J. H. B. LATROBE



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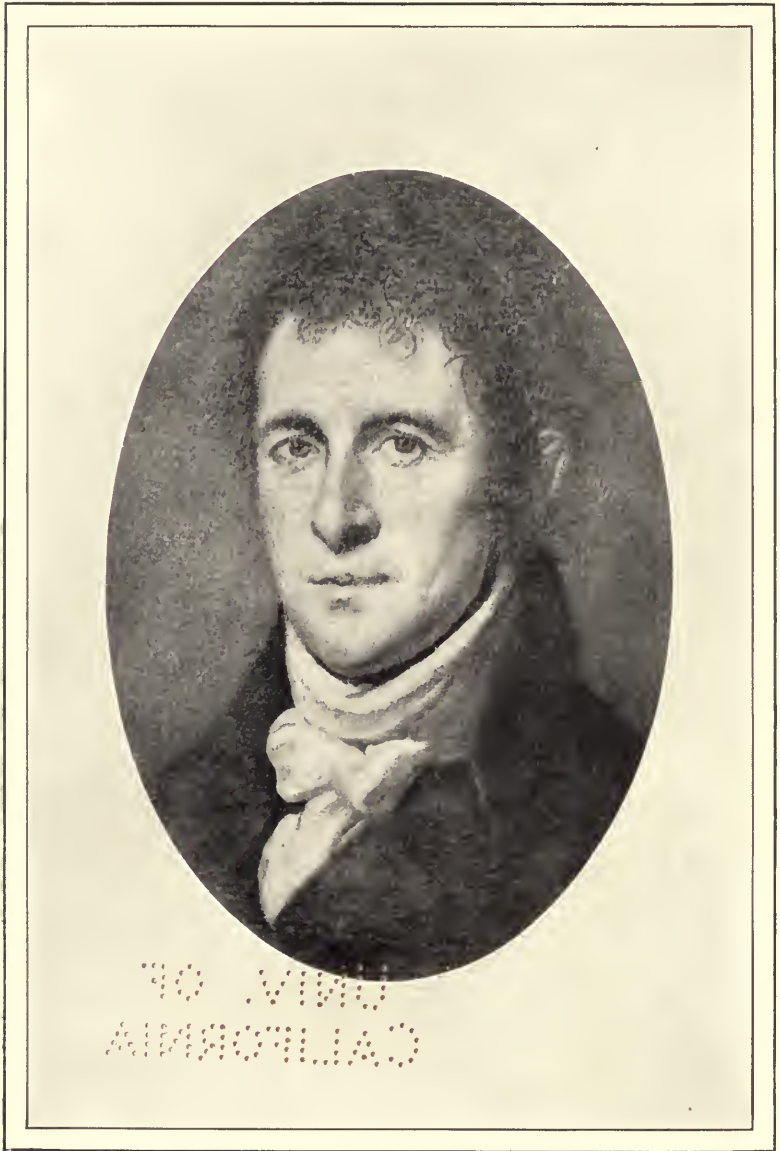
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FROM A PORTRAIT OF B. H. LATROBE.

In the possession of Ferdinand C. Latrobe, Esq.

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## INTRODUCTION

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**B**ENJAMIN HENRY LATROBE, the subject of the present brief memoirs, was the youngest son of the Rev. Benjamin Latrobe and Ann Margaret Nutis—the former an English clergyman of the Moravian faith, eminently distinguished for his talents and many virtues, and the latter the daughter of a gentleman of Pennsylvania. The family name was Boneval, that of Latrobe belonging to a younger branch which emigrated to England from France during the persecution of the Huguenots. For the curious in these matters it may be here mentioned that the last of the elder branch was Count of Limousin, whose life throughout was more of a romance than a reality.

The family of ~~Nutis~~, into which the elder Mr. Latrobe married, was closely related to David Rittenhouse, whose knowledge and success, self-acquired, have gained for him so extended a reputation. Col. Frederick ~~Nutis~~, the brother of Mrs. Latrobe, distinguished himself as a partisan chief during the Revolutionary War, and, with a price set upon his head

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by Lord Howe, was untiring and successful in his opposition to the British arms. Miss ~~Nutis~~ <sup>Notes</sup> had been sent from Pennsylvania by her parents, who were Moravians, to be educated in Germany, at one of the establishments of the United Brethren in that country, and meeting, while there, with Mr. Latrobe, they were married about the year 1755. The fruits of this marriage were three sons.

In looking back to the early history of an individual who has distinguished himself in any particular department of science or art, it is interesting to observe the indications, which sometimes present themselves even at the tenderest age, of his future career. An instance is the oft-repeated and well-known story of West's first attempt at portrait painting, as he endeavored to copy the features of the infant that, when a boy, he was set to watch. The childhood of Mr. Latrobe, which until eleven years of age was spent chiefly at school in Yorkshire, was marked by his fondness for his pencil; and there is now in the possession of his family a drawing of Kirkstall Abbey, from nature, made by him in his tenth year, the accuracy and force of which, in all its Gothic details, would do credit to any artist. Various other drawings, made about the same time, and all of architectural subjects, prove him, at this early age, to have possessed a correctness of eye and a force and facility of delineation which are not easily attained until after years of constant practice.

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In his eleventh or twelfth year he was sent to Saxony, to a Moravian seminary, where he remained for some time and until sufficiently advanced in his education to become a student at the University of Leipsic, then the most celebrated on the continent of Europe. Here he remained for nearly three years, during which time he devoted himself with the most intense application to the acquisition of knowledge of every kind. There was scarcely anything that he did not attempt for which he could provide the facilities of instruction, and, being well grounded in elementary knowledge when he entered the university, aided by the book masters, and possessing uncommon perseverance and a remarkable memory, there were few things that he attempted which he did not succeed in acquiring.

In 1785 Mr. Latrobe, being then in his eighteenth year, left the university, and passed some months in traveling through Germany. Meeting with some friends, English and Prussian, whom he had known at Leipsic, they agreed, in a wild spirit of adventure, to make a campaign with the Prussian army, and through the influence of their friends obtained subaltern commissions. Mr. Latrobe's was a company of hussars; and after two hard-fought skirmishes, in the last of which he was severely wounded, his friends and himself found the curiosity which had led them into this youthful and dangerous folly gratified, and resigned from any further participation in a contest in which

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the most of them had no possible interest to advance or serve. One of Mr. Latrobe's friends during his brief campaign was afterwards a distinguished officer in the army of the United States. After recovering from the effects of his wound he made the tour of Europe, and acquired that intimate knowledge of the works of the great masters in architecture which distinguished him in his own subsequent career.

In the latter part of 1786 Mr. Latrobe returned to England, in his nineteenth year, in time to be present at the last illness of his father. After this he resided for several years in London with his elder brother, during which time he assiduously devoted himself to the acquisition of knowledge, aiming, as in Leipsic, at everything within his reach. He mixed much in the best society of England, to which the character of his father provided him a ready access, and formed friendships and acquaintances with the distinguished literary and scientific men of his day, which were, many of them, continued during his life.

After being for some time in England, he determined to choose and study a profession, and guided by his tastes and propensities, fresh too from the works of art of the Continent, he adopted that of architecture and civil engineering, and concentrated all his energies upon the acquisition of the necessary practical information. All this time the celebrated Smeaton was still alive, and although he had retired from the active

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practice of his profession, he was still in the full vigor of his mental powers, preparing for publication those works which have done so much toward establishing his high reputation. With him Mr. Latrobe was intimate, and had the benefit of his advice and experience in the prosecution of his present studies. In 1787 or 1788—it is uncertain which—he entered the office of Mr. Cockrell, then considered one of the best architects in London. His previous classic education, his skill with his pencil, his profound mathematical knowledge, and his acquaintance with the great buildings of the Continent gave him most decided advantages over all around him; and anecdotes are still extant showing the great facility which he soon acquired in all the practical knowledge of a draughtsman and calculator. Under these circumstances the period of his probation in Mr. Cockrell's office was comparatively short, and as his labors knew no relaxation while engaged in it, he soon found himself competent to commence the practice of the profession which he had adopted.

In a short time after he left Mr. Cockrell's office Mr. Latrobe found ample employment offered him as an architect and civil engineer, and was appointed Surveyor of the Public Offices, in London. In 1790 he was married to Miss Lydia Sellon, the daughter of the learned Dr. Sellon, and the sister of Mr. John Sellon, a lawyer of eminence, whose work in the practice of the courts is well known both in England and

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America. In a memorandum in the possession of the writer of this memoir, Mr. Latrobe, speaking of himself about this time, makes mention of the uncommon rapidity with which he succeeded in his profession when he had not been engaged in the practice of it more than a year or eighteen months. The same successes continued to attend him during his residence in London. In a letter written to his brother, after he reached America, he narrates the following anecdote, which shows that at the same time he must have acquired considerable reputation as a professional man:

“Mr. Ton (Charles I. Ton) on one occasion paid me the highest compliment I had yet received; for, although only slightly introduced to him, he recognized me on Pall Mall, took me into a coffee-house and conversed with me on all sorts of things, and the next day, when the tax on bricks was proposed, sent for me and obtained from me, in a manner I shall never forget, all the information on the subject of bricks and brick houses which I possessed, and, while he received information from me, opened my mind to so many new views that I have ever since been the better for this *tête-à-tête*.”

By his marriage with Miss Sellon, Mr. Latrobe had two children, a son and a daughter. In 1793 Mrs. Latrobe died, leaving her husband plunged in the deepest affliction; and her loss may be considered as

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among the chief causes of his leaving England for America at a time when his profession in the former country offered him every inducement to remain there. In the numerous papers that he has left there are constant allusions to this sad event as having broken in upon all his prospects and having rendered distasteful to him the presence of the objects and the society with which her memory was inseparably connected. Other matters combined to determine him to make his future home on this side of the Atlantic.

It is not to be supposed that one of Mr. Latrobe's education and acquirements should have been so much immersed in the daily occupations of his particular profession as to take no note of the politics of the stirring times in England, when Pitt, Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, with the talent that surrounded them, fixed the attention of the whole civilized world. On the contrary, Mr. Latrobe took a deep interest in the agitating discussions of this time, and although the attention that his business required prevented him from mingling personally in any of the proceedings of the day, the new doctrines of government that were then in the mouths of most men made strong impressions upon him, and the natural bent of his mind so inclining him, he espoused the side of liberal principles, and was among those who looked to America as the scene of that mighty experiment in government which has been since so successfully accomplished. It was the

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home, too, of his maternal ancestors. By parentage he was already half an American; and these considerations operating upon him at a time when the powerful recollections of his domestic loss weighed down his spirits, as though it would not be shaken off, he determined to cross the Atlantic and devote his talents to his professional advancement in the United States. Having once formed his resolution, he at once proceeded to carry it into effect. He completed the works he was engaged in in England, declined the office of Surveyor to the Crown, with a salary of £1,000 per annum, disposed of his patrimonial estate, and on the 25th of November, 1795, left the country of his birth forever. It is a matter of regret to his biographer that there is nothing to enable him to refer with any certainty to Mr. Latrobe's works in England; though from time to time, since his death, those who knew him before he came to America, and who have since moved to this country, have spoken to his children in praise of edifices that they attributed to him, both of a public and private character, and which they say still keep alive his professional reputation in the land of his nativity.

On the 20th of March, 1796, after a passage of four months, within four days (a fact mentioned now by way of contrast), Mr. Latrobe landed at Norfolk, Va. His letters of introduction were numerous, and he was received and treated in the kindest manner by



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all to whom he presented them. On the 31st of March he writes from Norfolk:

“ I have been idly engaged since my arrival. The friends to whom I was recommended have been extremely kind to me, and I have loitered my time away at their homes, doing little odds and ends of services for them—designing a staircase for Mr. A——’s new house, a house and offices for Captain P——, tuning a pianoforte for Mrs. W——, scribbling doggerel for Mrs. A——, tragedy for her mother, and Italian songs for Mrs. T——. The excursion into the Dismal Swamp opened a prospect for professional pursuits of more importance to me. I saw there too much to describe at random and too little to describe at all without seeing more. In the meantime the management of the James River Navigation seems opening for me, and I am going thither to-morrow ”; etc. Again he says in a postscript to the same letter: “ A Virginian welcome must be experienced to be understood. It includes everything that the best heart can prompt and the most luxurious country afford. It is that which will oblige a stranger to stop his career to the northward, and force him to settle among men whom he experiences to be liberal, friendly, and sensible—*Experto crede Roberto.* ”

After remaining several months at Norfolk, Mr. Latrobe went to Richmond, where he remained until November, 1798, when he removed to Philadelphia.

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During this period he was constantly occupied with the business of his profession in its most extensive application. He designed many private buildings in Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg, besides others in the country. In July, 1797, his design for the penitentiary, which the Legislature had determined to build after the change in the penal code of the State, was accepted, and he was employed to superintend its erection at Richmond. He was employed to examine and report upon the Dismal Swamp Canal, the improvement of the navigation of the Appomattox and the James rivers, and also the condition of the fortifications at Norfolk, with a view to their renovation.

As a geologist and mineralogist his services appear, by his memoranda, to have been in frequent demand, and he paid numerous visits to various counties of the State where it was believed that coal, iron, and other minerals were to be found. Such time as he could spare from strictly professional pursuits he devoted to the cultivation of the natural sciences and an examination into the geological features of Virginia. Upon these subjects he wrote much; and his remarks, accompanied by numerous illustrative drawings, landscapes, and sketches, show, at this day, the keenness and accuracy of his observation, not less than the activity and energy of his mind. His communications, copies of which he has left, were principally addressed to Volney and Dr. Scandella, the naturalist, and ex-

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hibit a thorough knowledge of the subjects of his investigation.

In other respects, too, Mr. Latrobe was most pleasantly situated while in Virginia. The acquaintances that he formed in many parts of the State were numerous, and at Richmond he enjoyed the friendship of the late Bushrod Washington, John Simes, Edmund Randolph—Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States—John C. Shubert, Esq., of Maryland, to whose attention during a dangerous illness he owed his life, and many others, who were through life his warm and assured friends. His talents were appreciated, his society was sought, ample occupation was afforded him, he experienced but little of the opposition that he had subsequently to contend with, and he found no reason to regret the loss of the prospects which he could have enjoyed had he continued to reside in England. On one of his many excursions through the State Mr. Latrobe visited President Washington at Mount Vernon.

In March, 1798, Mr. Latrobe paid a short visit to Philadelphia. Among the acquaintances which his letters procured for him in that city was the president of the Bank of Pennsylvania. Upon one occasion, when in company with this gentleman, the conversation turned upon the banking house which it was then proposed to build, and Mr. Latrobe, having heard described the accommodation that would be necessary,

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made a sketch of a design, while the conversation was going on, with the pen and ink that happened to be at hand, and left it with the president, without the remotest expectation of its ever being executed. In the following July (1793) he was not less surprised than gratified to receive a letter from Philadelphia, informing him that his design for the Bank of Pennsylvania had been adopted, and pressing him to prepare correct copies of the sketch that he had left behind him, and such instructions as would enable the workmen to build it.

It is a fact that deserves mentioning in this place that Mr. Latrobe, at the time he designed the Bank of Pennsylvania, had not the means of access to a single work in which were the proportions of the order to which it belongs. The vessel containing the library which was sent after him to America had been taken by a French privateer, so that for several years he was without a single architectural authority to resort to, and obliged to rely solely on his memory and his taste. How well these served him is shown in many of his works.

The Bank of Pennsylvania is the work which permanently established the professional reputation of Mr. Latrobe, and if simplicity of construction, classic elegance of proportions and details, and adaptation to the purposes for which it is intended may give character to a building and credit to its architect, the praise

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which the Bank of Pennsylvania has universally received and the fame which Mr. Latrobe has derived from it are fully justified.

The employment of Mr. Latrobe to superintend the building of the Bank of Pennsylvania, joined to the inducements that had been held out to him to make Philadelphia his permanent home during his short visit there in the spring of 1798, determined him to leave Richmond. Accordingly he brought all his business in Virginia to a close, and in the winter of 1798 went to reside in Philadelphia.

Soon after Mr. Latrobe moved to Philadelphia he undertook to build the waterworks for the supply of the city with the water of the Schuylkill, pumping it by a steam-engine, with proper reservoirs, from whence it could be distributed through the streets. It was the first time that such a design had been attempted in America, and Mr. Latrobe was looked upon by the mass of the community as a visionary prospector when he undertook it. People were not satisfied with treating him and his design with contempt. Personal abuse was heaped upon him. Unfortunately for him, L'Enfant, a French engineer, the author of the plan of the City of Washington, had disappointed the people of Philadelphia in the home which he undertook to build for Robert Morris and the city assembly rooms, for which a subscription had been raised to a considerable amount. On both these buildings immense sums of

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money had been squandered. The house of Mr. Morris, although put under roof, was never finished, and was torn down, and the assembly rooms never rose above the foundations. L'Enfant had scarcely left Philadelphia before Mr. Latrobe made it his home and attracted to himself the public attention by the two great works that he at once commenced, the Bank of Pennsylvania and the supply of the city with water. The first was easily understood by the citizens; the last was at first incomprehensible, ranking with the schemes of L'Enfant, and they transferred at once to Mr. Latrobe, whose profession and French name appear to have been considered by them as ample justification, all the unpopularity into which the works of L'Enfant had brought the profession of an architect. He was called "the damned Frenchman," in common parlance, who was spending the people's money upon a chimerical project. Difficulties were thrown in the way of his procuring workmen. Petty and vexatious injuries were done to the buildings by unknown persons; no argument could convince the multitude, and popular dislike toward Mr. Latrobe seemed to advance with the progress of the work until, when the pipes were laid in the streets and the steam-engine finished, this sentiment seemed to have attained a point beyond which it could not be restrained from acts of violence.

A change in popular feelings was, however, close at hand. By Mr. Latrobe's directions, the hydrants

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were left open on the afternoon of the day when the steam-engine was in readiness, and in the middle of the night, with three gentlemen, his friends, and one of his workmen, he went to the waterworks, kindled a fire under the boiler, and set the ponderous machinery in motion while the city was buried in sleep. Everything worked as he anticipated, and when the morning came the streets of Philadelphia were flowing with water from the gushing hydrants. Mr. Latrobe was now praised as much as he had before been condemned, and everyone seemed desirous of making atonement to him for the ill-usage that he had received. Philadelphia already owed her building of greatest beauty to his talent, and she was now indebted for the most useful of her improvements to his skill.

In 1799 Mr. Latrobe made a survey with a view of ascertaining the practicability of uniting the waters of the Chesapeake and Delaware bays by a canal. His report was favorable, and in 1803 we find him busily engaged in the surveys preliminary to the choice of the precise route and the work of construction.

While engaged in the surveys of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, in 1803, Mr. Latrobe was called to Washington by Mr. Jefferson to complete the buildings there which had been commenced under the administration of General Washington. Having undertaken the task, he received the appointment of Surveyor of the Public Buildings of the United States. For two

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years he paid only occasional visits to Washington, but upon the abandonment of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal he removed there with his family and made it his permanent residence in 1807.

General Washington had caused advertisements to be published for plans for a Capitol and President's house to be built at Washington. At this time the country was entirely destitute of artists, and even of good workmen in those branches of architecture upon which the superiority of public over private buildings depends, and the designs that were offered were such as might be expected from such a state of things. The design chosen from among these was one made by Dr. William Thornton, a man of talent, but without any practical architectural skill. His own account of his architectural education was that he had acquired it by a week's study among the works that he found in the Philadelphia Library. The plan of the Capitol, therefore, certainly was a striking proof of his genius. He was appointed one of the commissioners to superintend its execution, and by the year 1800 the north wing was so far completed that Congress moved to Washington and occupied it.

Mr. Latrobe's first step on receiving his appointment was to examine the work that had been done and to see how far the plans yet unfinished could be carried into execution. This brought him at once into painfully unpleasant collision with all those who had been



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before engaged in the public buildings. If he suggested an alteration, if he pointed out a defect, if he showed the impracticability of executing a part of the design, he was sure to bring upon himself a host of assailants. Every effort was made to undermine him in the President's good opinion. His talents were denied, his motives assailed, and the party papers of the day, associating him with party politics because he received his appointment from Mr. Jefferson, joined in the hue and cry against him. Several times was he on the point of resigning his situation altogether, and was only prevented from doing so by the firm and unwavering support that on all occasions he received from the President.

In 1803 Mr. Latrobe commenced the south wing of the Capitol. The foundation, it is true, had been already laid, but so defectively as to require to be taken down in many places. The whole design of the interior of this wing was his, for the design of the original projector was impracticable and could not have been put together. The exterior, of course, had to be built in conformity with the north wing design and built under the direction of Dr. Thornton.

At the time of his appointment to the office of Surveyor of the Public Buildings the business of the navy yard was put into Mr. Latrobe's hands, and the entrance to the yard, which is still admired for its excellent taste and the beauty of its proportion, is from

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his pencil. He designed the workshops, the convenience of whose construction is still remarkable, the powder magazine on the eastern branch, and superintended all the improvement within or in connection with the navy yard during his residence in Washington.

In 1809 Mr. Latrobe was employed to survey and superintend the construction of a canal to pass through the city of Washington, meeting the main stream of the Potomac River at the mouth of Tibers Creek with the eastern branch near the navy yard. The work was commenced with much ceremony on the 2d of July, 1810, and prosecuted vigorously until it was completed. Over the deepest excavation there is a brick arch of upward of sixty feet span, the construction of which is a singular specimen of Mr. Latrobe's skill and ingenuity.

Mr. Latrobe continued busily engaged in Washington until 1813. In 1811 the south wing of the Capitol was completed, and the further progress of the public buildings was suspended for want of appropriations to carry them on, the approaching war with Great Britain being alleged as the reason for curtailment in the expenditures for this particular object. The works at the navy yard, however, were carried on upon a larger scale than ever.

While engaged at the public buildings in Washington, Mr. Latrobe invented what has been often termed a new order of architecture, and the words of praise

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in which it has often been spoken of require a notice of it in a sketch of his life. In the small vestibule at the east entrance to the north wing of the Capitol the vaulted roof is supported by columns representing the stalk of the Indian corn with its fruit. The shaft of the column is composed of the stalks of the corn bound together by a cord or rope at the bottom, of sufficient size to form the molding of the base, and with a smaller cord at the top so as to form a proper fillet below the capital. The capital is composed of the ears of the corn with the husk or outer covering sufficiently opened to show the grain within. The proportions of the columns are perfect, and the effect is singularly striking.

Not many years since, the writer of this article, then on a visit to Virginia, made the usual pilgrimage of travelers in that quarter to Monticello. Among the places of interest that were pointed out to him in the then dilapidated premises was the favorite seat of Mr. Jefferson. It was upon the low, flat roof of a range of offices, which are built partly underground and extend some distance from the main building. Several trees formed a thick shade over the spot without interfering with the rare and lovely view which it afforded. In the distance were the bold mountains of the Blue Ridge. The intervening landscape was covered with the velvet hues of cultivation. Charlottesville, with its university, was in the midst, and the river, gleaming

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here and there, broke the uniformity of the landscape and carried the eye far to the north into the remote perspective. Four garden benches were so disposed as to form a square on this little observatory, and upon a pedestal in the midst was a capital with its ears of corn, a silent but expressive compliment to the genius of its author, paid by one who knew him well and could appreciate his abilities.

As early as the year 1809 Mr. Jefferson, at the suggestion of Governor Claiborne, of Louisiana, applied to Mr. Latrobe to ascertain whether it was practicable to supply New Orleans with water by the same means that had been so successful in Philadelphia, and proposed that Mr. Latrobe should undertake it. This he consented to do, and we find among his correspondence numerous letters written to that place with a view of ascertaining the practicability of obtaining an exclusive grant of the privilege. In 1810 he became satisfied from his intercourse with Governor Claiborne, then on a visit to Washington, that such a grant could be obtained, and sent his eldest son by his first wife, Henry S. Latrobe, who, having graduated at St. Mary's College in Baltimore, had then been for some time in his office, to New Orleans with the necessary authority to negotiate for the grant in question. In 1811 the Legislature of Louisiana granted to him the exclusive privilege for twenty years from the first of May, 1813, the time intervening between this date and

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the date of the grant being considered as sufficient for the erection of the necessary buildings and machinery. Mr. Latrobe having associated with himself several gentlemen as partners in the advantages promised by this undertaking, so flattering in the outset, but to which ultimately the lives of himself and his son were sacrificed, commenced the preparation in Washington of all those parts of the building which could be made cheaper there than at New Orleans, sending them round by sea to his son, who was upon the spot engaged in erecting the works.

The war with Great Britain, which came on in 1812, broke in upon all Mr. Latrobe's plans. The engines for the waterworks had not yet been built, nor could they be built at New Orleans; and if built, as was originally intended, in Washington, they could not be sent round by sea without the risk of a loss which no insurance could cover—the loss of time. Under these circumstances he made up his mind, as the greater portion of the work on the public buildings, and, of course, his emoluments thereon, were suspended by the war, to remove to Pittsburg, and there superintend the construction of the engines for the New Orleans works, sending them when completed down the Mississippi. While making arrangements to carry this plan into effect he incidentally heard that Robert Fulton, with whom he had long been intimate, contemplated removing his engine works to Pittsburg and

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obtaining for his steamboats the same monopoly on the Western waters that was already enjoyed on the Hudson. He wrote to Fulton; the result was a combination of objects, and Mr. Latrobe, in the fall of 1813, as the agent of the Ohio Steamboat Company, moved his family to Pittsburg, and began there the construction of a steamboat, with a view of constructing subsequently the engines for which his son was waiting in New Orleans.

The first steamboat that had ever descended the Mississippi had been built in 1812 by Nicholas T. Roosevelt, Esq., who, in 1810, married the eldest daughter of Mr. Latrobe by his first marriage. The next boats were the *Vesuvius* and *Ætna*, built by a brother-in-law of Mr. Fulton's; so that the steamboat commenced by Mr. Latrobe was the fourth that was launched upon those waters, where they are now so greatly multiplied.

In this visit to Pittsburg Mr. Latrobe was unfortunate. Ignorant of the new creation which was then just starting into life to give impetus to all the transactions of commerce and all the relations of man in America, Mr. Latrobe in commencing the building of the steamboat *Buffalo* was but the agent carrying out the ideas of others and exercising no judgment of his own, because he had no experience, and without experience he was necessarily at fault. All his instructions, and those too of the most humble kind, were given

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him by Mr. Fulton before he went to Pittsburg. Mr. Fulton in making up these instructions was governed by the value of labor and materials in New York, with the conveniences possessed there for the construction of vessels and materials. The result was what might easily have been anticipated. Mr. Latrobe found himself without support and his drafts protested when the advanced condition of the steamboat required the greatest exertions to complete it and make it profitable to those interested. Mr. Fulton, who found that his estimate had been spent and that it was still unfinished, made no allowance for error in those calculations and instructions which had been the only guides in the management of the business. He was disappointed, and his disappointment made him unjust. The distance of the parties rendered personal explanations out of the question; misrepresentation was busy in creating a wrong understanding, and the result was a breach, destructive alike to the interest of both of them. For the first time in his life the spirits and firmness of Mr. Latrobe sank under the complicated difficulties by which he was now surrounded. Not only was the steamboat design wholly defeated, but also all his hopes of being able to furnish the engines for his New Orleans works which he had looked forward to beginning on the completion of the boat. All the money that he could raise from his own resources was applied to the payment of the hands, in the daily expectation that

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advices from New York would put all things once more upon their proper footing. The expectation was a vain one, however, and yielding to the pressure of circumstances, and worn out by constant mental suffering, Mr. Latrobe was wholly overcome and rendered incapable of exertion.

In thus speaking of Mr. Fulton and the consequences to Mr. Latrobe of his conduct in the matters here related, it is not intended by the writer of this article to use one harsh term or to create one unpleasant feeling to any of his friends or relatives. Before his death, which occurred while Mr. Latrobe was still in Pittsburg, he did ample justice to Mr. Latrobe, and admitted the error of the opinion under which he acted at the period in question, and expressed his deep regret at what had taken place. What is here stated claims its place in the narrative only as a necessary portion of the history of the individual.

Mr. Latrobe was in the painful condition above described when peace was proclaimed. It brought to him no satisfaction, for misfortune had made him indifferent to everything. Mrs. Latrobe, however, had seen that a law had passed authorizing the rebuilding of the public buildings, and, known to her husband, wrote to Mr. Gallatin, Mr. Dallas, and others of her husband's intimate friends, stating his situation and asking their influence in obtaining his reappointment to his former office as Surveyor of the Public Buildings.



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She induced him, too, with much difficulty to write to Mr. Madison soliciting the place. Her gratification may well be imagined when the return mail brought to her the official information that the subject of her letter already had been under consideration, and there had never been a moment's hesitation as to his being the person to be appointed to rebuild the Capitol. She carried the joyful intelligence to her husband, and all the pain of months of anxiety and sorrow was compensated when she saw him revive from the despondency into which he had fallen at this prospect of extrication from the difficulties of his situation.

While at Pittsburg Mr. Latrobe designed several private buildings that were erected there or in the vicinity, as well as others. Among these last were the residences of Henry Clay at Lexington and Governor Taylor at Newport.

Upon receiving his appointment Mr. Latrobe immediately went to Washington to examine the situation of the public buildings. In the summer of 1815 he returned for his family, and soon afterwards found himself once more at the seat of Government. His reception here was of the kindest and most gratifying kind, and letters of congratulation came to him from all those with whom his profession had at any time connected him.

For nearly three years Mr. Latrobe now devoted himself assiduously to the restoration of the public

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buildings at Washington, and made those alterations in the interior arrangements of the south wing and north wing which the destruction of the former divisions by the fire permitted. The Hall of Representatives was altered from an oval into a semicircle, and the design as it is now executed belongs to Mr. Latrobe. The columns of Potomac marble are due exclusively to him, as he was the first who suggested the applicability of the material to its present purposes. During a visit to Virginia he had observed the immense quantities that were scattered in all directions, and, having ascertained that it was susceptible of high polish, he proposed that it should be used in place of freestone for the columns of the Senate and House of Representatives. In the north wing the fragile character of the original structure before Mr. Latrobe was appointed Surveyor of the Public Buildings had given more materials for the flames, and the room for change and improvement was greater than in the south wing of the Capitol. The Supreme Court room, the Senate chamber vestibule in the place of the former staircase, are all of his design, and in the capitals of the columns of the latter the leaf and flower of the tobacco plant are used as the ears of corn in the capitals of the columns of the vestibule below.

While at Washington in 1817 Mr. Latrobe received the afflicting intelligence of the death of his eldest son. As we have already had occasion to remark,

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he had gone to New Orleans to superintend the construction of the waterworks there, and finding ample employment otherwise in his profession as an architect had made it the place of his permanent abode. He had distinguished talents in his profession, and several of the best buildings of New Orleans are from the design of his pencil. The lighthouse that he designed on Frank's Island at the mouth of the Mississippi has been pronounced by a distinguished judge to be unsurpassed save by the Eddystone light and the celebrated light of the Caduan. During the attack of the British he distinguished himself by his cool, determined bearing.

On the return of Mr. Latrobe to Washington the system under which the work at the public buildings was conducted was very different from what it had been during the time of Mr. Jefferson. The direction was no longer in the hands of the President, but was confided to a Board of Commissioners appointed by law. After a little while this board was done away with, and an act of Congress passed resting the whole control in a single commissioner. The individual who was appointed to the office was, unfortunately for Mr. Latrobe, one who could not appreciate the necessity that then existed of the architect of a great and complicated structure having the sole direction of those interested with the execution of its various parts; and who, totally ignorant of everything connected with the profession, was nevertheless constantly interfering with

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the progress of the work. It was not to be wondered at, therefore, that constant collisions took place between Mr. Latrobe and the commissioner, until the latter, by the course which he pursued, made it impossible for Mr. Latrobe to retain his situation without giving up what he conceived due to himself and his profession, and sacrificing for the sake of the office which he held his independence, both as an architect and a gentleman. The alternative was one about which he did not for a moment hesitate, and he resigned his situation as Surveyor of the Public Buildings, deeply as his pride and his reputation were interested in his completing them, rather than submit to the daily sacrifice of personal and professional feeling to which he would have been otherwise subjected.

The Capitol as now finished is essentially, with one or two exceptions, so far the design of Mr. Latrobe as it could be when the style of the architecture was settled for him beforehand by the erection of the north wing under the direction and after the plan of Dr. Thornton. The present central dome, however, is far larger than Mr. Latrobe ever intended that it should be. In his design, which is before the writer, this dome is low and flat, rising from an octagonal base, the sides of which are marked with deep-sunk panels. The dome is in every respect an appendage to the building. To use a plain simile, an inverted coffee cup, instead of a tea cup, has been placed upon the Capitol, and the

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body of the building, with its noble porticos, instead of making its full and proper impression upon the spectator, is buried and pressed down by the mass above it. The domes of the wings are altogether dwarfed on either side of their formidable neighbor.

What is here said is by no means in disparagement of the amiable and talented gentleman who succeeded Mr. Latrobe as Surveyor of the Public Buildings. To him great credit is due for the manner in which his part of them has been completed, involving as it has done great originality of design and skilful contrivance. The whole of the center building was put up under his direction, and when the writer of this article speaks of the claim of Mr. Latrobe to the general features of the design, so far as this part of the Capitol is concerned, it is the exterior rather than the interior that is alluded to.

During his residence at this time in Washington, Mr. Latrobe designed St. John's Church, on the President's Square. The building as it at present stands has been disfigured in an attempt to enlarge it by the prolongation of one of the arms of the cross. The church as originally finished by Mr. Latrobe was a simple yet beautiful specimen of his skill. He also designed Christ's Church in Alexandria.

After resigning his situation at the Capitol, Mr. Latrobe removed in the early part of 1818 to Baltimore. There he was occupied in building the Exchange, on

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Gay Street, and the Cathedral. The latter building had been commenced in the year 1805 under the auspices of the late respected Archbishop Carroll. Want of funds had protracted its erection, nor was it until 1818 that it was covered in. The Exchange was commenced in 1817 from a design made by Mr. Latrobe while he yet resided in Washington. The cathedral, in point of size and solidity of execution, is his greatest work. The Bank of Pennsylvania was long considered as the most beautiful; but while it does not yield to the cathedral in taste or execution, it is inferior in size and in complication. It required less genius to design it and less skill to suit all its parts, one with another, until a whole, perfect in proportion, was the result. At the present writing the interior of the cathedral is all that may be considered as finished, and the remarks here made refer to the interior alone. The exterior still wants one of its towers to lighten by contrast the dome, which now appears too massive, and, above all, it wants its north portico, with a double range of Ionic columns. When the towers and the portico shall be added to the cathedral, the exterior, not less than the interior, may be referred to as among the best instances of the talent and skill of the architect. The Exchange is in its exterior a plain building of excellent proportions. Its hall, however, is a beautiful specimen of architecture, not only in the proportion of all its parts, from the Ionic columns below to the light and airy

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dome high overhead, but for the truth and ability with which the various and complicated parts of the whole are adjusted and put together.

After his removal to Baltimore, Mr. Latrobe, no longer in the public employment and bound down to remain near the public buildings, determined to visit New Orleans, with a view of completing the waterworks there which had been commenced by his son, and in which so much of the fortune of himself and his friends was already invested. Leaving his family, therefore, in Baltimore, he paid a visit to New Orleans in 1819-20, and commenced putting up the engines, which had been built in Baltimore since he had left Washington. After he had remained there a few months he found that his own constant personal supervision was unnecessary, and having made arrangements to remove his family, he returned for them to Baltimore, and in 1820 took up his residence with them in New Orleans, with the intention of remaining until the works were finished and their success certain. When it was understood that he intended removing from Baltimore, the trustees of the Cathedral and the directors of the Exchange addressed to him letters showing the estimation in which he was held by those to whom his talents had been last devoted.

For some time after Mr. Latrobe reached New Orleans the waterworks progressed most rapidly. His health was good, and he congratulated himself that at

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last there was a prospect of his being released from the constant labors of his previous life and being able to live in comfort and with competence, if not affluence, for the remainder of his days. The engine was completed, and in two weeks the entire work would have been done and water flowing through the streets. But on the very day that he was engaged in superintending the laying down of the pipe connecting the engine with the Mississippi he was taken ill. The fatal disease of the climate had seized him, and in a few hours he was laid beside his son. His all had been embarked in the works he was then engaged in. His own life was now added, with his son's, to the sacrifice. With him died all hope of emolument from the scheme. The buildings and machinery passed into other hands, and his widow and children, in sorrow, and in vain, returned to the Atlantic seaboard.

JOHN HAZLEHURST BONEVAL LATROBE.

BALTIMORE, 1876.



ORIGINAL OF  
1838

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## FOREWORD

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*WE* pay so little attention in general to what is going forward on the scene on which we ourselves are actors that when now and then a real story, unadorned by fiction, is presented to us in the succession of its circumstances, we are very apt to fancy it too full of incident and contrivance to have passed on the theater of actual life. I have more than once made this observation in reading my old journals of trivial transactions, which had very little but truth to recommend them. In this respect we are like the actors of dramatic scenes, who are so engaged with their own parts that they hardly ever study the performance of others. We wait till our own act comes, and then go on as we have accustomed ourselves to do.

I have often intended to make the recital of some of my own adventures an amusement of my leisure, but whenever I have attempted it the appearance of fiction has accompanied many of the most positive facts. Indeed, the general rage for novels, which most frequently recite very common occurrences but which we know to be invented, throws a false reflection upon

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*every relation which at all steps out of the common road.*

*The practice of keeping a regular journal was recommended to me very early in life by my father—merely for the sake of writing down my ideas with ease and correctness, for he recommended at the same time that I should at the close of every year extract all the generally useful facts and burn the remainder. I have followed his advice at intervals ever since I was a boy, both in writing and burning my journals. Since my arrival in America I have in a great measure altered my plan of a diary into a collection of observations and a record of facts in which my personal interest and actions were not immediately concerned. The great chasms which appear in the collections are chiefly owing to the personal activity which so filled up my time as to render it out of my plan to report what was going forward.*

B. H. L.

# *The Journal of Latrobe*

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## CHAPTER I

VIRGINIA AND ITS PEOPLE: WITH COMMENTS UPON  
HOSPITALITY AND SOME STRANGE ACQUAINTANCES

COL. SKIPWITH'S, CUMBERLAND COUNTY,  
June 10, 1796.

**T**O get my person to this place has been the work of much labor and some contrivance. I ought to have been twenty miles more to the westward upon the 7th, but that could not be done. The capital of Virginia does not afford a horse for hire. This is not much to be wondered at, nor will the matter be better till post-feeding goes out of fashion. The Virginians ride hard, and are, into the bargain, accused of tying their horses to a post or tree, when they ought to be tied to a manger. My appointment for the 7th was to meet the superintendent of the Appomattox Navigation at Mr. Venable's, in order to proceed from the head of the river to Petersburg. The weather has been very rainy for this fortnight

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past, and all my endeavor to hire or beg the use of a horse has been abortive. Mr. Arthur, however, furnished me at last with a horse, which, having carried me to Tuckahoe, I exchanged for another and proceeded across the river to Amelia County. Tuckahoe is sixteen miles from Richmond on the north side of the James River. The river here is about a hundred and fifty yards wide, and runs in a straight line about two miles. Its scenery of wood and gentle hills is soft and pleasing. The river is deep at the ferry.

The rains had swelled it, and there was about ten feet of water nearly across. My object was to get to Hopkins's Tavern. An old, talkative negro, who was plowing in a cornfield, directed me. I made him repeat the lesson till I knew it by heart. He happened not to know his right hand from his left, but with some trouble I contrived to understand him. This business of inquiring after roads and getting clear directions is a matter that ought to be well understood by a solitary traveler in American woods. Men that daily travel the same route think their road so clear that it cannot possibly be mistaken, and perhaps pass over in their directions its most critical points. My way is always to hear and, if possible, to imprint on my memory the direction offered me, and then to make minute inquiry after all the by-roads and turnings which I am to avoid. By this mode of inquiry I in general astonish my directors by discoveries of difficulties they never thought of

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before. This was the case with my old negro. After telling me at first that the road was so plain I could not miss it, he then recollected so many devious paths in the first mile that he turned me over for further guidance to the overseer, whom, he said, I should meet half a mile off. I met, however, no overseer, but continued my ride through the woods, following the old man's direction and steering southwest. Having, by my feelings, ridden about ten miles without catching a view of any known object, I began to be uneasy, and soon after met a man who, though himself a stranger, could tell me that Hopkins's Tavern lay about ten miles behind me. He put me into a small path leading into the thickest of the woods which would lead me to a plantation where I could get directions.

After following it three miles, frequently stopping to choose among three or four by-ways, which appeared to be equally likely to be right, I overtook another white man, who made me turn aback about half a mile again, as I unfortunately had pitched upon a wrong one. This path I followed for an hour without seeing an opening in the wood or meeting with anything that looked like an indication of human habitation. At last I arrived at a fence and saw a small house at a distance. I pulled part of the fence down, got over, and rebuilt it. I soon arrived at the house. A man, apparently dying of consumption, sat at the door with his head in the lap of a very beautiful young

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woman, who was crying over him. Her cheeks seemed flushed with a hectic red. There were three or four small white children crawling about, attended by about as many black ones. Within, everything looked neat and comfortable. I waited for some minutes, and felt a degree of melancholy that I cannot describe, picturing to myself a long story of distress which I fancied must belong to this unhappy family, of which the poor children might soon inherit the continuance. Here, however, there is hospitality and neighborly feeling to assist and alleviate; in Great Britain the crowded inhabitants are forced to trample upon each other's sufferings. The man, who had fainted, soon recovered, and I found that the fever and ague, the canker of the plenty and health of this country, had harassed him for a year or two, and that he despaired of recovery. He begged me to alight and refresh myself, but the scene was too distressing. I got from him and his wife a clear direction, and in about an hour more escaped from the woods and arrived at Hopkins's. I was extremely fatigued, got my horse fed and a dish of tea for myself. While I was drinking it the tavern keeper sat in the room nursing a child and singing and rattling a table in the most violent manner, and exceedingly unpleasant to a fatigued traveler. There is nothing, thought I, like liberty and equality. I found it impossible to disturb him by the questions I asked with that design. I therefore ordered my horse, paid



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my bill, and rode eight miles farther. It was dark when I arrived. It had rained often in the day, and when I alighted I could scarce walk to the house with fatigue, having ridden about fifty miles in the course of about nine hours. Extreme fatigue prevented my sleeping much. I got up late, and resolved to go and dress myself for the day at Captain Murray's, about four miles off.

I spent all Wednesday at Captain Murray's, and on Thursday went to Major Eggleston's. He was out, and I followed him to Mrs. Eggleston's, his mother-in-law's, about two miles farther. He had also left that place, but I met there his wife, and spent a very pleasant day with three agreeable ladies. In the evening he arrived, and I returned to his house, joined by Major Scott, a veteran officer in the American army and a man of uncommon natural ability and strength of intellect. About nine o'clock this morning I pursued my journey up the river, hoping in the evening to arrive at Mr. Venable's, where I proposed staying till the freshet should have subsided and the superintendents commenced their operations.

Major Eggleston favored me with a letter to Colonel Skipwith, who has a mill about twenty miles higher up upon the Appomattox. The road lay through Stingytown and by Chinquopin church. The circumstance that gave the name of Stingytown to the small collection of houses around Mr. James Town's

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tavern is forgotten. The name, however, is now, I dare to say, indelibly fixed, and the attempt of the proprietor to call it by his own name, Jamestown, will scarcely succeed. Nicknames are durable things. Chinquopin church has a small collection of houses about it, the principal of which is a tavern kept in an indifferent style by Major Chaffin, who with Major Eggleston is a representative of the county in the State Legislature. I suppose the quantity of Chinquopin bushes about the church gave it the name it bears, but they are everywhere so thickly spread that I am at a loss to know why the preference should be given to this spot. [The church, like all the rest, is an indifferent wooden building, scarcely ever used.]

I was in hopes of getting by twelve o'clock to Colonel Skipwith's. At Chinquopin church I struck into the woods and pursued the direct road without suffering fork to the right or left to puzzle me, according to the advice of an old man whom I met near Chinquopin. The road indeed was straight enough. I rode without fear till I fancied I must have exceeded the seven miles of distance I had to travel. I then turned into a plantation, the third opening only which I had met with in these eternal woods. A negro man came to the gate, who in a long speech bewailed my having missed the proper turning to the right in this infallibly straight road. It was about four miles behind me. The day was excessively sultry, and my

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horse appeared as tired as his rider. Nothing, however, could be done but to go back, and I got nearly the following directions:

“ I am right sorry, master, you are so far out in this hot day. It is very bad indeed, master. You must, if you please, turn right around to your right hand, which was your left, you see, when you were coming here, master. I say you turn right around to your right hand, which was your left hand, and then you go on and go on about two miles or two miles and a half, master. It's very bad indeed to have to ride so far back again on so hot a day, and your horse tired and all; but when you have got back again about two miles or two miles and a half you will see a plantation, and that plantation is Dicky Hoe's. That's on your right hand now as you're going back, but it was on your left hand when you were coming here, you see, master. The plantation is Dicky Hoe's on your right hand, right handy to the road, and there is a house with two brick chimneys on it; but it is not one house, it only looks like one house with two brick chimneys, but it is two houses and is only built like one house, but it is really two houses; you will see it right handy to the road a little way off, with two brick chimneys, on your right hand, which was your left hand when you were coming here. And so you ride by Dicky Hoe's plantation with the house with the two brick chimneys, which is two houses, you know, and

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then you ride on and come to another plantation about a mile farther, which plantation is on your left hand, which was your right hand when you came here, right handy to the road."

"Well," said I, "I know it; and then I get again to the wood, and how then when I am in the wood past the plantation and house?"

"Why, then, master," said the negro, "when you have passed the plantation on your left hand, which was your right hand when you came here, right handy to the road, you go along till you come into the woods, and ride about one hundred yards—no, master, you don't ride about one hundred yards, only fifty yards. But I think, master, you had better ride about a hundred and fifty yards, and then it will be all plain to you, for you see a fork on your right hand, which was your left hand when you came here. Turn down there."

"Now I know all about it," cried I, fatigued. "Good morning, my good fellow, and thank you many times." I rode off in full trot, and when he was out of sight he was still calling out to me about my right hand which was my left. As soon, however, as I got out of the woods I saw the house with the two brick chimneys on my left instead of my right, and presently the next house was on my right instead of my left. I therefore tied up my horse, got over the fence, and at the house got a direction in good German to the mill,

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from which I was then only two miles distant. The river was very full, and I heard the roar of tumbling water half a mile off. The mill and house belonging to it are on the opposite steep bank. Colonel Skipwith had just erected a small mill on the south end of his dam, to which I rode and tied my horse to a tree. There was not a human being, however, to be seen in or near it. I heard voices in the wood and went in search of the women or children from whom they seemed to proceed, but I could not reach them. I then walked down the river, halloed to the other side, but nobody answered. The roaring of the cascade, I presume, drowned my voice, and nobody was in the mill, which was stopped. I therefore undressed and attempted to swim to a canoe which I saw on the other side. The river was very deep at the spot at which I entered it, but I had not swum many yards when my feet, which I dropped to feel for the bottom, were entangled in some bushes, and I was glad to get back to the shore again. I then sat down quietly under a tree, dressed, and waited near an hour. At last I saw a negro on the other side. He heard me, and presently a young white man put the canoe across, brought me over, and then forded my horse at the ford below the mill. During this time a dreadful thunderstorm was slowly rising, and before I could get to the colonel's house, about a mile above the mill, it began to rain. He was gone to another plantation an hour before my

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arrival. His family, however, consisting of his lady, two daughters, and Miss Johnson, received me with the politeness and hospitality I have everywhere met with in Virginia, and the terribly stormy, wet weather which has set in and continued renders it extremely necessary as well as pleasant to me.

COLONEL SKIPWITH'S, June 11, 1796.

This place has a name very appropriate—*Horsdumonde*. No possibility of outside communication by letter or visit but by riding half a dozen miles into the world. In other respects there is a great deal of worldly beauty and convenience about it. The house is a strange building, but whoever contrived it, and from whatever planet he came, he was not a *lunatic*, for there is much comfort and room in it, though put together very oddly. Before the south front is a range of hills, wooded very much in the style of an English park. To the east runs the Appomattox, to which a lawn extends. Beyond the hills to the southwest the river winds, and to the vapors tending eastward thence the unhealthiness of the place is ascribed. It is a remark which I have heard from many sensible and examining men that water, even stagnant water, situated to the eastward of a place—that is, between the place and rising sun—never affects its health, but that no elevation protects from the noxious evaporation arising from a western river or pond. The opinion is

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universally received here, and I dare say is well founded on fact. The warmth of the rising sun may expand and occasion the rise of vapors which have been hovering near the ground or surface of the water during the night. But why they should take an eastern course I cannot guess, as the wind in warm latitudes in general blows from the sun, and I should suppose on a still morning the tendency of the pressure of the air would be to the westward. Reasoning, however, against experience is vain work.

Of the unhealthiness of this place, Horsdumonde, Mrs. Skipwith is a melancholy instance, having for five years past labored under a fever and ague which nothing, I think, can cure but a change of air. All her family have had the same complaint, though at present well. They seem to think it a thing of course, and one of them, upon my observing that her looks did not betray an unhealthiness in the situation, answered that it was no wonder, for she had not had an ague for these thirteen months past. A miserable existence this.

BIZARRE, JUNE 12, 1796.

Another French name, but not quite applicable to Mr. Richard Randolph's house at present, for there is nothing bizarre about it that I can see. It was, however, I am told, justly enough applied to the first house built on the estate. My misfortunes have fol-

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lowed me to this house. It rained violently at Horsdumonde all the night before I left and yesterday morning. At eleven I mounted my horse, hoping to get to Mr. Venable's last night. I rode gently through the woods, following a tolerably good road,



SKETCH OF EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Former Secretary of State.

Made in the Court of Appeals, Richmond,  
Va., April 12, 1796.

crossing first Guinea Creek and then Green Creek, both of which were so swollen by the rain as to be scarcely fordable. At the distance of ten miles I got to Colonel Beverly Randolph's, who gave me a very distinct direction through the woods hither. The weather was excessively sultry, and a constant peal of thunder from a very black cloud to the southwest hastened my pace.

About half-past two o'clock I arrived at the last gate before Mr. Randolph's house, which I found I could not jump without alighting. I then perceived that I had lost my bundle and great-coat from behind my saddle, containing all my drawing materials, besides clothes of some value. *Eheu misere!* My philosophy was nearly worn out before,



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but it quite forsook me now, and I stood at the gate, absent and uncertain what to do, for a quarter of an hour, to the great astonishment of those who observed me from the house, till a heavy shower reminded me of my horse and the neighboring shelter, and I rode on to the house. I soon forgot my personal loss at finding Mr. Randolph very dangerously ill of an inflammatory fever. He induced me, however, to stay, and immediately sent a trusty servant to seek my bundle, who in a couple of hours returned with it, safe but wet. But this was not all. The superintendents of the river, of whom I was in quest, had passed Bizarre that very morning, and rendered all my journey useless. It was no comfort to me that the voyage must be equally so, for the freshet that has been for a week in the river must have rendered an examination of it impossible. From the moment of my arrival to eight this morning it has thundered, lightened, and rained incessantly. The river, however, remains just within its banks. Mr. Randolph is much worse. His family, however, have shown me every attention and kindness in their power.

PETERSBURG, June 17, 1796.

Mr. Randolph was visited about noon by a medical practitioner in the neighborhood, Dr. Smith. He appeared a man of good sense. His opinion was against the probability of Mr. Randolph's recovery, though

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masked by a long string of hopes and technical phrases. The weather cleared up about noon. I dined with the melancholy family of my host, and immediately after set off for Colonel Skipwith's. My horse was perfectly master of the intricate road and saved me the trouble of much consideration by the quickness with which he turned from broad, beaten roads into the narrow paths through which I had to go. Otherwise, I have no doubt that I should have, as usual, missed my way. The two creeks were so swollen by the rain that I had to swim through the middle of the channels. About eight o'clock I got back to Horsdumonde, where I found Mr. Venable and Epperson waiting for the freshet to subside.

Colonel Skipwith is related to the Skipwiths of Warwickshire in England. His brother, Sir Paton Skipwith, is one of the very few who keep up their title in this country. The title of baronet is a phantom even in England, having no real privilege annexed to it; here it is the lank ghost of a phantom, the shadow of a shade. Among the follies of mankind the adoration of this title is one of the most unaccountable. Fifty years hence it will scarcely be credited in this country that the baronets of Great Britain should have met, appointed a committee, issued advertisements, held frequent and grave deliberations, and publicly exhibited a pettish kind of anxiety upon the subject of petitioning the king for leave to wear a badge of dis-

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inction to distinguish themselves from mere knights dubbed Sir—"right worshipful on shoulder blade." It is impossible to think of it without astonishment and vexation, and, indeed, a sensation of total despair that the reign of common sense will ever be established in any country. Captains, majors, colonels, and generals elbow a man out of all hopes even of this country.

Colonel Skipwith is a man of strong mental powers. His house is a most pleasant one, though the illness of Mrs. Skipwith operates as a drawback. We were most hospitably entertained; the sense and wit of Messrs. Skipwith and Venable provided the mental feast. In the evening Messrs. Venable, Epperson, and myself rode, accompanied by Colonel Skipwith, part of the way to Captain Patterson's, about five miles down the river. Without the polish and refinement, we met here the same hospitality as at Horsdumonde. The house was small and inconvenient, and Mr. Venable and Epperson, Mr. Anderson and I, and Mr. Wily, treasurer to the company of Appomattox, slept in a small room upon excellent beds. Mr. Anderson is a country gentleman from the neighborhood of Mr. Venable's, who undertook to be captain of our aquatic expedition, being a perfect adept in the management of a boat among rocks, falls, and rapids. Captain Patterson furnished us with a roomy boat he has, and we had got a tilt to protect us from the rain or sun, and plenty of good ham, bacon, Indian bread, and spirits. We

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rose before sunrise, but it was six o'clock before we got into the boat ready to start, as the Virginians say. The river is too narrow above Clemen's mill to display in all its beauty the scenery of its banks. Each side is bordered with trees of a great variety of species and sizes, and now and then a bold rock bursts into the river. There is not much large timber near the banks of the river. This is a defect which deprives the innumerable pleasant groups of that boldness which characterizes them lower down. About six we arrived at Clemen's mill. With the assistance of the people of the mill we got our boat unloaded and carried past the milldam into the water below. The south shore, upon which the mill stands, is a hard rock of the same species of micous granite which I have observed to extend through Amelia County. Much of the interest of a trip of this kind arises from the little difficulties attending it, and we were in a humor to laugh at every seeming inconvenience. Having launched our boat again, we went to breakfast as she quietly carried us down the stream. Mr. Venable and myself are water drinkers, the rest drink grog, and we all lived upon ham and bacon, of which we had a great store. The same cask also contains cherries, a few biscuits, and pones of Indian and wheat bread. The social manner in which all these viands inhabit the same dwelling produces a sympathy of *taste* among them, so that with your eyes shut it would be difficult to decide whether

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you had a piece of bacon, a cherry, or biscuit, or a slice of bread in your mouth. Whenever we came to the rattle of a spring from the bank we recruited our water cask, and thus kept up a constant supply of cool beverage.

Had we been furnished with firearms we might have had plenty of wild ducks, Indian hens, and kingfishers. The river abounded chiefly with these birds, and innumerable other species rose incessantly among the trees. Having rowed along till we supposed it about twelve o'clock—for we had not a watch on board—we discovered through an opening a house upon a near hill. Anxious to know whereabouts we were, we landed and marched up in a body to the house. We found nobody at home. Before we discovered the house we had made the banks ring again with singing and hallooing in order to attract some one to the bank and partly to get rid of our superabundant spirits. Mrs. Brackett, supposing us drunk, had escaped into the kitchen, and Mr. Brackett was gone in search of the *racket*. We sent a message to Mrs. Brackett, who then made her appearance, and soon afterwards Mr. Brackett returned, and we were hospitably furnished with as much grog and buttermilk as we could drink. Mr. Brackett accompanied us down the river as far as Like's ford, a shallow part of the river which will require some improvement. The river winds amazingly about Mr. Brackett's, but from thence to Jeneto its

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direction is tolerably straight. We got to Jeneto before three o'clock. Mr. Venable and myself walked up to the inn, one-quarter of a mile distant. Captain Williamson returned with us, and furnished us with a number of negroes, who soon launched our boat below the dam of his mill. We have overtaken the freshet, and the water was very deep and covered all the shallows and falls, of which there are a few below this place. Having dined and added some of Captain Williamson's excellent beer to our salmagundi, we proceeded down the smooth stream and arrived about seven o'clock at the mouth of Flat Creek, a very considerable stream, which with little trouble might be made navigable forty miles up the country. The river below Jeneto winds about so much as to run for a considerable extent in a northwesterly direction. We found the stream in Flat Creek so rapid and so full of logs that, having attempted to get up to the mill, we were obliged to return and land on the shore of the Appomattox. Thence we walked up the hill to Mr. Walk's house, where we were determined to stay all night, no introduction or previous notice being necessary in this hospitable country. Mr. Walk, a sensible, good-humored man, made his house so comfortable and pleasant to us that we were happy to accept his polite offer to send for Major Eggleston as a pretense for staying the greater part of another day with him. We had expected to find Major Eggleston somewhere

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higher up, but a letter of appointment having missed him, we had neither seen nor heard of him.

While we were waiting, Mr. Anderson, with what I considered a most desperate intrepidity, stripped himself, and, furnished only with a pipe of tobacco, knocked off the head of two beehives and robbed them of their contents without being once stung by the thousand bees that were buzzing about him. In this climate very little is necessary to the rearing of large quantities of bees, and I am astonished to find them so little attended to. I conceive that the fourth book of Virgil's "Georgics" would contain every possible direction to that end, as it was written in about the same climate. We are here in latitude 38 degrees: Mantua, I believe, is in latitude 43 degrees or 44 degrees. The honey was excellent. All the use Mr. Anderson made of his pipe was to drive the bees from the upper to the lower parts of the hive, lest they should get drowned in honey. In coming down the river we saw many swarms and hives of wild bees. They are not indigenous. Jefferson tells us that they precede the European settlements in propagating themselves to the westward, and are called by the Indians the white man's fly.

Neither the messenger nor Major Eggleston having returned at two o'clock, we dined, and immediately afterwards got our things on board and proceeded down the river, which had fallen considerably. The weather had been cloudy since yesterday noon, and it began to

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thunder soon after our departure. About six o'clock our tempers were completely tried by a most violent thunderstorm and rain which drove us under the lofty trees of the bank. Their protection was but of short duration, for the rain, which exceeded any that I have yet seen, soon poured in streams from the leaves, and we were all wet to the skin. About seven o'clock we arrived at Watkins's mill, and having stored our goods, we proceeded to the house, about a mile distant upon the hill on the left bank. Upon approaching the yard we were attacked by half a dozen dogs. We got, however, safe to the house. Old Mrs. Watkins sat at the door, apologized for having set the dogs upon us, not knowing who we were, and informed us that her son Dick was in bed. Mr. Walk, who is his brother-in-law, undertook to wake him, and in about ten minutes appeared our minute host, a proper study for Lavater. His manner expressed just as much haughtiness and conceit as it excited contempt. A total want of good breeding might have been forgiven, good sense cannot be acquired; but civil hospitality is the spontaneous impulse of the savage. Mr. Venable, with that good sense and mildness of temper which is natural to him, and Mr. Epperson, the best-humored man in the world, stood the brunt of his insolence. Silence protected me in a great measure, though not entirely, and Mr. Walk was too much chagrined to say anything. We were wet and hungry, but neither accom-



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modation nor food was offered. Before nine o'clock Mr. Watkins took up a candle and said:

"Gentlemen, I will show you your beds." He led us into a small room containing beds for four of us, and, putting the candle down, walked away without saying a word. We had asked him to permit some of his negroes to help us in getting our boat around his mill. His answer was:

"If it rains, they may assist you if they like. If fair, I wish them to be in the wheat-field."

At six o'clock we escaped from the house and got to our boat, which we contrived to get around by ourselves, though with difficulty. Before we were gone he came down and continued his insulting language. It was met with temper and contempt. The instance of rude inhospitality is so extraordinary that I take Dick Watkins to be a mere *lapsus naturæ*. Hogarth somewhere records a singular caricature of a very slender Italian singer, of which everybody discovered the original at first sight. It was nothing but a straight line with a dot over it. Had I the talent of Hogarth I think I could represent both the body and mind of this animal under the same form.

We ate our pork-cherry-pone dinner at a fine spring near Moore's mill and then proceeded to the falls, which commence about four miles lower down. The river there is divided by numerous rocky islands covered with beautiful trees. We passed several small

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falls without much alarm. Mr. Anderson is completely master of his pole, and exerted himself with great skill. Trailer's Falls, however, are a most serious obstruction. The river tumbles down a ledge of rocks among some islands which scarce offer any tolerable opening. We were directed entirely by chance in our choice of a passage. We kept the right bank, and by very great exertion arrived in smooth water, which continued about a quarter of a mile to the second and most dangerous part of Trailer's Falls. We were not so fortunate here, for, Mr. Anderson's pole breaking, we hung upon a rock in the worst part of the cataract, and were all preparing to go overboard when we got again into a sluice, and soon after were dashed into a tolerably smooth surface. Half a mile lower down the gang of negroes belonging to the company were at work. We landed on the north side, about a mile distant.

PETERSBURG, April 21, 1796.

Everybody here is so engaged in talking of Lamp-lighter, the Shark mare, the Carolina horse, etc., that I am as much at a loss for conversation as if I were among the Hottentots. There indeed I should be much better off, for I could talk to the women without knowing their language. But the case is desperate in a house occupied by seventy men in leather breeches. I rode yesterday to see the race, accompanied by Mr.



JAMES RIVER FALLS.

THE  
AMERICAN

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Thomas Shore. I meant to have taken my quarters with him, but he is at present building, and occupies his offices only, which in Virginia seem to follow the dwelling house as a litter of pigs their mother. The accommodations at Mrs. Armstead's are quite as good as you ought to expect at such a time as this. I slept in a garret with seven other gentlemen. Their different merits of snoring I could descant upon at great length, having been a wakeful listener a greater part of the night, and could I have got a previous bet I should have laid any odds upon my old shipmate, Martin, but he was distanced hollow by Mr. Ruffin, who snored, indeed, like a *ruffian*. I am, however, afraid that the subject might prove more soporific in writing than it did to me in fact. ✓

The concourse upon the race ground was very great indeed—perhaps fifteen hundred persons. It cannot be of much interest to know that Lamplighter, the favorite of the field, upon whom all the odds were laid, was beaten two successive heats, and came in only third. A light, delicate horse from North Carolina won with ease. I have now got into Mr. Shore's house for the day, and feel a little more at home than in the buzz of betting on the course.

PETERSBURG, April 23, 1796.

I have neither books, pencils, brushes, nor colors, nor any other drawing materials at this place, and my

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refuge from *ennui*, drinking, and gambling is reduced, therefore, to a sheet of bad paper and my pen. Having once lived in a Polish ale-house for four days during a fair which had collected all the Jews and Gentiles from fifty miles around under one miserable roof, I cannot say that my residence at Mr. Armstead's tavern affords any scenes that are entirely new to me. The multitude of colonels and majors with which I am surrounded bring back the nobles of the Polish republic to my recollection, whose power and respectability were much upon the same level. The only difference is that instead of Counts Borolabraski and Leschinski and Latroblastmygutski and Skratchmypolobramboloboski, we have here Colonel Tom and Colonel Dick and Major Billy and Colonel Ben and Captain Titmouse and General Rattlesnake and Brigadier-General Opossum. The rabble in leather breeches which fills up the vacuities of swearing and noise is scarcely distinguishable in the two places—only indeed by this difference, that we are here at a loss for even a Jewish rabbi to help out the appearance of religion, and a box of lemon and sealing wax to represent commerce.

I was invited, with several other gentlemen, to dine with Dr. Shore. About an hour before dinner I was at his door. I found there many other gentlemen, all honorable men, no doubt, very busy indeed. They were doing no harm, only playing at loo. A very sumptuous dinner soon made me acquainted with Mrs.

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Shore, a very pleasant lady, who with great ease and goodness of temper presided over a company of twenty-eight men. After dinner, and one bumper to the President's health, the whole party adjourned to the drawing-room. Loo, the most trifling of the ingenious contrivances invented to keep folk from the vile habit of biting their nails, made a very large party happy, whist affording a more sulky delight to a few more. The rattling of dollars is a very pleasant sound when it is at last smothered by the folds of your own pocket. To me, whose pockets and mind remained equally void, it was a great relief to go and chatter to Mrs. Shore and a few ladies who called upon her in the afternoon. Just before a magnificent supper was completely arranged I walked off with Jack Willis, resolved to go to bed. I had got a bed in a neighboring house, where only six gentlemen slept in the same room. But alas! after knocking and bawling for half an hour at the door of the room, in which a light was visible through the cracks, a tremendous yawn, which preceded the slow drawing of the bolt, ushered me in—to disappointment. A huge mulatto, more than half naked, had been left to guard the room. Overcome with sleep and toddy he had stretched himself upon my bed, indulging the former and evacuating the latter. It was not to be endured, and I returned to the inn.

Here in the interval had Falstaff with Harris, Haydon and Sam Overton, his Nym, Pistol, and Bar-

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dolph, established the throne of Pharo and assembled his hosts around him. However, I went upstairs and got into bed in the shedded barrack. Another sober man or two also lay down, but the explosions of joy from below banished sleep till past twelve. I am ashamed of my apathy, for I really outslept the remaining raptures of the night, nor should, I believe, even have opened my eyes at six o'clock had not a heavy mass which then fell upon my bed, with the eructation "By your leave," recalled my senses. The motion by which I freed my legs from the weight which oppressed them might have been injurious to my eyes had they not been closed, for the colonel (it was a colonel, you must know) called out, "Damn your eyes, lay still." After extorting an apology and a promise of good behavior, I left him in quiet possession of the ground and got up. Upon going downstairs I found myself surrounded by half a dozen colonels and as many majors in different states of intoxication and noise. The subalterns were still rattling the dollars below. By eight o'clock most of them had staggered out of the house or into their beds.

PETERSBURG, April 24, 1796.

Close to the river Appomattox is a little house inhabited by a man whose brother I knew in England. He has a large concern of distillery, bakehouse, and mills here, and under the idea that I might be useful



## VIRGINIA AND ITS PEOPLE

to him, Major Murray (a major *de facto*) introduced me to him. His house stands upon a very high bank, under which the river steals along and winds away into beautiful woods to the right, and to the left washes the town of Petersburg. Mr. Bate is also proprietor of the race ground and the buildings belonging to it. He



TRAVEL ON HORSEBACK IN VIRGINIA.

is also one of the stewards of the course. I rode with him to the field. It was the same thing over again. Upon the whole, I think running matches a useful as well as a very amusing entertainment. It encourages a taste for and an inclination to breed handsome horses. The mischief they do is, I believe, not peculiar to horse racing, but attendant upon all concourses of men for the purpose of amusement. Betting at a

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horse race, I believe, is an English passion. Upon the continent of Europe high play is carried to its utmost extent, but I do not think, from my recollection of manners, that horse racing would be considered on the Continent as a subject into which gambling could deeply enter. There is a work written in his own fascinating style by Mercier, author of the "Tableaux de Paris," entitled "La Quinzaine Anglaise à Paris," which, I believe, has been translated into English. It contains, if I recollect right, a very excellent chapter on horse racing, and the idea of betting upon running horses is therein assumed to be entirely English. Gibbon has entered deeply into the business of the blue and green factions at the chariot races of Rome and Constantinople. I entirely have forgotten the merits of the betting question, but they cut throats upon these occasions, an addition to, if not an improvement upon, the degree of interest we take in the running of our horses. The Greeks, I think, were entirely ignorant of the pleasures of betting. I have been delving into the metaphysics of this strange passion, and have at last found out that a bet is a mental dram. It exhilarates and stimulates the mind till it has worked off. Its effect is then gone, and is, on the losing side, followed by sickness and qualms; on the winning, by lassitude and debility and a longing for another dram. Intoxication is in both the consequence. The amusements of the theater would be useful to interrupt the

## VIRGINIA AND ITS PEOPLE

gambling and drunkenness of the evening. But there are no players here at present.

About nine o'clock in the evening I got back to the barrack, which I found in a dreadful state of warfare. Lieutenant Williams had said that General Bradley was as great a fool as himself. It is true that a greater affront could not be offered to any man, but the fury with which the affront was taken up was astonishing even to me whose motto here had become *Nil admirari*. Six men, each six feet high, swore, bawled, cursed, damned, blasted, drank punch for nine hours uninterruptedly without settling the important affair. The most valiant of these champions was a colonel and representative of this county—*ci devant* sergeant of regulars and Methodist preacher. The rest were to a man colonels and majors whose stentorian rhetoric stunned me while I remained below, that is, from nine till one o'clock. I then retired to the eight-bedded barrack, but to sleep before three o'clock was impossible. At eight I rose and found Lieutenant Williams still upon his legs, who upon my appearance wreaked his half-spent vengeance upon my spectacles, challenging me to fight for a hat. In the fray the faro table was upset, the dollars scrambled for, and all the host put to flight.

## CHAPTER II

### VIRGINIA AND ITS PEOPLE—*continued*

**A**RRIVED about eight o'clock at Alexandria. About half-past eight the Philadelphia company of players who are now acting in a barn in the neighborhood came in in a body. They had been at a "drinking party" in the neighborhood. Once, in Virginia, these drinking parties had a much more modest name—they were called "barbecues." Now they say at once a "drinking party." And as insincerity gets the better of hypocrisy, or, to use the more clerical and decent phrase, as vice expels shame, we shall have the nature of the meeting explained at once by hearing it called a "drunken party."

This honorable company was shown at first into a small room opposite the supper room, where those who could not stand sat down. The others filled the passage and hiccoughed into the faces of those who had business at the bar. In this small room two or three songs were well sung, and, mellowed by the distance, the sound arrived pleasantly enough in the supper room where I was writing.

## VIRGINIA AND ITS PEOPLE

About nine my last night's sleeplessness induced me to go to bed. I was shown into the hall room, where eight beds were arranged for that class of citizens so little respected at taverns, stage passengers. I lay down, and as I was the only one in the room I should soon have fallen asleep had not messieurs the players become dissatisfied with their accommodations in the small room and insisted upon a larger. That immediately under me was assigned them, and the movement commenced. For more than half an hour the racket continued. It was more like the breaking up of a camp than a change of room in the same house. To arrange chairs and tables, and perhaps to get a deviled bone or other light supper for these mock kings and princes, was not a work that could be done without a corresponding *éclat*. The shifting of the scene produced, therefore, as much noise of men and things as did ample justice to its importance. Noise seems to be universally considered as the evidence of mirth and hilarity (quite different things from happiness), from the burst of cannon on the coronation of Bonaparte to the horse-laugh of a fool or the drum of a child.

As now the furniture became silent, the clamor made up the deficiency for an hour. Screeching, hallooing, roaring, laughing, and simultaneous conversation continued, till at last the cry of, "Order, gentlemen! Silence for a song!" And the knocking that accompanied these festal rounds drowned every other.

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"Time has not thinned my flowing hair," was struck up by Robbins, at least a sixth too high.

"That won't do," cried Francis. "Time has not thinned my flowing hair." (This time a third too low.)

"Both wrong," exclaimed Wood. "Listen, this is the key: 'Time has not thinned my flowing hair.'"

Now on they went, too low for Robbins's falsetto and too high for his natural voice, and just hovering over the crack that separates Francis's bass from his treble.

Would to mercy on my ears, thought I, that water had *thinned your flowing grog*. However, they got through it fairly well, for they sang this hackneyed, but always incomparable, duet both in time and in tune. Roars of approbation and talking all together in a body. "Toby Philpot," "Boony Bet," and all the old routine of English drinking songs succeeded, with interludes of noise, till at last "My friend so rare, my girl so fair, my friend, my girl, and pitcher," seemed to have exhausted their lungs and their tempo into a general crash, slamming and knocking of chairs and tables around the room. And then silence as they filed out, but it was not of long duration. It broke out again immediately. But the clock had struck one, the party was breaking up, and I rejoiced in the prospect of three hours' sleep before I should be called to proceed by the stage. My joy was premature. Several of the worthies choose to sleep at the tavern, and they were



BILLIARDS AT A COUNTRY TAVERN.

AND  
POLYMER



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ushered into the room exactly over my head; to go to bed quietly would have been entirely out of character. The corporeal exercise of this sort of gentry had no scope below; upstairs all was roomy and the party select. Wrestling, tumbling, dancing, pulling about bedsteads were the gymnastic exercises with which the night was concluded. Between three and four all was still; a feverish doze took possession of my senses, and scarcely had I forgotten myself before the half-sleeping waiter yawned to me that the stage waited at the door.

Philosophy and self-command had many opportunities of exerting themselves in this motley world. To quit a warm bed in order to get into a stage is one of the severest trials to which a man can be put. But "no help for it" is the spur that effects this achievement.

Happiness, convenience, comfort, *bien-être*, it may be said, in mass and in detail depends altogether upon habit, excepting in cases in which physical pain or pleasure or the disappointments of natural wants are concerned.

This premise I deny. There is a great deal more in the science of the French—the *savoir-vivre*—than is admitted by the English and the clergy of all nations and denominations.

In my trips to the quarries to look over the stone

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destined for the public buildings, I have remarked upon the hundreds of half-starved, miserably lodged, idle, besotted, and fever-smitten families that inhabit the country on the Potomac, and indeed all the back country of the slave States below the mountains.

These people are either tenants to great landholders or possess little farms themselves or only inhabit miserable log houses, and hire themselves occasionally as laborers. The river and creeks supply them most amply in ordinary seasons with shad and herring at the expense of little labor and salt. A few pigs and fowl and a cow are kept at scarcely any expense in the woods. The pigs furnish bacon, the cows a scanty supply of milk. The little labor these people do for themselves (and generally they cultivate but little land) gives them as much corn as supports them and a few vegetables, viz., cabbage to their bacon. And the smaller amount of labor they perform for others brings them in their deficient meal, their few groceries, and the great source of their bliss—*whisky*.

The wretched women, who with few exceptions are but mere beasts of burden, spin a little and make up household clothes of all sorts, cotton chiefly, and also lindsey, and earn a little whisky by spinning for more decent and wealthy neighbors. This tribe of wretched (I am told they are happy!) families is numerous in all conscience, and their votes at election time are not unimportant in the new and peculiar phase of politics.

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Within a mile of Mr. Robertson's quarry are fifteen such families, from whom, to use Mrs. Tuttle's phrase, you cannot borrow a gridle's bacon.

Colonel Cook insists upon it that we have not in our everyday existence, and that I have not in my professional interests, means of happiness equal to what whisky is to them.

"But the ague and fever?" quoth I.

"They don't mind it half so much as you do the vexations of your public concerns."

"But the dripping roofs of their huts; the open state of their log walls, which admit the winter's blast from every quarter; their wretched food, often scanty, never certain; their constant fighting and quarreling with each other; the poverty, the disease!"

"Hold, hold!" exclaims Colonel Cook. "I shall forget half of this Pandora's box of questions. First, there is always some dry corner under their dripping roofs, and if they get wet, whisky keeps the cold out. Second," says he, "whisky is better than a tight wall against a northwestern gale. Third, whisky is a substitute for solid food, and an hour's labor earns a day's drunkenness; fighting is a mere amusement, and all quarrels may be made up over a glass of whisky. As to the lesser of the immaterial comforts, they count them small. Less worry they take over them than you do about a mosquito bite."

And what can be said to all this, alas! alas!

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When I sat down to write, however, it was not about these wretches that I meant to spend my ink and paper, but Colonel Cook's arguments popped in upon my memory and drew away my original range of thought. I sat down to find fault with the personal manners of my country, at least this part of it. By personal manners I mean everything that relates to habits of cleanliness and living, food and domestic arrangements. I must confess that many of these things are much better ordered in England than with us, which may be the effect of older customs and usages. . . .

Take the traveler. The half-dozen or ten hours which intervene between his being set down abruptly by the stage at the best tavern between New York and Norfolk and his being taken up again in the morning are far from pleasurable.

In the first place he sups at the ordinary. There are probably two or three clerks, young, permanent residents, farmers, physicians, etc., who, boarding at the house, have the control of the waiters and of all the accommodations, especially as to the hours of meals. A stage passenger is everywhere a little below the rank of any other citizen (those who travel in their private conveyances, of course, are different).

The youngsters at the table are often loud talkers, and their subjects are (*O tempora, O mores!*) the last drunken bout and the girls. This is unpleasant, but

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it is best to be silent in such cases, and that is an effectual resource.

### EXPEDITION TO THE DISMAL SWAMP

SUFFOLK, June 10, 1797.

About the beginning of the month, Mr. Macauley, merchant of York, the acting director of the Old Dismal Swamp Land Company, engaged me to go down to the Swamp to survey the boundaries of the company's property, and to point out such improvements as might occur to me as a professional man.

On Tuesday, the 6th of June, we intended to go down to York by the stage, and having stayed there a day or two, to cross the James River to Smithfield, and then to proceed to Suffolk. But by some mistake the stage set off without us. We therefore resolved to go to Petersburg and take the south side of the river. Our companions in the carriage were Mr. George Hay, of Petersburg, and Mr. Parker, of Smithfield. We breakfasted at Osborn's and arrived about eleven in Petersburg.

Soon after our arrival at Bob Armstead's a tall, well-looking young man introduced himself to me, and presently entered into a very lively conversation upon horses, their diseases, the best mode of treating them; gave me a very intelligent account of an extraordinary marsh upon his estate in Lunenburg County, and was so witty and good-humored that I thought his acquaint-

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ance an acquisition. He dined with us, became equally acquainted with Mr. Macauley, and seemed to be the life of the whole company. He procured our names and gave us his, which was John Mason.

I spent the evening at Mr. Hay's, and returned to the inn about nine o'clock.

The company had just sat down to supper, and Mason was one of the party.

As soon as he saw me he called out, "Walk in, Billy Keely." I thought him drunk. He then introduced me to the gentlemen sitting to his right and left.

"This is Mr. Jones, a very honest, humane little gentleman, as you may tell by the shape of his nose; and this is Mr. Brown, as quiet a good soul as you'll meet in a thousand; and this, sir, is the true Billy Keely."

"Pray, sir," said I, "is Billy Keely a title of distinction or a noun proper?"

"Sir," said he, "let me tell you who Billy Keely is. The Billy Keelys are a numerous family, and by the cut of your jib, or your physiognomy, as the learned say—to which, by the bye, I have taken a very particular fancy—I know you are one of them. Billy Keely is a soft, humane, quiet, and accommodating gentleman, suiting himself to dispositions, tempers, circumstances, and times. He never contradicts roughly, never finds fault, never is out of humor, never quarrelsome. His opinions are right, correct, and virtuous.

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You think he converses, while he argues; you think you have convinced him, but he has changed your own opinions. You think you have conquered, but he has triumphed. Mankind is a great deal better for Billy Keely. He relieves the distressed, comforts the sorrowful, and makes all sad faces put on a smile."

"You do me much honor," said I, "to adopt me into this family of Billy Keelys, and I am very happy to find so many of my relatives in this circle, for I observe that you give them all the same name."

"They are all good fellows," said he, "all Billy Keelys, and we will drink a bottle together." He then ordered a bottle. Some of it was drunk. He ran on for above an hour in the same eccentric, mad way, till he and I were the only members of the Billy Keely family left. In the course of the evening he discovered my fondness for natural history, and immediately turned the conversation to the subject of Dr. Greenaway's studies. He had been educated by that very extraordinary man, and this explained his acquaintance with learned terms and subjects. I thought him excessively drunk, though everything he said was very rational. But it was wildly arranged, and he started from one subject to another without any apparent connection.

I hoped by his means to procure some books left by the late Dr. Greenaway, and which his widow wishes

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to sell. It was with difficulty I escaped from him to bed.

June 11th. About half-past six I came downstairs, and found my friend Billy Keely waiting for me. He had just prepared a mint julep. "Sir," said he, "you do not drink spirit, I know, but still we may take this julep together. I will drink the spirit, you take the botanical part. I am a Virginian dram-drinker, you a disciple of Linnæus."

I was very sorry to see him appear so drunk, and hoped to escape from him by going to breakfast with Mr. Macauley to Mr. George Hay's, but it was in vain. He had fastened upon me like a leech, and he declared he would accompany us. He did so, to the utmost distress of the excellent family. However, he was so witty, his observations were so shrewd and original that he kept us exceedingly merry till it became necessary to return to the inn in order to proceed by the stage. It would be impossible to follow him through four minutes' duration of his eccentric talk. Like the plays of Reynolds, which depend upon unexpected incident, stage effect, the humor of the performer, and the very ridiculous effect of his selection of words, the conversation of Mason would perhaps appear extremely insipid if read.

On our return there happened to be a gentleman on the porch, unlike Mason in every respect except for his extreme fondness for talking. As soon as he saw



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him Mason proceeded to the attack. He introduced him to me under the most ridiculous though indecent name. "Sir," said he, "this is a very particular and entertaining friend of mine, a very distant relative of Billy Keely, a great talker—almost as bad as myself—and above all, let me tell you, a most honest man, the most honest man, I may say, in Petersburg. For you will observe," continued he, turning to me and speaking in a half whisper, "there goes a great deal of very strong sense to make a great rascal." His friend had not sense enough to understand him.

About twelve the stage was ready. After we had gotten in I was distressed to see Mason follow us. He declared he would go one stage with us. I contrived, however, to persuade him to deliver two letters for me at the post-office, and while he was doing it the stage drove off.

During the whole time that this unfortunate man attached himself to me I did not discover the slightest trace of insanity, and was astonished to hear from Mr. Hay, just as I was leaving him, that not only he, but his father and other members of his family, are insane. He spoke more like a drunken than a mad man and acted soberly enough. After hearing that he was insane I could, however, plainly perceive that he is conscious of the light in which he is considered. He is in the highest degree jealous of every look and whisper among those with whom he is conversing; he often

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repeated the words: "They say that both my father and myself are mad, but, notwithstanding, let anyone try to gain his ends with us on that supposition."

John Mason is just mad enough—or, which amounts to the same thing, he acts and speaks just enough out of the common road—to be extremely troublesome without being injurious to society. He drinks hard, and it seems probable that in time he may bring himself into a state of mind in which the law concerning lunatics may reach him. At present there is so much method in his madness that he must be permitted to take liberties which men in their senses dare not attempt. He lives, for instance, upon the tavern keepers without paying them, torments their company without their daring to turn him out or to caution them against him. Both he and his father are accused of having pleaded their insanity in order to violate contracts and to make void imprudent and injurious engagements. All this renders him less an object of pity.

### HOSPITALITY IN VIRGINIA

#### *A Confused Conversation*

"Pray, my good sir," asked Dr. Scandella, "do you think the Virginians *hospitable*? I have heard so much in Europe of the hospitality of the Virginians, and of the Americans in general, that I confess I am most egregiously disappointed. I have met with none

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of it. Where I have been particularly introduced, or have had urgent letters of recommendation, I have received a few invitations to dinner, but I do not call that hospitality.”

When Dr. Scandella—a Venetian gentleman of the most amiable, fascinating manners, and of the best information upon almost every scientific subject, who speaks English perfectly, and who has now traveled through all the country between the St. Lawrence and James rivers—asks such a question, it naturally induces a closer examination of the subject than I might have otherwise given it, having never yet been in a situation in which I could receive the hospitality to which his question particularly applies.

Upon the hospitality of the *rich* in a very infant and almost savage state of society the best treatise is to be found in Dr. Adam Smith’s “Wealth of Nations.” A rich shepherd or a rich cultivator of land, having no market for his cattle or for his corn, wine, and oil, cannot acquire distinction but by distributing these perishable commodities among those who will pay him with praise, who will increase the jollity and mirth of his existence, who will support him in war, and by their number add to the splendor of his retinue. This is the hospitality of a Tartar khan, and was that of a feudal lord. It is entirely selfish.

The hospitality of an Indian is much more amiable. It often arises from an idea of moral duty, or is a re-

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ligiously received law, and has not personal gratification for its immediate object. The experience of the difficulty of procuring food and shelter, especially by a stranger, excites besides that gregarious sensation of



“AN ATTEMPT AT THE FEATURES  
OF PATRICK HENRY.”

compassion that belongs naturally to man as an animal, and on that account savages are in general hospitable in proportion as they are poor. Where strangers are seldom seen curiosity is often a powerful motive for hospitality. An insulated farmer in the back country, or in the thinly populated States, is in some respects in the situation of the feudal lord. It costs him nothing at his plentiful

table to supply the appetites of one or two additional guests, and he receives amusement and entertainment in return. His life in general is insipid and uniform, the visit of a stranger furnishes it with a little variety. But as soon as the market comes nearer to him, or increasing

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population occasions more frequent calls upon him, or he finds the society of towns more accessible, experience has everywhere proved that his hospitality declines.

In answer, therefore, to Dr. Scandella's question, I think I might truly say that Virginia is past that state of society in which the latter species of hospitality was at its acme. It still, however, exists at a distance from all the towns. Strangers are still welcome, although they are now no longer collected "*from the highways and hedges and pressed to come in.*" (But the peculiar manners of the country must also be considered in order to appreciate the degree of hospitality that exists in it.

In spite of the unpopularity which politics will annex to the assertion, the manners of Virginia are English. The English character, with some excellences, has many faults. It is the most cold-hearted and cautious of any nation I know. English hospitality, therefore, like gas under a very low temperature, must be estimated according to the volume it would occupy when raised to the temperature—by Dr. Scandella, for instance—of the Italian sky.

"This," says the doctor, "may be very true; at all events it ingeniously settles the account for the Virginian, but it does nothing for me. I still go without the society and the information I wish to gain. I stayed, for instance, for a week and more at Stanton. I dined frequently at the tavern with all the gentlemen

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in the neighborhood. My inquiries and my accent proved me a stranger, my dress and, I believe, my manners—a gentleman. What was the consequence? I overheard daily whispers—“ Pray, who is that Frenchman? He seems a genteel sort of a man. I wonder what has brought him hither? ” Perhaps I was asked about the present state of affairs in Europe, and no doubt civilly enough treated. But no soul invited me to his house, begged to be better acquainted, or put himself forward to oblige me. I have mentioned Stanton, but the case was exactly similar from Niagara to Richmond.”

I much fear that the doctor’s judgment is correct. And it is certainly, as far as my observation goes, a real fact that, notwithstanding modern principles and prejudices, there is in the minds of us Virginians a practical English unsociability to the French, and we are apt to mistake all but English, Irish, and Scotch for Frenchmen as soon as we hear them open their mouths. An Englishman, I believe, would have fared better, and, especially if recommended to *one* family, would have shared what there is of hospitality in the whole country.

“ Hospitality! What do you mean by hospitality? ” said the doctor. “ Beef, mutton, ducks, geese, and turkeys; a bed and a dish of tea. I came not hither to feast and to drink, but to examine the country and make myself acquainted with the state of society in a



VIEW OF THE TOWN OF NORFOLK FROM TOWN POINT IN 1796.

THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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country as free and as well governed as this. Now, by eating a man's beef and mutton I do not at all put him out of the way, but it has appeared to me that by my inquiries I have put people out of their way and made them uneasy. None but Mr. Jefferson and three gentlemen at Richmond have stepped forward to meet and assist me in that respect. *This*, however, would have been the hospitality of an enlightened and free people. But, estimating their hospitality as you measure the volume of your gas, I feel as much obliged, though much worse informed."

I cannot help agreeing with my friend the doctor, but I answer him thus: The Virginians are no doubt on a par in goodness of heart and soundness of sense with every other nation in the world. The state of their manners, however, being one of the objects of our inquiry, the want of this hospitality exhibits one of its features.

You are a man of letters and a theoretic farmer.<sup>7</sup> Neither of these characters are common among us. You therefore miss the conversation you have been accustomed chiefly to find among those with whom you have elsewhere associated. With the detail of county and State politics you neither are nor wish to be acquainted. This shuts you out from a very large field of conversation which fills up the intercourse of our citizens. The actual state of agriculture in this State is, however, open to you, and upon that subject you

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have no doubt heard much that was interesting. But upon the whole you seem not to be satisfied, and I must therefore remind you that you are in a country in which you could not have expected information, unless you had *eaten* your way to the hearts of its inhabitants.

We must proceed considerably in refinement before the era arrives when, our beef-and-mutton hospitality being quite worn out, the literary hospitality of Europe succeeds it, and till a few have amassed such large stocks of fortune and taste as to spend the former to gratify the latter. In Richmond, for instance, as in the other towns of Virginia, everyone who wishes to treat you hospitably invites you to dinner and asks half his friends to meet you. This is expensive, and, as in all towns most men live up to their incomes, cannot often be repeated. You therefore perhaps hear no more of this friend during the ebb of his ability till, the flood arriving, you are again asked to dine with him. In Europe, and lately even in England, your first invitation would be perhaps to an evening party, the entertainment of which would be a trifle. ] You would be pressed to repeat the visit frequently, and, feeling that you did not incommode, you would come. But we have as yet no such parties, and you must be content to eat beef and mutton now and then till you by degrees become an *amico della casa*, and feel yourself at ease in visiting at such hours as shall be con-

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venient and agreeable to yourself. And, besides, I can assure you that you are entirely mistaken in judging as you do from the Anglican reserve and gravity of our good citizens that they dislike the free visits of strangers. I believe it is, in general, far otherwise.

## CHAPTER III

### A VISIT TO WASHINGTON AT MOUNT VERNON

ON Sunday, the 16th of July, I set off on horseback for Mount Vernon, having a letter to the President from his nephew, my particular friend, Bushrod Washington, Esq. I traveled through a bold, broken country to Colchester. Colchester lies on the north side of the river Occoquan, over which there is a ferry. The river is filled briefly by the backwater of the Potomac. At the ferry it is a hundred and five yards wide, but extends (nearly the same width) only two miles up the country, where it dwindles into a rivulet. The town is small and scattered. The river is shallow and the convenience for trade not considerable. I breakfasted with Mr. Thomas Mason. From Colchester to Mount Vernon the road lies through extensive woods, the distance being about ten miles. About two and one-half miles from the President's house is a mill belonging to him, on a canal brought from the river. Its neatness is an indication of the attention of the owner to his private concerns. The farm of the President extends from the mill to his house. Good fences, clean grounds,

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and extensive cultivation strike the eye as something uncommon in this part of the world, but the road is bad enough. The house becomes visible between two groves of trees at about a mile's distance. It has no very striking appearance, though superior to every other house I have seen here. The approach is not very well managed, but leads you into the area between the stables. The house is a wooden building, painted to represent chamfered rustic, and sanded. The center is an old house to which a good dining room has been added at the north end, and a study, etc., at the south. The house is connected with the kitchen offices by arcades. The whole of this part of the building is in a very indifferent taste. Along the other front is a portico, supported by eight square pillars of good proportions and effect. There is a handsome statuary marble chimney-piece in the dining room with inverted columns on each side. This is the only piece of expensive decoration I have seen about the house, and it is indeed remarkable in that respect. Everything else is extremely good and neat, but by no means above what would be expected in a plain English country gentleman's house of £500 or £600 a year. It is, however, a little above what I have hitherto seen in Virginia. The ground on the west front of the house is laid out in a level lawn, bounded on each side with a wide but extremely formal serpentine walk shaded by weeping willows, a tree which in this country grows very well upon high, dry land. On

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one side of this lawn is a plain kitchen garden, on the other a neat flower garden laid out in squares, and boxed with great precision. Along the north wall of this garden is a plain greenhouse. The plants were arranged in front and contained nothing very rare, nor were they numerous. For the first time since I left Germany I saw here a *parterre* stripped and trimmed with infinite care into the form of a richly flourished *fleur-de-lis*, the expiring groan, I hope, of our grandfathers' pedantry.

Toward the east nature has lavished magnificence, nor had art interfered but to exhibit her advantages. Before the portico a lawn extends on each hand from the front of the house and a grove of locust trees on each side to the edge of the bank. Down the steep slope trees and shrubs are thickly planted. They are kept so low as not to interrupt the view, but merely to furnish an agreeable border to the extensive prospect beyond. The mighty Potomac runs close under this bank, the elevation of which must be perhaps two hundred and fifty feet. The river is here about a mile and a half across, and runs parallel with the front of the house for about three miles to the left and four to the right. To the left it takes a sudden turn round a point and disappears, proceeding to Alexandria and the federal city; but the sheet of water is continued in the Piskattaway, which appears at first sight to be the Potomac, being of the same width. The Piskattaway



VIEW OF MOUNT VERNON LOOKING TO THE SOUTHWEST.

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AND  
ANATOMY  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



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appears in sight to the distance of eight or nine miles and then vanishes at the back of a bold woody headland. This river continues about fifteen miles up the country, a bold stream, being filled by the backwater of the Potomac. It is, however, shallow, and at present no object of commercial advantage. An extent of 1,500 acres, perfectly clear of wood, which borders the river on the left bank on the Virginia side, boldly contracts the remainder of the woody landscape. It is a farm belonging to the President. Its general surface is level but elevated above all inundations. Beyond this sheet of verdure the country rises into bold woody hills, sometimes enriched by open plantations which mount gently above one another till they vanish into the purple distance of the highest ridge twenty miles distant. The Maryland shore has the same character. Opposite to the house, where its detail becomes more distinct, it is variegated by lawns and copses.

After running about four miles to the right, the river turns suddenly to the eastward, but is seen over a range of lowland for a considerable distance. A woody peninsula, running to a point, backs the silver line of the water, and the blue hills of Maryland just appear above the edge of the trees beyond the next bend.

What are descriptions of the face of nature good for? They convey just as much an idea of the scene as the description of the features of a lady does her face.

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The pen and the dictionary of Mrs. Radcliffe has done little more than to tire her reader by setting him to paint imaginary scenes of landscape that interrupt the story. Descriptions of buildings are more successful, in general, and I think she is particularly so in them, though I once endeavored to plan the Castle of Udolpho from her account of it and found it impossible.

Having alighted at Mount Vernon, I sent in my letter of introduction, and walked into the portico next to the river. In about ten minutes the President came to me. He was attired in a plain blue coat, his hair dressed and powdered. There was a reserve but no hauteur in his manner. He shook me by the hand, said he was glad to see a friend of his nephew's, drew a chair, and desired me to sit down. Having inquired after the family I had left, the conversation turned upon Bath, to which they were going. He said he had known the place when there was scarce a house upon it fit to step in, that the accommodations were, he believed, very good at present. He thought the best thing a family, regularly and constantly visiting Bath, could do would be to build a house for their separate accommodation, the expense of which might be two hundred pounds. He has himself a house there which he supposes must be going to ruin. Independent of his public situation, the increased dissipation and frequency of visitors would be an objection to his visiting it again, unless the health of himself or family should render it neces-



Sketch of General Washington  
taken at Mount Vernon while  
he was looking to discover  
a distant vessel on the Po-  
tomac, in which he expec-  
ted some of his friends from  
Alexandria.

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CALIFORNIA

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sary. At first that was the motive, he said, that induced people to encounter the badness of the roads and the inconvenience of the lodgings, but at present few, he believed, in comparison of the whole number, had health in view. Even those whose object it was, were interrupted in their quiet by the dissipation of the rest. This, he observed, must naturally be the case in every large collection of men whose minds were not occupied by pressing business or personal interest. In these and many more observations of the same kind there was no moroseness nor anything that appeared as if the rapidly increasing immorality of the citizens particularly impressed him at the time he made them. They seemed the well-expressed remarks of a man who has seen and knows the world. (

The conversation then turned upon the rivers of Virginia. He gave me a very minute account of all their directions, their natural advantages, and what he conceived might be done for their improvement by art. He then inquired whether I had seen the Dismal Swamp, and seemed particularly desirous of being informed upon the subject of the canal going forward there. He gave me a detailed account of the old Dismal Swamp Company and of their operations, of the injury they had received by the effects of the war, and still greater, which their inattention to their own concerns had done them. After many attempts on his part to procure a meeting of directors, the

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number of which the law provided should be six in order to do business, all of which proved fruitless, he gave up all further hopes of anything effectual being done for their interests, and sold out his shares in the proprietary at a price very inadequate to their real value. Since then his attention had been so much drawn to public affairs that he had scarcely made any inquiry into the proceedings either of the Swamp or of the Canal Company. I was much flattered by his attention to my observations, and his taking the pains either to object to my deductions where he thought them ill-founded, or to confirm them by very strong opinions of his own, made while he was in the habit of visiting the Swamp.

This conversation lasted above one hour, and, as he had at first told me that he was endeavoring to finish some letters to go by the post upon a variety of business "which notwithstanding his distance from the seat of Government still pressed upon him in his retirement," I got up to take my leave; but he desired me, in a manner very like Dr. Johnson's, to "keep my chair," and then continued to talk to me about the great works going forward in England, and my own object in this country. I found him well acquainted with my mother's family in Pennsylvania. After much conversation upon the coal mines on James River, I told him of the silver mine at Rocketts. He laughed most heartily upon the very mention of the thing.

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I explained to him the nature of the expectations formed of its productiveness, and satisfied him of the probability that ore did exist there in considerable quantity. He made several minute inquiries concerning it, and then said that "it would give him real uneasiness should any silver or gold mines be discovered that would tempt considerable capital into the prosecution of that object, and that he heartily wished for his country that it might contain no mines but such as the plow could reach, excepting only coal and iron."

After conversing with me more than two hours he got up and said that "we should meet again at dinner." I then prowled about the lawn and took some views. Upon my return to the house, I found Mrs. Washington and her granddaughter, Miss Custis, in the hall. I introduced myself to Mrs. Washington as a friend of her nephew, and she immediately entered into conversation upon the prospect from the lawn, and presently gave me an account of her family in a good-humored free manner that was extremely pleasant and flattering. She retains strong remains of considerable beauty, seems to enjoy very good health, and to have a good humor. She has no affectation of superiority in the slightest degree, but acts completely in the character of the mistress of the house of a respectable and opulent country gentleman. Her granddaughter, Miss Eleanor Custis, the only one of four who is unmarried, has more perfection of form,

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of expression, of color, of softness, and of firmness of mind than I have ever seen before or conceived consistent with mortality. She is everything that the chisel of Phidias aimed at but could not reach, and the soul beaming through her countenance and glowing in her smile is as superior to her face as mind is to matter.

Young La Fayette with his tutor came down some time before dinner. He is a young man about seventeen, of a mild, pleasant countenance, favorably impressing one at first sight. His figure is rather awkward. His manners are easy, and he has very little of the usual French air about him. He talked much, especially with Miss Custis, and seemed to possess wit and fluency. He spoke English tolerably well, much better, indeed, than his tutor, who has had the same time and opportunities of improvement.

Dinner was served about half after three. It had been postponed about a half-hour in hopes of Mr. Lear's arrival from Alexandria. The President came into the portico about half an hour before three, and talked freely upon common topics with the family. At dinner he placed me at the left hand of Mrs. Washington; Miss Custis sat at her right, and himself next to her about the middle of the table. There was very little conversation at dinner. A few jokes passed between the President and young La Fayette, whom he treats more as his child than as a guest. I felt a little embarrassed at the silent, reserved air that prevailed.





MISS CUSTIS. MRS. WASHINGTON. MASTER LEAR.

SKETCH OF A CLASSIC GROUP AT MOUNT VERNON.



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As I drink no wine, and the President drank only three glasses, the party soon returned to the portico. Mr. Lear, Mr. Dandridge, and Mr. Lear's three boys soon after arrived and helped out the conversation. The President retired in about three-quarters of an hour.

As much as I wished to stay, I thought it a point of delicacy to take up as little of the time of the President as possible, and I therefore requested Mrs. Washington's permission to order my horses. She expressed a slight wish that I would stay, but I did not think it sufficiently strong in etiquette to detain me, and ordered my horses to the door. I waited a few minutes till the President returned. He asked me whether I had any very pressing business to prevent my lengthening my visit. I told him I had not, but that as I considered it an intrusion upon his more important engagements, I thought I could reach Colchester that evening by daylight. "Sir," said he, "you see I take my own way. If you can be content to take yours at my house, I shall be glad to see you here longer."

Coffee was brought about six o'clock. When it was removed the President, addressing himself to me, inquired after the state of the crops about Richmond. I told him all I had heard. A long conversation upon farming ensued, during which it grew dark, and he then proposed going into the hall. He made me sit down by him and continued the conversation for above an hour. During that time he gave me a very minute

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account of the Hessian fly and its progress from Long Island, where it first appeared, through New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, part of Pennsylvania, and Maryland. It has not yet appeared in Virginia, but is daily dreaded. The cultivation of Indian corn next came up. He dwelt upon the advantages attending this most useful crop, and then said that the manner in which the land was exhausted by it, the constant attendance it required during the whole year, and the superior value of the produce of land in other crops would induce him to leave off entirely the cultivation of it, provided he could depend upon any market for a supply elsewhere. As food for the negroes, it was his opinion that it was infinitely preferable to wheat bread in point of nourishment. He had made the experiment upon his own land and had found that though the negroes, while the novelty lasted, seemed to prefer wheat bread as being the food of their masters, soon grew tired of it. He conceived that should the negroes be fed upon wheat or rye bread, they would, in order to be fit for the same labor, be obliged to have a considerable addition to their allowance of meat. But notwithstanding all this, he thought the balance of advantage to be against the Indian corn.

He then entered into the different merits of a variety of plows which he had tried, and gave the preference to the heavy Rotheram plow from a full

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experience of its merits. The Berkshire iron plow he held next in estimation. He had found it impossible to get the iron work of his Rotheram plow replaced in a proper manner, otherwise he should never have discontinued its use. I promised to send him one of Mr. Richardson's plows of Tuckahoe, which he accepted with pleasure.

Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis had retired early, and the President left the company about eight o'clock. We soon after retired to bed. There was no hint of supper.

I rose with the sun and walked in the grounds near the house. The President came to the company in the sitting room about one-half hour past seven, where all the latest newspapers were laid out. He talked with Mr. Lear about the progress of the work at the great falls and in the City of Washington. Breakfast was served up in the usual Virginia style. Tea, coffee, and cold broiled meat. It was very soon over, and for an hour afterwards he stood upon the steps of the west door talking to the company who were collected round him. The subject was chiefly the establishment of the University at the federal city. He mentioned the offer he had made of giving to it all the interests he had in the city on condition that it should go on in a given time, and complained that, though magnificent offers had been made by many speculators for the same purpose, there seemed to be no inclination to carry

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them into reality. He spoke as if he felt a little hurt upon the subject. About ten o'clock he made a motion to retire, and I requested a servant to bring my horses to the door. He then returned, and as soon as my servant came up with the horses, he went to him and asked him if he had breakfasted. He then shook me by the hand, desired me to call if I came again into the neighborhood, and wished me a good morning.

Washington has something uncommonly majestic and commanding in his walk, his address, his figure, and his countenance. His face is characterized, however, more by intense and powerful thought than by quick and fiery conception. There is a mildness about its expression, and an air of reserve in his manner lowers its tone still more. He is sixty-four, but appears some years younger, and has sufficient apparent vigor to last many years yet. He was frequently entirely silent for many minutes, during which time an awkwardness seemed to prevail in everyone present. His answers were often short and sometimes approached to moroseness. He did not at any time speak with very remarkable fluency; perhaps the extreme correctness of his language, which almost seemed studied, prevented that effect. He appeared to enjoy a humorous observation, and made several himself. He laughed heartily several times in a very good-humored manner. On the morning of my departure he treated me as if I had lived for years in his house, with ease and atten-



*Sketch made at Mt. Vernon in July, 1796.*

THE TUTOR.

MRS. WASHINGTON.

MISS CUSTIS.

YOUNG LAFAYETTE.

ANOTHER CLASSIC GROUP AT MOUNT VERNON.





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tion, but in general I thought there was a slight air of moroseness about him as if something had vexed him.

For Washington, had Horace lived at the present age, he would have written his celebrated ode: it is impossible to have ever read it and not to recollect in the presence of this great man the *virum justum propositique tenacem*, etc.

I returned by the same route that had brought me to Mount Vernon. Near the spot at which the roads to Alexandria and Mount Vernon separate lives an old man of the age of eighty-five by his own account. He was born in Yorkshire and his name is Boggis, I think. He is tall, rather thin and rawboned, but perfectly hearty and strong. What is remarkable in him is that he has for many years past lived upon nothing but tea. He drinks his tea three times a day, consuming in it a pound of sugar daily and a great quantity of the richest cream. A pound of tea lasts him a week. He buys the best he can procure, and makes it pretty strong.

The ferryman at Occoquan ferry is one of the uncommon productions called albinos. He is one of several who are children of a man and woman, negroes, brought from Africa—called here salt-water negroes. I could not get an exact account of his family from him, he appeared ashamed of the trick dame Nature had played upon him. He has the exact features of a perfect black, flat nose and thick lips, and is very ugly. His skin, both of his face and body, is uncom-

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monly fair and white. His cheeks and neck, which is extremely thick, are very red and pimpled as if he were a hard drinker. His hair, or rather wool, is yellow, his eyebrows are white with a yellowish cast, and his eyelashes, which are very long and almost choke his eyes, are almost white. His eyes are reddish gray. He wore his hat, and they twinkled as if they were weak, but upon my asking him the question he told me he "had as good eyes as anybody else." I suppose he is much pestered with inquiries and ill-natured jokes upon his color, for he seemed very pettish upon the subject. If his eyes are good, he is an exception to Jefferson's general remark in his notes.

## CHAPTER IV

### THOUGHTS ON NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

RICHMOND, May 28, 1798.

FERDINAND FAIRFAX, ESQ.,

of Shannon Hall, Shenandoah.

*D*EAR SIR: The compliment you have paid to my opinion by requesting that I would furnish you with the observations that occur to me on the perusal of the regulations and by-laws of the Charlestown Academy, requires that I should give them to you freely. I have reason to know your candor, and I believe you will give me credit for sincerity. If I therefore should happen to differ with the benevolent institutors of this undertaking I need not fear that I shall offend you by saying so plainly, nor yet be thought captious in my criticisms for the purpose of exhibiting my judgment.

Education has been the subject of innumerable treatises. They have all, even those which are founded in the boldest and most original trains of thinking, received part of their character from the habits acquired by their authors from the mode which was fashionable in their own education. There is a fashion even of

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sentiment, and wherever there is fashion there is bigotry. I wish we could get rid of fashions in thinking. I think this age less addicted to them than the preceding have been. At all events, more fashions are suffered to live together as contemporaries than formerly, and we have a greater choice of them. They therefore improve by emulation. The old ones, which were seldom changed, and the absurdity of which was not so easily discovered for want of contrast, seldom ceased to be worn until they would no longer hang together.

While religion and law were the only paths of learning which led to riches and honor, and while priests occupied both professions, it was exclusively of other circumstances which made the rest of barbarous Europe dependent upon the remnant of Roman civilization in Italy, good policy in the priests to entrench themselves in the Latin and Greek languages. How effectually the Latin religion and the Latin law of the centuries between the sixth and the fifteenth held Europe in the most abject subjection to ecclesiastical and political tyrants everybody knows. A mathematician was then a heretic, and a natural philosopher a wizard.

After the reformers had driven the priests from many of their strongholds, and Lord Bacon had pointed out, by the way of experiment, the true road to science, or, which is synonymous, to truth, the habits of mankind, though their knowledge was increased, still continued to subsist. Accustomed to see pretended knowl-

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edge only in Greek and Latin dress, they could not bear to behold truth in the plain garb of a vernacular idiom, but tricked out the simple, chaste maiden in the foppery of the harlot.

Learning, in fact, within the remembrance of everyone who is above thirty, was another word for Greek and Latin. Oxford, and even Cambridge, are yet immense hospitals, in which lingers, decrepit and mortally wounded, what remains of Greek and Latin ignorance in England, and within these forty years, in Germany, to write upon any literary subject in German was to proclaim the ignorance of the author. Out of the pale, however, of the old seminaries, whose crazy and diseased constitutions can never be repaired, and which may now be safely suffered to die a natural death, the men of letters, both in Europe and America, have shaken off the shackles of the dead languages, and quitting their study with the slavery of the schools, more useful knowledge employs their attention and their time. Now no man of genius or clear understanding devotes himself to the settling of doubtful readings in useless works or to the acquisition of the command of a language which he will never be required to speak or to write.

In the establishment of a new seminary in a country, the social and political duties of which are settled, it were much to be wished that every part of instruction should tend to render the citizen useful and the

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man happy. A republic would be ill served if its schools were only contrived to create a privileged class of men furnished with languages, to the acquirement of which in perfection a gregarious education of long continuance is absolutely necessary, which cannot be applied to the common transactions of life, and which, therefore, as we see of other things that are useless and rare, command reverence from those who want and feel pride in those who profess them.

As America took the lead in the practice of improved political theory in the organization of a community, I sincerely wish that she may set the example of a rational education of her citizens.

American citizens may be divided into only three classes, cultivators of the soil, artisans, and merchants. Of the practical sciences, the first have most occasion for a knowledge of chemistry, natural history, and national philosophy; the second, of those branches of mathematics called usually mechanics (or *materia applicata*); and the third, of numeral mathematics. To each a general range of science is highly useful, but these ought, in my opinion, to be the leading objects of education in an American seminary. They may be acquired without the knowledge of Latin or Greek, although an acquaintance with these beautiful languages will greatly ease the memory in retaining the technical vocabulary and assist in comprehending the precise meaning of terms, most of which are taken



MOUNT VERNON LOOKING TO THE NORTH, JULY 17, 1796.

1911  
1912



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from them. Young men, and of these there will always be a great number in a country circumstanced as ours is—young men who will have sufficient property to purchase philosophic leisure, whose business it is “to do little, but to observe everything,” will, in such a course of study, be rendered capable of employing and amusing themselves usefully throughout their lives, while little can be expected from a mere knowledge of Greek and Latin toward the improvement of the enjoyments of American society.

I cannot, therefore, help regretting that your seminary has so far followed the beaten track of the old schools as to place knowledge of Greek and Latin at the head of your studies. I am by no means ignorant of all the advantages attending a critical knowledge of the ancient languages. They are included in the following heads:

1. In learning a dead language, or even a living one, which must be acquired not in loose conversation, but in reading and analyzing authors who are perfectly correct in their diction, and in composing by dint of inflexible rules, a general knowledge of language and of grammar becomes so imprinted upon the mind, at an age when permanent impressions are easily received, that it may never be effaced. This general knowledge comes into use whenever a living language is to be learned or the native language studied.

2. The dry, laborious study of words, uninterest-

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ing in themselves, inures the mind to labor and to the habits of attention.

3. So many useful and elegant works are written in these languages that it is worth while to expend much time in obtaining the key that unlocks these treasures.

4. A knowledge of Latin, and especially of Greek, renders it easy to understand the technical language of every science.

5. There is a time when it is difficult to employ boys in anything else, and when it is very indifferent what they are employed in, provided they be kept out of mischief. They may, therefore, as well be learning languages, which may perhaps become useful, and never can be a burden.

The first argument, the importance of acquiring a perfect knowledge of grammar, has perhaps the most weight, and is the principal reason why, after all the useful sciences, I would recommend the study of Greek and Latin.

Second. If the minds of children generally were less capable of understanding mathematical truths or of retaining facts in natural history or philosophy than of remembering grammatical rules, for which no reasons can be assigned, and which do not interest the mind in any degree, I would agree that Greek and Latin should be forced into their memories at all hazards. But I believe the contrary to be the case generally. I know it from my own experience, and besides

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the presumption is highly reasonable. I think of a boy ten or twelve years old I could much sooner make a perfect botanist than a good Greek scholar; and I am sure the botanist would be happier, healthier, and less agitated by false notions of glory and honor than the expositor of Homer; nor do I believe his mind would have acquired less activity and vigor.

Third. If there be little weight in the other points, then this argument can have none, for all the good works of the ancients may be read in excellent translations.

Fourth. To comprehend and remember easily the technical terms of science, it is very true that a knowledge of the learned languages is highly useful, but a much slighter acquaintance with Greek and Latin is necessary than that proposed by the usual modes of education, and which is attainable in a much shorter space of time. Indeed, the knowledge of a science will lead to, and render pleasant, the study of its language, the latter being subordinate to the former.

Fifth. I am so ashamed of the fifth reason that were it not very commonly urged I should not have quoted it. It is answered under the second head.

My objection, therefore, goes not to teaching Greek and Latin, but to the preference given to the Greek and Latin instruction. I should object even to its being upon a level with moral philosophy, mathematics, physics, or modern languages. But, by the constitu-

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tion of your school, it not only has the preference, but will very probably absorb the attention which other studies more deservedly claim. "*The principal shall be a professed teacher of the Greek and Latin languages,*" and shall be only "*competent to teach mathematics,*" etc.; "*he shall be the teacher of the Latin school.*" What a preponderance in favor of words, and how little is done for truths! How inevitably must your academy, carried along by the current and organized into the habits of this old prejudice, run into a channel by no means intended to be cut out for it by the other regulations of the benevolent founders.

I observe that with the instruction in Greek and Latin the elements of history, rhetoric, and poetry are to be connected. This is some atonement for the attention forced into the channel of the languages; and if the authors read in the Greek and Latin schools be more judiciously chosen than has been usual in the old schools, it is impossible not to combine the acquisition of the language with that of the useful knowledge conveyed in it. But then Terence, Phædrus, Ovid, and other poets, from whom no one ever learned a single useful fact, should be rejected, and in their room it would be well to substitute Justin's epitome of the history of Trogius Pompeius, as being an easy and entertaining writer, and containing a tolerably good sketch of general history; Cornelius Nepos, Cæsar's "*Commentaries,*" and for the more advanced scholars, Livy,



VIEW OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND FROM THE BANKS OF THE JAMES RIVER IN 1796.



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and, above all, Tacitus, the most elegant and virtuous of historians. I would confine the study of poetry to Virgil, and select pieces to Horace. In eloquence, Cicero's book "De oratore" stands for all that ever has been or will be written, and ought to be well digested by those who propose to plead at the bar or to serve their country or their party in the senate. I believe the first Latin book which is studied appears to the student to be written in the easiest style, at least I have always thought Livy and Cicero to be the easiest of all Latin authors, because I first learned the language by reading their works. Many of my friends, however, think them more difficult than others whom I cannot read with equal ease. Should the observation be true, and it is reasonable, the book "De oratore" might be put into the hands of very young students as well as any other, and might upon the whole be the most useful to those who propose to read only a few ancient writers, and to devote most of their attention to science.

In Greek the works of Xenophon are among the richest treasures of the language. I wonder his "Anabasis" is so little read in schools. It is highly entertaining and instructive, and as a composition nothing can be more elegant. The "Cyropædia" is not less elegant and instructive, but boys will think much of it very dull. Plutarch has both the advantages of fixing the attention to his story and teaching the purest

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Greek by his style. Herodotus, with both those excellences—and without both no ancient author ought to be put into the hands of a scholar—has another of considerable importance. The subject of his work, the institutions of Egypt, which he has often been charged with disguising in fables, is daily more and more found to be faithfully copied from actually existing facts; and he conveys much important knowledge concerning the cradle of all the past and present religious systems which have been called Christianity. He is well translated by Beloe. Homer's "Iliad," which no one can more admire as an effort of genius than myself, is, I think, the most improper book for a school. It poisons the minds of young men, fills them with a rage for military murder and glory, and conveys no information which can ever be practically useful. Sooner than suffer my pupil to learn to read without horror many beautiful passages he should read nothing but Theocritus and Anacreon. It is better to soften the mind of a boy of fifteen by a picture of a tender shepherdess hanging upon the neck of her lover than to set it on fire by a description of brains dashed out, bellies ripped open, blood streaming around, and convulsed heroes gnawing the earth in agony. But neither is necessary.

To the mathematical school there can be no objection, provided the trustees watch over it and prevent it becoming a mere ciphering school. Half the rules of the common books of arithmetic are useless to one



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who understands the principles of algebra. Arithmetic is generally a heavy study to boys, because it is rendered entirely a business of memory, no reasons being assigned for the rules. A schoolbook of arithmetic accompanied with demonstrations is much wanted. We do boys from seven to fifteen years old great injustice in supposing they cannot reason.

Natural philosophy and history ought to have a fair proportion of time. Moral science and political economy ought to have a separate school. Adam Smith's book, "The Wealth of Nations," ought to be the groundwork of a very principal instruction. We much want a schoolbook upon this subject. It is a subject the most necessary for an American citizen.

Two more schools are allotted to languages, that is, to words. The time, class, or school allotted to English might include the French language, but under separate teachers.

I highly approve the degree, neither more nor less, of attention paid to writing.

I confess I am shocked at the first section of the fifth chapter. Let us first examine into the meaning of the word punishment as generally understood, and as intended here. Is it not synonymous with revenge? As an American republican I may ask what right has any human being to prescribe laws to the actions of any other unless they be injurious to him? What right has any American citizen to say to any other, "You

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shall get Quis, quæ, quid by heart by a certain time or you shall be punished"? What injury does the punisher receive from the neglect? Can he even plead the savage law of retaliation? But suppose the fault to be punished to be of the active kind. Suppose tricks be played, and quibs and crackers thrown in the school. Then punishment can only be just, as it is retaliation, as it is revenge. Punishment upon this principle—and my reasoning applies to all legislative punishment—is, in fact, a repetition of the offense, and most frequently it is a repetition with aggravation. If the punishment be, as we falsely say, *just*, or exactly adequate to the crime, that is, if the pain, or evil, or inconvenience inflicted upon the criminal be equal to that occasioned by him, the moral nature of the act of punishment would stand in the place and be as *bad* as that of the crime if the crime had not preceded it. And will anyone say that moral actions are good or bad according to their succession in the order of time?

This reasoning appears to me to be mathematical, and by no means puts an end to social order and discipline. We have mistaken the moral rights of communities because we have mistaken the moral rights of man. We have taken it for granted that retaliation is a law of nature because it is the propensity of educated man. But can that be a law of nature that in its mildest form *doubles* the injury committed? Nor is it certain that the propensity is natural, because the

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desire of revenge may, by education, be rendered as perpetually absent from the mind of the dervish and the true Christian as it is perpetually present to that of the Cherokee and the Arab. We Christians who cherish laws of honor are in the situation of the Cherokee.

The original rights of man are bounded by his individual existence and his individual interests. They are self-preservation and self-defense. I cannot conceive a principle upon which they can be further extended. A society is an interchange and a union of these individual rights. Every individual has a right to enter into compact by mutual consent for mutual preservation and defense, and under this compact to observe certain laws. But what right have I to force any man or boy into my society and to make him observe its laws? If an individual of my society refuse to conform to its rules, let him be removed. If, after agreeing to abide by them, he is guilty of their violation, that act cancels his title to protection, and he ceases to be a member of it. The preservation and defense of the society require his removal, and the society has a right to remove him. A school is such a society, as far as the rights of one individual over the other extend. It is an institution for the good of its members, and my argument might be strengthened by considering the matter in another point of view, and deciding upon the morality of what is called punishment by its utility.

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As far as punishment is the effect upon the punished and not the act of the punisher, so far is exclusion from the society the severest that can be suffered. It involves the society in no immoral act, and it makes unhappiness what it is in nature, in spite of human ingenuity to invert her order, synonymous with misconduct. This fact applies particularly to a school. Does a boy fear the ferula half as much as a temporary separation from his schoolmates? We all know the contrary.

If this be mere theory, look at experience. Crimes, she teaches us, abound in every State, in proportion to the multitude and severity of penal laws. This proves that if they be immoral, they are at the same time ineffectual. On the other hand, examine that great and first experiment in the moral science of mind—the penitentiary house at Philadelphia. I may be told that it is an insult to an academy to compare it to a prison. Is it not a greater to make it a place of execution, and to erect in it a whipping post? So much for the punishment. But as to the exception, it is worse than the rule. No boy of sixteen and upward is to receive corporeal punishment. Those under that age—the more innocent, the more incapable of resistance, those who being more ignorant are less guilty—they are to be punished!

The lenity of public and private admonition is very laudable. But I do not like the title of the “Book of Disgrace.” It will tend only to fix a stigma upon



BUCKHALTER'S FERRY, ON THE SUSQUEHANNA.

THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY  
AND  
ANATOMY

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a boy, which he may not practically wipe off again by ever so good behavior. It betrays anger against those recorded in it and excites it in them. If such a book must be kept, why not call it what it is, the "Record of Misconduct."

It occurs to me that in this country, however, such a record were improper, unless every boy on leaving the school could be satisfied that the record of his misconduct were destroyed. How most injuriously might not the youthful follies of a meritorious citizen be brought forward against him from such a record—from political or any other hostile motives! The intention of the book is obvious and good; but it appears to me to be very open to abuse in its application.

No master ought to be permitted to punish at his discretion, under the idea of punishment evidently established by these rules. He will punish promptly if he has the power. If punishment be admitted, it should be delayed and considered. The very act of punishment, though begun in the most philosophic temper and coldest blood, excites anger by the habitual association of angry feelings with inflicted blows, and the last strokes are always the severest. If begun while the irritation of the offense is fresh, the floggings will be, what, to the disgrace of humanity and of reason, it is in all the schools which I have ever known, the most flagitious act committed within their walls. I cannot bear the idea, besides, of tormenting the poor little

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boys and letting the strong fellows escape. The personal feeling of the master, operating by rules of capricious dislike or favoritism, will dictate the infliction and the measure of the punishment.

As I have already given you my sentiments so freely upon the by-laws as they are before me, I will add a few words more:

Nothing can be of greater importance than to render the study of language and science amusing to the scholars. The former is always disagreeable to the boys, especially at first. On this account the most entertaining authors ought to be put into their hands. I have, therefore, recommended such as I thought agreeable when I was very young. Much will, however, also depend upon the method of the master.

For the preservation of the morals of the boys they should be under constant inspection. But this inspection should not be constant government. Therefore the hours unoccupied by school ought to be devoted to established games of ingenuity and activity under the eye of the master, or usher, whose sole interference should be to prevent dispute and decide doubtful cases of skill, unless he chose to play with them, which could not, I think, degrade the greatest philosopher under heaven. The rewards should be impressive trifles. Cricket, running, swinging, seesaw, and tops may be thus made moral amusements. If the boys be moderately fatigued by exercise in the day, they will



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be glad to go to bed and rest at night, when otherwise they would be planning adventures of fifty sorts. I know by my own experience much of the ingenuity of boys to contrive nocturnal rambles and meetings, and I believe they are everywhere alike, and differ only according to their management.

But the most amusing and useful recreations to boys, and indeed a most important one to the community, would be their being trained to arms and military evolutions. While arms wound, and men, believing their separate interests to be different from those of the human race, have recourse to arms to decide their quarrels, every citizen ought to learn how to defend himself against, and repel, a hired soldier. If this be learned by the boy, it will never be forgotten by the man. Let their officers be chosen by themselves for a limited term, so as to give each the chance of a turn. Let the principal, or the trustees, commission them. Their mothers will find them uniforms. If in every neighborhood throughout the State the boys from seven to fifteen were regimented, and called out to parade frequently, no useful labor would be lost, no public expense incurred, a well-trained and disciplined militia would be formed, always ready to act though unexercised for many years. Habits acquired at so early a period of life are never lost, as no one forgets how to dance, to swim, to ride, or to skate. This is enough for a hint.

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I am sure no apology is necessary to you for the freedom of these remarks. Had I kept back my sentiments then I ought to have apologized. Your academy has an early stand upon the list of Virginian attempts at rational education, and if I may judge from the hearts and heads of its promoters, it will be as successful as it is early in its exertions in the cause of mankind. *Esto perpetua!*

## CHAPTER V

### PHILADELPHIA

RICHMOND, April 19, 1798.

*F*AR fetched and dear bought," as the proverb says, are epithets that human pride has made almost synonymous with *excellent*, *valuable*, and *useful*. Talk to an Englishman of white marble columns of the United States Bank, thirty feet high, and he is astonished at the magnificence of the said columns. In London indeed such columns would not only be magnificent, but really valuable. They would contain the value of all labor necessary to bring them thither from some place where they were equally magnificent, but less valuable, by the whole amount of that labor. As nine-tenths of our American, even our Virginian ideas and prejudices, are English, a very large proportion of the admiration which we have bestowed upon the said white marble columns has been bestowed upon the material, the *white* marble. Now it happens to be a fact that any other material besides white marble was not to be easily procured at Philadelphia. And so common is its use that the steps to the meanest house and checks to cellar doors are frequently made of it.

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Gray marble, something like that of Carrara, is equally common. I do not know where the quarries are situated.

The white marble columns of the bank are full of bluish and yellowish veins, but they have, notwithstanding, a very beautiful appearance. Sufficient attention has not been paid to the successive heights of the blocks, nor are the joints level. The plain workmanship is well executed. The sculpture is not good.

April 20, 1798.

While I was at Philadelphia, William Cobbett, alias Peter Porcupine, did me the honor of the following notice. The paragraph furnished me with a hearty laugh, and I am not a little pleased with the posthumous honor done to my father's memory, who has been dead about eleven years. Miss Willems is Mrs. Green, for whose benefit the apology was acted. She was a very good dancer, and sings very well, though in the style of the English stage, which does not please here. She is a very respectable woman, and a mother. I am sorry to have been the occasion of the abuse thrown upon her, although the abuse of Porcupine is, in general, a certain proof of merit.

### " A FARCE AND A FIRE

" At Sans-culotte *Richmond*, the metropolis of *Negro-land*, alias the *Ancient Dominion*, alias *Virginia*,

## PHILADELPHIA

there was, some time ago, a *farce* acted for the benefit of a girl by the name of Willems, whose awkward gait and gawky voice formerly contributed to the ridicule of the people of Philadelphia.

“The farce was called the *Apology*; it was intended to satirize *me* and *Mr. Alexander Hamilton* (I am always put in good company), and some other friends of the federal Government. The thing is said to be the most detestably dull that ever was mouthed by strollers. The author is one *La Trobe*, the son of an old seditious dissenter; and I am informed that he is now employed in the erecting of a *Penitentiary House*, of which he is very likely to be the *first tenant*.

“In short, the farce was acted, and the very next night the playhouse was *burnt down!* I have not heard whether it was *by lightning* or not.”

The intelligence was conveyed, as I understood at Philadelphia, to Peter Porcupine by a letter from Richmond, written in order to counteract the effect of some letters of recommendation which I carried with me with a view to the design of an arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

My stay at Philadelphia was too short to enable me to say anything concerning the state of society there. As far as I did observe, I could see no difference between Philadelphian and English manners. The same style of living, the same opinions as to fashions, tastes,

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comforts, and accomplishments. Nor can it be well otherwise. The perpetual influx of Englishmen, the constant intercourse of the merchants—here the leaders of manners and fashion—with England, must produce this effect. In Virginia, where this influx and intercourse is not so great, there appears a shade of character somewhat different.

Political fanaticism was, during my residence in Philadelphia, at its acme. The communications from our envoys in Paris, the stories about X Y Z and the lady, etc., were fresh upon the carpet. British influence may be denied by one party, and French influence asserted. But a very short residence in Philadelphia will leave no doubt upon that subject. To be civilly received by the fashionable people, and to be invited to the President's, it is necessary to visit the British ambassador. To be on terms with Chevelier D'Yrujo, or General Kosciusko even, is to be a marked democrat, unfit for the company of the lovers of order and good government. This I saw. Many of my Virginian friends say I must be mistaken.

I boarded at Francis's hotel. It is a much cheaper house than any I have been at in the Virginian towns. For breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, exclusive of liquors and fire, you pay \$8 a week. At the Virginian house  $7/6$  per day or \$8.75, exclusive of liquors, tea, supper, and fire.

I left Philadelphia on Wednesday morning, April



THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER BELOW THE FALLS.





## PHILADELPHIA

11th, in the mail stage. The weather was very bad again, the roads, however, were better than when I came up. Between Philadelphia and Chester we lamed a horse, which accident delayed us near two hours. Dined at Wilmington. Got very late to the head of Elk, and through the most horrid of roads from thence to the Susquehannah at half-past twelve. It was very calm, but a strong fresh in the river rendered crossing tedious. At Barney's, where we arrived at half-past one, there was neither fire nor supper provided. After much grumbling we procured both, and got to bed about half-past two. At four we were again in the stage, breakfasted at Hartford, and arrived in Baltimore at eleven o'clock. The weather cleared up, but the roads were as bad as ever. Breakfasted the morning of the 13th at Spurriers, dined at Bladensburg. Bladensburg is a little village on the eastern branch of the Potomac, and has a very picturesque situation in a deep valley, surrounded by woody eminences. We stopped a few minutes in the federal city, during which time I rambled over the Capitol. We got to Georgetown and crossed the Potomac an hour before sunset. Scarce, however, had we proceeded half a mile before we broke our splinter bar. Mr. Rogers and I therefore resolved to walk on. It was soon dark and began to rain, and we trudged up to our knees in mud a great part of the way to Alexandria. The stage overtook us just as we entered the town, about ten

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o'clock. At three we again resumed our journey. We had a very pleasant day and a very pleasant party, so that I forgot my excessive fatigue and a dreadful cold. The trees on this side of the Potomac seemed at least a fortnight more forward in vegetation than they were in Pennsylvania. We breakfasted at Colchester, dined at Stratford Court-house, and arrived at Fredericksburg about six o'clock. I took up my quarters at Mr. John Minor's, where I stayed also Sunday, the 15th. Spent the evening with Mr. Slackley. Set off again Monday morning at three, and arrived in Richmond at half-past five. The only tolerable roads on the whole journey are between Fredericksburg and Richmond.

The expense of going to Philadelphia from Richmond in the stage is as follows:

Stage to Fredericksburg..	\$3.50	Breakfast 2/6, -3/-..	\$0.50
Stage to Georgetown...	3.50	Dinner, 6/-.....	1.00
Stage to Baltimore....	4.75	Bed and supper, 4/6-	.75
Mail to Philadelphia...	8.00		<u>2.25</u>
Heavy stage to do. \$5.00			
	<u>\$16.75</u>	Five days .....	\$11.25
	\$19.75	Stage .....	\$19.75
		Expenses .....	11.25
			<u>\$31.00</u>

N. B.—The heavy stage arrives later in Philadelphia and occasions more expense on the road, but *returning* the \$3 are a clear saving, if you can proceed immediately from Baltimore.

## PHILADELPHIA

RICHMOND, April 26, 1798.

Among the buildings of Philadelphia I did not mention the house of Robert Morris, because I knew not what to say about it in order to record the appearance of the monster in a few words. Indeed I can scarcely at this moment believe in the existence of what I have seen many times, of its complicated, unintelligible mass. Though I was in the pile, I protest against any inquiries from me as to the plan, for I cannot possibly answer them.

Mr. L'Enfant, the architect, never exhibited his drawings to any but Mr. Morris and his wife, so that I could not obtain any information of the intention of the different parts of the building from my friends who have been very often in it, and were well acquainted with Mr. Morris and also with L'Enfant.

The external dimensions of the house are very large. I suppose the front must be at least one hundred and twenty feet long, and I think the flank cannot be less than sixty. Every side of the house is as yet in the most unfinished state possible, although much of the marble dressing is entirely complete in patches and the whole building is covered in. The south front is not yet raised from the ground in the center part, but part of each side is quite finished. The roof, in the meantime, is carried by shares. At each angle is a sort of a bow, or tower, or what you please, for it would be difficult to define the sort of thing by any one term.

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It consists of two square and three curvilinear faces, the square faces projecting about nine inches before the other. In each face is a window in each of the two stories. The windows, at least some of them, and the others appear unfinished, are cased in white marble



A STUDY IN HEADS.

with moldings, entablatures, architraves, and sculpture mixed up in the oddest and most inelegant manner imaginable; all the proportions are bad, all the horizontal and perpendicular lines broken to pieces, the whole mass giving the idea of the reign of Louis XIII in France or James I in England. I cannot anyhow conceive by what accident the windows were finished

## PHILADELPHIA

in the order they are. For some in the east, others in the west, a few in the north, and one or two in the south, have their dressings complete, while their neighbors still exhibit the rough brick wall. There is a recess, across which a colonnade of one-story columns was intended, the two lateral ones being put up, with a piece of their architrave reaching to the wall; I cannot guess what was intended above them. There is a wide opening with an elliptical rough arch in the brick wall. Conjecture is entirely baffled here, nor could I obtain the smallest information what could be intended. In the south front are two angle porches. The angle porches are irresistibly laughable things, and violently ugly. The bow is open to the roof, the bases only of the columns being laid in niches, as in the front of St. Peter's at Rome, from which I hope they were copied, as such a madness in modern architecture stands in great need of a powerful apology. The pilasters are carried up, however, to their neckings, and being diminished, they look horrible—indeed everybody who sees them supposes they have given way and are ready to fall down. There is a profusion of wretched sculpture about these fragments of porticoes and scraps of colonnades. The sockets of all the architraves are enriched with panels and foliage. The capitals of the columns are of the worst taste. They are a sort of composite, and resemble those of the —— at Rome, the production of the worst times of the art. The roof is

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an immense mansard, and on the top of it are three or four prominent skylights.

The whole mass altogether gives no idea at first sight to the mind sufficiently distinct to leave an impression. I went several times to the spot and gazed upon it with astonishment before I could form any conception of its composition. It singularly made me wish to take a drawing of it, but the very bad weather prevented me. It is impossible to decide which of the two is the madder, the architect or his employer. Both of them have been ruined by it.

It is now sold to Mr. Sansom of the Pennsylvania Bank, who means to convert it, as I am told, into five houses.

This is the house of which I had frequently been told in Virginia that it was the *handsomest* thing in America.

April 27, 1798.

The Capitol in the federal city, though, as I mentioned in my journal at Philadelphia, it is faulty in external detail, is one of the first designs of modern times. As I shall receive a plan of it from either Dr. Thornton or Mr. Volney, I mean to devote a particular discussion to it at my leisure.

April 29, 1798.

On inspecting the plan of the city of Philadelphia, and observing the numerous wide and straight streets,

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it will not be easily believed that want of ventilation can be entirely the cause of the yellow fever which has made such dreadful and frequent devastations among the inhabitants. It is true that there are narrow and



*A Whig reading a Gory-paper.*

often very filthy alleys which intersect the interior of the squares bounded by the principal streets and in which the air may stagnate. The back yards of most of the houses are also depositories of filth to a degree which is surprising, if the general cleanly character of

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the Pennsylvanians be considered. There must be some cause more powerful and more specific. This cause may, I believe, be found in the following circumstance:

The soil between the Delaware and Schuylkill is generally flat, and though not entirely so, yet it has strongly the appearance of being factitious, that is, deposited by the two rivers; or perhaps it was the shallowest part of the bed of the Delaware and Schuylkill united, at the period when the waters of all these North American rivers were elevated between one hundred and two hundred feet above their present levels. At that time, then, the present Delaware and Schuylkill were perhaps two channels only in this immense river. The soil consists of a bed of clay of different depth, from ten to thirty feet. It is excellent brick earth, being very smooth and free beneath the surface from stone or gravel. Below this bed of clay is universally a stratum of sand. In this sand runs a stratum of water, and as it is impossible to dig into it without finding clear and excellent water in an inexhaustible quantity, let the wells and pumps be ever so near to each other, it appears to me not at all extravagant to suppose that the waters of the two rivers unite through this sand stratum, which serves as a filtering bed. The water naturally, therefore, is universally as clear as crystal and tastes as sweet and as free from heterogeneous particles as possible. But this very circumstance, the inexhaustible supply of clear water to be found in



## PHILADELPHIA

every possible spot of ground, and which must have appeared the most tempting inducement to its projector, Penn, to found here a city, is the great cause, in my opinion, of the contagion which appears now to be an annual disease of Philadelphia, the yellow fever. The houses being much crowded, and the situation flat, without subterraneous sewers to carry off the filth, every house has its privy and its drains which lodge their supplies in one boghole sunk into the ground at different depths. Many of them are pierced to the sand, and as those which are sunk thus low never fill up, there is a strong temptation to incur the expense of digging them deep at first to save the trouble and noisomeness of emptying them.

In every street, close to the footpath, is a range of pumps at the distance of about sixty or seventy feet from which all the water which is used for drinking or culinary purposes is drawn. The permeability of the stratum in which the water runs, and which the action of the pump draws to itself from all parts round it, must certainly contaminate the water of every pump in the neighborhood of a sink loaded with the filth of the family, and as the number of these sinks is very superior to that of the pumps, each of them is in a manner surrounded by noxious matter. That this must be the case is evident from these facts: 1. Those who now live in the heart of the town, as in Fifth, Sixth, or Seventh streets, but who can remember when their

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houses were in the skirts of the city, complain that their water is growing worse since the accumulation of houses beyond them. 2. All the public buildings, which have large open squares around them, as the State House, the penitentiary house, the hospital, etc., have excellent water, and their pumps are resorted to by all their neighborhood. 3. All the houses on the skirts of the town, from Ninth to Eleventh streets, have admirable water as yet. 4. In the rest of the city the water is not to be drunk, and it is worst in the most crowded neighborhoods. It appeared to me to taste as if it contained putrid matter. 5. Before the pumps were furnished with iron ladles, chained to the stocks, for the purpose of drinking at them, those who were desirous of satiating their thirst at the pump—which very frequently happened to the lower class of people in the violent heat of summer—had no other method than to put their mouths to the spout, while they used the handle. It was, therefore, a very common thing that people fell down dead at the pump. This was accounted for by their drinking the cold water while they were heated by exercise. But it appears to me infinitely more probable that the water in the pump, loaded with all kinds of putrid and putrifying animal substances, was in a state of chemical dissolution, and that a noxious gas, containing probably a very large portion of azote, swam, and was confined upon its surface, the top of the pump being closed by an ornamental



THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER OPPOSITE WISSAHICKON.

1912  
1913

## PHILADELPHIA

knob. This gas was, of course, forced into the mouth by the raising of the bucket and inhaled strongly, as everyone who is going to drink at a stream draws in his breath with great force. Instantaneous suspension of life must be the consequence. I have been assured by a very respectable and credible man who lived long in Philadelphia, and was a very active member of the corporation, that to his knowledge no less than thirteen men thus died at the pump in one day, and that no such accident had ever been heard of since the ladles were provided.

Thus, therefore, we have a proof that there does exist in the mode by which the city is supplied with water a very abundant source of disease, independent of the noxious exhalations of the narrow and filthy alleys and lanes. It is true that the inhabitants of Philadelphia drink very little water. It is too bad to be drunk, and that which is used in tea and cookery loses, no doubt, most, if not all, of its noxious quality. But the evil lies in the constant fermentation of the stratum of water and production of mephitic air, to which the pumps are so many chimneys to convey it into the streets and open windows at all times, and from which it is regularly pumped up every time the handle is depressed.

As to the public sewers, there are not very many of them, and I do believe they are productive of much mischief. That in Dock Street is a very great evil,

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but it spreads over a small extent of the city and through a very few streets, for I believe it produces no noxious vapors excepting when the tide is out.

The great scheme of bringing the water of the Schuylkill to Philadelphia to supply the city is now become an object of immense importance, though it is at present neglected from a failure of funds. The evil, however, which it is intended collaterally to correct is so serious and of such magnitude as to call loudly upon all who are inhabitants of Philadelphia for their utmost exertions to complete it.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

FREDERICKSBURG, July 9, 1796.

**A**MONG the many ingenious insects that I have met with in Virginia, the dirt-daubers, more decently called masons, are particularly worth notice. They are a species of wasp of a dark-blue color. Their cells are built of clay and are in appearance somewhat similar to the nests of the English house martins. I have not had an opportunity of examining them, but am told that each cell contains an egg and a spider. They are now at work; later in the year I shall break into one of their fortresses; at present I think it a pity to put them out of their way. My attention was this morning drawn to one of them who was walking up and down his mud fort. Near him a very large spider had extended his net, but had left it to attack a caterpillar about two inches long, which was crawling up the wall in order to suspend itself and retire into the state of a chrysalis. The spider was of a dark-purple color, with one large and two small white spots on his abdomen and a few slight white marks down the sides. The thorax was almost black. His

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legs were short and very thick and mottled with white. He had but lately begun his meal, for his body was not much extended. I attacked him with a straw. He immediately ran off sideways with his load, the cubic contents of which were at least eight or ten times as large as himself; but upon being closely pursued he dropped it and suspended himself from my straw by a thread. I wound him up upon it and put him near the dirt-dauber. The wasp seemed immediately in great agitation, and ran at him. The spider must have given the wasp a bite, for he darted back. However, he soon attacked him again and again retreated. The spider seemed willing to decline the combat, and I had some trouble to keep him near the wasp's fortification. My curiosity was, however, balked, for the dirt-dauber got entangled among some neighboring cobwebs and the spider took the opportunity of my endeavoring to extricate him to drop himself by a thread into a crevice beyond my reach. The wasp cleaned his wings and legs with great address and then flew off. He soon returned with some dirt held between his legs. The road to his cells was through an abattoir of cobwebs, and I observed that the wasp took particular care to clean himself every time he flew off by running to some clear place and using his legs like a fly. They are no doubt furnished with means superior to other insects to clear their bodies of the glutinous threads of the spider, as their subsistence seems to depend upon their engaging



## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

among cobwebs. My wasp cleared himself easily of what would have destroyed a large humming bee.

RIPPON LODGE, July 18, 1796.

A whole forenoon has been employed by me in examining the operations of these ingenious wasps, without being yet able to understand completely their domestic economy. Behind a number of framed prints which hang in the drawing-room here a large colony had established their cells, all of which I destroyed and searched. Their cells are of two kinds, but whether two species of the same insect construct them or whether eggs of different females of the same are deposited in them, I have not yet discovered. The first kind consists of a tube which is continued without internal divisions at first for some length, perhaps four or five inches. The second consists of separate cells joined to one another in a parallel arrangement, each of which is begun and finished before the next is constructed. The former seem to be executed with more neatness, the latter with more strength, the dirt being daubed over them in a great number of layers. I have not seen any of the masons in the act of bringing dirt to the cells, but from the quantity which every cell requires, their labor must be very great. Internally each species of cell is finished and filled alike. I think the horizontal cells, however, are somewhat less in general.

The inside of the cells is made perfectly even and

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smooth. The mason had fixed his work to the back of the print frame and made use of the wood as part of his internal finishing without being at the trouble of carrying his coat of dirt all round; and I have seen one instance of a pipe being constructed in a hollow molding of a panel, so as to save nearly half the labor which a flat surface would have demanded. The dirt has the appearance of being platted, the mason while at work keeping the edge always in an angular form, the point of which is upward, and working first on one and then on the other leg of the angle. The tube being carried to a satisfactory length, the mason collects as many spiders as will fill about three-fourths of an inch, for the cells are not exactly equal in length. The poor devils are crammed in with unrelenting cruelty as tight as possible. I have counted twenty-seven in two cells, twelve in one frequently, often only six or seven if they happened to be large ones, and once as many as sixteen small yellow spiders in one cell. Upon opening many of the cells these miserable creatures were still alive, though so languid that they could but barely move, and soon died when exposed to the sun. I have been often shocked and distressed at the scenes of cruelty and misery that seem to form a part of the system of nature, but I scarce ever saw so dreadful a contrivance of torment as appears to be employed by the masons against the poor spiders, if we may reason upon their feelings from our own. The variety of

## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

spiders collected by these industrious robbers is much greater than my own curiosity ever exhibited to me in my searches after subjects of natural history. They remain in the cells in very good preservation even when dead, not being in the least mutilated till devoured by the grub for whose food they are provided.

Having filled the cell with spiders the mason then lays an egg into the lower part of it and closes it up with dirt. Another stop is then put to the head of the next cell close to the stop of the last, and the same provision laid in. The horizontal cells are managed in the same way. The egg produces as usual a grub. The uppermost cell produces the first complete insect. It is astonishing with what dexterity the mason attacks, conquers, and bears off a large spider much heavier than himself. In the woods they fix their pipes to the south sides of overhanging rocks. The young mason makes a hole in the side of his cell to extricate himself.

FREDERICKSBURG, July 24, 1796.

Wasps and hornets. I believe all insects of this class have more or less ingenuity, from the honey-and-wax-making bee down to the little wasp who persecutes the caterpillars and deposits his eggs in their bodies.

1. The first wasp I have observed in Virginia appeared as early as March. He was a long slender black fellow, very busy, and I was told that his sting is very acute. He suspends his comb from ceilings of

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outhouses and branches of trees, where I have found them with about a dozen hexagonal cells and eggs in the beginning of May. I have not observed them since.

2. The next that excited my attention was the mason. He was at work the beginning of June, in Amelia, and I suppose everywhere else in this State.

3. A large humble-bee-looking insect at the same time attracted my notice. He was at work in an orifice he had made in a piece of timber. I am told their passages are sometimes a foot or two long. Captain Murray told me he had often traced them to that length, but I have never had the means of examining either the insect or his work.

4. At Rippon Lodge some wasps were at work in the bench of the portico in the same manner. I could not get one of them, but I blew up part of their passages with gunpowder. One of them was full of sawdust at the outer end. Farther on seemed to be chrysalides which were mashed in being taken out. I followed another for some inches, but it was empty. In appearance the insect resembled the bald-face hornet.

5. The bald-face hornet. This dangerous fly is proverbially fierce. If he is disturbed he darts at the face of the intruder with great force and inflicts in a moment a sting, the pain and swelling of which are most extraordinary. He is not so large as the English hornet, but much larger than a bee. He derives his

## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

name from the pale-yellow color of his face. His body is also spotted with straw color and the two low folds of his abdomen are jagged with yellow. His sting is black and very long and thick. A yellow bag adheres to it when drawn. The females as well as the males are furnished with this weapon, for one of them whom I was examining laid an egg into my hand. Their nest is strongly wrought into the leaves of a twig by which it is suspended from the branch of a tree. The external covering is composed of a number of thin, tough flakes resembling parchment, which turn the wet most completely. Near the bottom is a hole at which the hornets enter and depart, and the nest may be easily taken and destroyed by stopping this hole in the night with a cork. In the inside are different cakes of hexagonal cells. That which I saw had two. They were placed obliquely, and the entrance hole was between them, and served both cakes. The young hornets come to maturity successively. Many of the cells were empty, having discharged the brood; others contained small, others large grubs, and others were closed and held a chrysalis. The grub is very similar to that of the mason reversed, having a thick head and a slender tail. These nests are sometimes found as big as a bushel. That which I saw was about as big as the head of a boy of ten years old. The food of these furies is flies. One of them fell into my butter dish at breakfast with his prisoner. They follow their prey into houses and are

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unpleasant visitors, but they do not sting unless provoked.

6. In the side of a bank at Mr. Thornton's a swarm of bees was supposed to exist. We went to the attack of them, but found the family very few in number, though there were a great many holes. The bees all escaped. In opening the holes I found they continued a few inches into the bank perfectly cylindrical and smooth; in one or two was a white grub. I did not see any of the bees, so called.

7. In searching for the bees we discovered in a neighboring stump a colony of scarlet wasps, longer and lankier than the masons. Their comb was suspended from a jag of the stump and exactly similar to that of the common wasp. It was full of bluish worms in different stages.

8. The yellow jacket I have not examined, but he appears to be when on wing very like the common wasp, and I am informed burrows in the ground in the same manner.

The bees, the black, the scarlet and the yellow wasps, and the bald-face hornet, feed their grubs in the cells during their growth with daily supplies. In this they all differ from the mason, who is, I think, one of the most whimsical of God's works. The bees have something of his forethought and their materials are more useful to man and better manufactured, and they are therefore more noticed and admired. But the odd predilection

## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

of the mason for spiders, his separate provisions for each grub, and his cruelty seem very eccentric instincts. The spiders of Virginia may truly be said to fear the *blue devils*.

RICHMOND, June 29, 1797.

On the 6th of June I went down to the Dismal Swamp, being engaged in a survey of the property of the old Dismal Swamp Company. On the 25th I received a letter from the Governor of Virginia informing me that my plan of the penitentiary house was adopted by the executive, and desiring me to return immediately to Richmond to direct the first steps for carrying it into effect. I set off the next day, and arrived through Portsmouth, etc., and Petersburg at this place on the 27th. To-day I was admitted to an interview with the board of Council, and received their instructions.

I spent the morning of yesterday at Colonel Jo Mayo's house, about one and one-half miles from Pence on the western road. The wasps called dirt-daubers or masons were very busy behind the framed prints in his dining room. This mason, whose cells are joined longitudinally and form one tube, seems to be the most common of the two. The proverb, "Two of a trade can never agree," does not apply to these two species of spider catchers. I have found both species at work behind the same picture.

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There is a considerable difference, however, not only in their manner of constructing their cells, but in the structure of their bodies. The *Sphex carulea* is of a very blue color, the other, which is not described by Linnæus, is quite black, and spotted on the thorax and thighs with yellow. The former has a petiolated abdomen, but the petiole increases gradually from its union with the thorax; the petiole of the latter is of equal thickness till it suddenly swells at its union with the abdomen. The nose of the former is somewhat pointed, of the latter it is broad, emarginate, and slightly turned up.

In lifting the picture from the wall, I injured several of the cells of the industrious workman; the dirt sticking to the wall being torn off. I held up the frame a little and he soon returned to work, bringing with him a round lump of dirt. He had just begun a new cell, but seeing his former work disturbed he ran rapidly over the cells seemingly doubtful what to do. At last he put down the lump upon one of the holes I had made, and began spreading it with his nose, pushing it out before him with the action of a hog who is rooting. While he did this he made a shrill, buzzing noise. Having plastered up the hole very completely and neatly, he flew away. In about four minutes he returned with another lump of dirt. He put this down upon another hole, and stopped it up in the same manner, and thus he employed himself four times. The



PLATE I  
D. A. S. 1886 O. 12 N. 1  
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DIRT-DAUBERS' CELLS.

UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA

## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

fifth time he brought his dirt to his new cell, and was proceeding to go on with it—having completed his repairs—when I pressed the picture to the wall, and thus caught him.

I then opened his cells, beginning with the lowest, and being curious to ascertain in what manner the quantity of spider flesh collected for the worm is ascertained, as the size of the spiders is very various, I weighed them.

From the trial it appears that the quantity of food collected for each worm is nearly the same in weight, about seven and one-half grains, notwithstanding the difference of the spiders in number, some of the cells containing twenty-two or twenty-three and some only eighteen, and the difference of weight was only proportioned to the consumption of spiders in each. It also appears that the worm, whose weight at his first escape from the eggs scarce amounts to the fifth part of a grain, weighs at his full growth about one-half as much as the food that reared him.

The whole class of insects called by Linnæus *Hymenoptera* seem endowed with singular modes of economy, with much ingenuity and almost reasoning faculties. The ichneumon lays his eggs in the bodies of other insects or animals. The sphex is a careful provider of substance through the life of his young progeny. The vespa is an architect; the apis follows many trades, building, making wax, and collecting honey, etc., etc.

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The ingenuity of the formica, the ant, exceeds perhaps that of all the others.

When my sphex saw the dilapidation I had occasioned in his cells, he must have thought and reasoned upon what he should do. The mischief was done in his absence. The mud he brought on his return was intended to build a new cell. But seeing the injury done to the old ones, he altered his plan and before he proceeded to build the new ones he thoroughly repaired the former.

RICHMOND, July 12, 1797.

Since my arrival I have been entirely engaged in setting out the foundations of the new penitentiary house, and in getting forward the provisory steps for its erection. Although so near Richmond, and so much frequented by cattle, the steep gravelly knoll upon which the house is to stand, abounds in snakes and scorpions, as a poisonous lizard with a red head and green body is here very improperly called. These reptiles found the brick kiln, before it was set fire to, a very convenient lodging house, and those who attended the burning of the brick told me that as soon as the fire and smoke began to incommode them they left their retreats in great numbers and were seen crawling round the top of the clamp till the fire put an end to their misery. In clearing the ground several moccasins and scorpions have been killed, of which I saw some.

## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

Two days ago the following singular circumstance occurred, of which Major Quarrier, Colonel Burnley, and myself were witnesses. The morning was extremely hot—there had been a meeting of several members of the executive upon the ground, and we were returning down the side of a hill, when we heard a violent screaming of birds in a small, low bush. We stopped, and saw two of the birds, called the French mocking bird, furiously pecking at and fighting with something which was hid in the bush. I got very near them and perhaps disturbed them, for presently the birds flew up the hill, close upon the ground, and a large black snake followed them. They alighted upon a tree near us and seemed in great agitation. Of the snake we soon lost sight. On examining the bush we found a young mocking bird alive, but wounded severely in the back and bleeding much. I took it up. It screamed, and was answered by the old one in the tree. I therefore put it down again, went away, and presently saw the old ones descend to its assistance. It should seem that the snake had been robbing the nest during the absence of the old birds. This is a very striking instance of the strength and courage inspired by parental affection.

Who will explain the difference of feeling in the same person? See how the poor little fly struggles in the net and with what savage activity and joy the spider weaves the web around him. He is yet too free, too

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unfettered, to be safely attacked; he can move his wings, he can move his legs, he buzzes violently with his wings. But every thread robs him of some motion. Already the action of his wings is clogged. He sinks into the net that is every moment strengthened. Hold, I will relieve thee, little sufferer! But is this humanity? Art thou not truly destined for the food of spiders by the hand that created you both? Shall I interfere and, by saving a life half destroyed, rob another of its support? I will venture it.

And I took the fly gently from the web that crossed the window of my office. One of the threads brought the spider along, and he crawled upon my hand. In the haste to brush him off I killed him. "There is one life lost," said I, "and what have I saved?"

My poor fly has one of his wings fastened over his head by a thread of the web. I have removed it, but the joint is dislocated and he cannot use the wing. He buzzes violently with the other. But he cannot walk or fly. His legs are tied together. How shall I hold him so as not to hurt him?

With great care I at last cleared him of the filmy fetters that bound him. But he is lame and hobbles miserably along. Have I done him any good? The office is full of spiders—one of them will catch him again. So I turn.

"Here, Hannah! Clear away all these spiders to-

## HABITS OF CERTAIN VIRGINIA INSECTS

morrow morning. How can you let the office be in this condition?"

"Dang 'em master! what between spiders and flies I never saw such a place in my life. What were they made for? I can't tell, I'm sure."

Alas! no more can I. We are equally ignorant if the question were put respecting ourselves. To be happy? Why then is half our life at least spent in misery and a great part of the remainder in sleep and apathy. Is there a smile but what is bought with a tear? Is there a glory but what cost the wretchedness of thousands? A feast but what is enriched by the spoils of Death.

The Hindoo's advice is good: "*Since all things are uncertain, repose thyself.*"

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL, WITH EXPRESSIONS OF THE AUTHOR'S CANONS OF ART

I WAS introduced in 1798 to Dr. William Thornton, then one of the commissioners of Washington City, by William McClure, Esq., now one of the commissioners of the United States at Paris. I was then on my way to Philadelphia to take upon me the direction of the Bank of Pennsylvania and the supply of the city with water. Of course I had no objects to solicit in Washington. I spent the afternoon with the doctor. One of the first subjects introduced was the plan of the Capitol, of which he had a ground plan and east elevation. Of the plan I had a copy given me by Volney, and differing from that which has been executed in some respects, and another by Hallet given me by Mr. Greenleaf. With freedom, but without giving offense, I objected to both plan and elevation, exactly on those points which I have since endeavored to correct, and having taken great liberty in my remarks, I offered to give to the doctor a drawing in per-



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

spective of his design which I trusted would convince him of its errors. But he never sent me the necessary materials.

In the year 1803 I was appointed Surveyor of the Public Buildings. I called for drawings to guide my operations. The President gave me a plan, and Dr. Thornton gave me another. They were copies of each other and both perfectly useless; neither of them agreed with the work as founded or carried up, and there were no details whatever. In the superintendent's office no drawings existed. To speak plainly, the design was evidently the production of a man wholly ignorant of architecture, having brilliant ideas, but possessing neither the knowledge necessary for the execution nor the capacity to methodize and combine the various parts of a public work. In some respects the plan as far as it indicated what was intended was impracticable, and in all respects it was so inconvenient and often useless in its arrangements that I despaired of correcting it. However, I gave to it several days of severe study, and then stated to the President that I could not undertake its execution. He consented to alterations. I proposed consulting Dr. Thornton. The President said it was unnecessary and would be useless. Having in the course of a week, however, formed and reduced to drawing all my proposed alterations, I called on the doctor, to whom I believed much to be due on the score of delicacy. I procured an interview, at which, after

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much argument and heat, he at last consented to admit my ideas into the plan. But the next day he called on me, and, with much irritation and using language offensive and uncivil, he recanted. I began, however, to build, with the consent of the President, agreeably to my own plan, and in the foundations no great alteration was perceptible. The doctor and myself remained on tolerable terms. The doctor, however, was not silent, and I found myself assailed on all quarters by members of the Congress that met in 1804 respecting alterations of the plan approved by General Washington, for on that point all objection turned. Even the President wished no unnecessary alteration from the plan approved by General Washington to be made. When the committee met to consider the message on the public buildings, I was called before them and asked in writing to exhibit the plan approved by General Washington.

Previously to my appearing before the committee, I called on Dr. Thornton in order to consult on my answer. I was received with violent expressions of anger. I was so harassed by the despair of executing a work which would do me any sort of credit that I sent in my resignation to the President, and begged to decline all further attempt to correct errors which, in spite of the utmost latitude and power and discretion in my office, were too deeply rooted in the design not to give me infinite trouble and vexation. My resignation

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

was not accepted. I therefore went on in the manner which is now before the public.

PHILADELPHIA, December 13, 1803.

THE HONORABLE AARON BURR, VICE-PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES AND PRESIDENT OF THE  
SENATE.

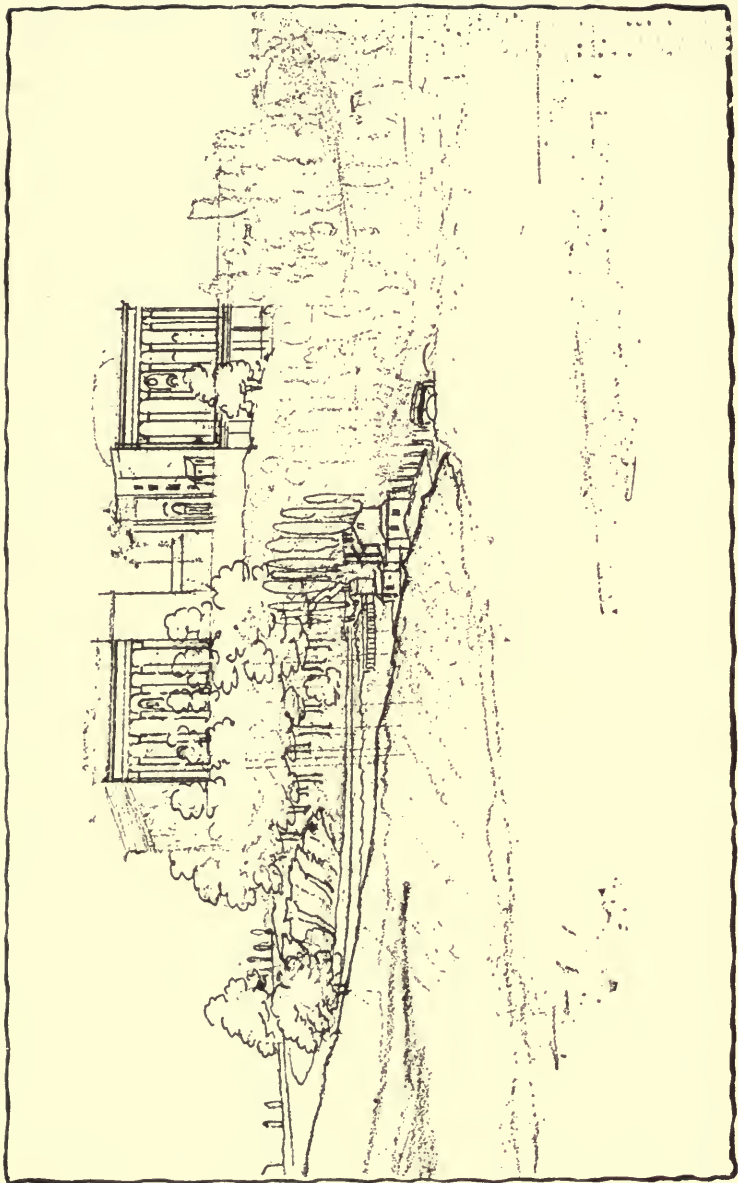
*Sir:* Soon after my appointment to the direction of the public buildings at Washington, I did myself the honor to address a letter to you at Charleston, on the subject of rendering the chamber of the United States Senate more commodious, and especially on the means of warming it more effectually. I much fear that this letter, which I transmitted by a private hand, did not reach, it being probable that you had left Charleston before it could arrive. In the meantime the early meeting of the Legislature rendered it necessary that the best means which I could devise should be pursued toward accomplishing the latter object, and, with the approbation of the President of the United States, the works, which I much regret were not completed, were commenced. The faulty construction of the Capitol rendered it absolutely necessary to open windows for the admission of light and air into the cellar story under the Senate chamber. It was then discovered that some of the timber of the floor was in a state of decay; that the cellar was filled with stones and rubbish, in many places to its whole depth, and that, owing perhaps

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to alterations in the first designs, walls of enormous mass, but of little use, occupied some of the most useful space. The removal of these obstructions required considerable time and labor, and the erection of furnaces intended to warm the room above, the clearing of flues, and the building of one entire stack could not be speedily accomplished. The pipes and the stoves themselves could only be made in Philadelphia or New York, and the yellow fever which prevailed in both those cities was another cause of delay. In spite, therefore, of my utmost exertion, the object is only just now on the eve of being attained, the stoves being cast and ready to be sent forward by the first vessel.

I have troubled you with the recital of this detail in hopes that it may plead my apology with you and with the members of the Senate, and I have no doubt but that when the stoves shall be fixed and other arrangements made, the Senate chamber will be equally and pleasantly warmed in every part of it. Independently of the erection of the stoves, it is necessary to ceil the cellar story and I have given directions to my agent, Mr. Lenthall, to prepare everything for this purpose, and he will wait upon you with this letter to receive such directions as you may think proper to give.

The fund from which the expenses of this work has hitherto been defrayed is the sum of \$50,000, placed at the disposal of the President of the United States for the purpose of completing and repairing the



SKETCH OF THE CAPITOL FROM THE WEST.



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

public buildings, etc., etc., at Washington, by an act of the last Legislature. In order that this fund may go to the greatest possible extent toward the completion of the buildings themselves, I beg leave to submit to you whether the expenses attending the stoves and in the erection of furnaces and flues in the cellar, as well as the stoves themselves which more evidently may be considered as furniture, might not be charged to the contingent fund of the Senate.

I am sure you will acquit me of any intentional indiscretion in making this suggestion. Previously to the statement of my accounts of the manner in which the funds intrusted to me have been expended, I considered it in a great degree my duty to state to you my ideas on this subject for your consideration, and I hope on my arrival in Washington, in the course of ten days, to be guided by your decision and advice. An account of what these expenses have amounted to will, if you require it, be made out by Mr. Lenthall.

I am, with truest respect, etc.

WASHINGTON, February 27, 1804.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Dear Sir:* I judged very ill in going to Dr. Thornton. In a few peremptory words he in fact told me that no difficulties existed in his plan but such as were made by those who were too ignorant to remove them, and though these were not exactly his words, his ex-

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pressions, his tone, his manner, and his absolute refusal to devote a few minutes to discuss the subject, spoke his meaning even more strongly and offensively than I have expressed it. I left him with an assurance that I should not be the person to attempt to execute his plan, and had I been where I could have obtained immediate possession of pen, ink, and paper, I should have directly solicited your permission to resign my office.

I owe, however, too much to you to risk by so hasty a step the miscarriage of any measure you may wish promoted, and I shall devote as before my utmost endeavors to execute the disposition in the committee, to which I am summoned to-morrow morning, in favor of the appropriation.

In respect to the plan itself, it is impossible to convey by words or drawings to the mind of any man the impression of the practical difficulties in execution which twenty years' experience creates in the mind of a professional man. I fear I have said too much for the respect I owe your opinions, though much too little for the force of my own convictions. The utmost praise I can ever deserve in this work will be that of *la difficulté vaincue*, and after receiving your ultimate directions all my exertion shall be directed to gain this praise at least.

My wish to avoid vexation, trouble, and enmities is weak compared to my desire to be placed among those whom you regard with approbation and friendship.



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

If you, therefore, under all circumstances, conceive that my services still be useful, I place myself entirely at your disposal.

In order to pass my accounts it will be necessary to produce a regular appointment from you to my office. May I beg you to give the necessary directions for this purpose? I ought to leave Washington on Wednesday morning. I am, etc., etc.

After writing this letter and before I drew up my report to the committee on the President's message respecting the public buildings, but having had an interview with Mr. Blagden and Mr. Hatfield as to the facts which I have therein stated, I met the committee as soon as it broke up.

The President's letter of 26th of February, 1804, was delivered me. I answered it immediately, explaining in many instances the utter absurdity of the plan, especially in respect to the conference room, which though drawn in the plan of the ground story belongs to the floor above, and to the want of light in the two rooms on each side of the conference room. I also stated what had passed verbally before the committee, and that I was required to give it them in writing. Of this letter I have no copy. In the evening I had an interview with the President, when after much conversation he appeared convinced of the absurdity of many parts of the plan and the impracticability of others, and de-

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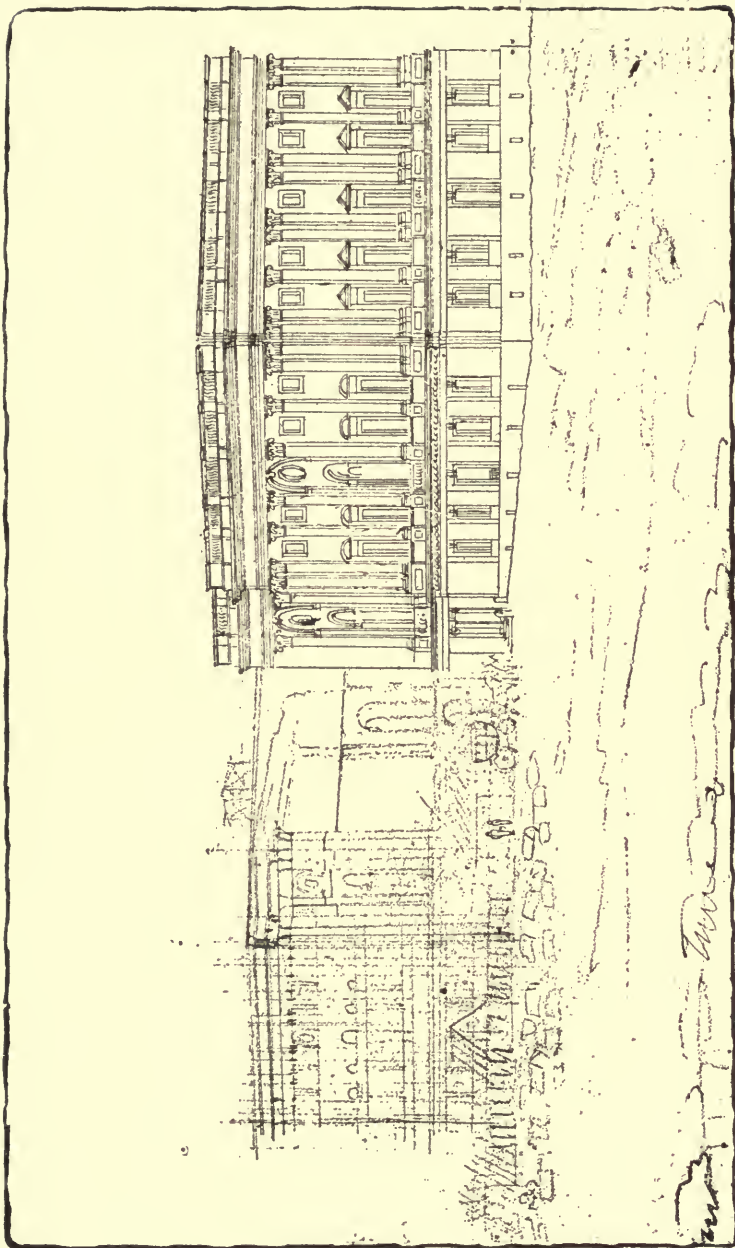
sired me to transmit to him drawings of a practicable and eligible design retaining the features of that adopted by General Washington.

NEWCASTLE, March 29, 1804.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
WASHINGTON.

*Dear Sir:* I herewith transmit to you a separate roll containing drawings, being the plans and sections of the south wing of the Capitol according to the ideas which I explained to you when I had the favor of seeing you last. I fear, however, that these and any other preparations for proceeding with the public works may be useless, for by a letter from Mr. Lenthall I learn that the appropriation bill has passed the Senate with an amendment enjoining the removal of Congress to the President's house. This amendment must either be fatal to the bill when returned to the House of Representatives or divert the expenditure of the appropriation from the Capitol to I know not what sort of an arrangement for Congress and for the President, if it should pass into a law.

However, as it is impossible to think or speak with legal respect of the yeas in such a measure, or to suppose that such a law should pass both houses, I will take the liberty to explain the drawings as concisely as I can.



UNFINISHED SKETCH OF THE CAPITOL, FROM THE EAST.

TO VNU  
AMBOLIAO

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

WASHINGTON, March 6, 1805.

PHILIP MAZZEI, ESQ.

*Sir:* By direction of the President of the United States I take the liberty to apply to you for your assistance in procuring for us the aid of a good sculptor in the erection of the public buildings in this city, especially of the Capitol.

The Capitol was begun at a time when the country was entirely destitute of artists and even of good workmen in the branches of architecture, upon which the superiority of public over private buildings depends. The north wing, therefore, which is carried up, although the exterior is remarkably well finished as to its masonry, is not a good building. For two or three years after the removal of Congress to this city the public works were entirely discontinued. In the year 1803, however, they were resumed, and under the patronage of the present President and the annual appropriations by Congress the south wing of the Capitol has been begun and carried on. It is now so far advanced as to make it necessary that we should as early as possible have the assistance of a good sculptor of architectural decorations. In order to procure such an artist the President of the United States has referred me to your assistance, and to enable you to make choice of the person most likely to answer our purpose I will beg leave to describe to you the nature of the work we require to be done. The principal sculpture required

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will be of twenty-four Corinthian capitals, two feet four inches in diameter at their feet, and open enriched entablatures, of 147 feet (both English measure) in length. There are besides five panels (tavole) enriched with foliage and an eagle of colossal size in the frieze, the distance between the tips of the extended wings being twelve feet six inches.

The material in which this is to be cut is a yellowish sandstone of fine grain, finer than the peperino or gray sandstone used in Rome—the only Italian sandstone of which I have any distinct recollection. This stone yields in any direction to the chisel, not being in the least laminated nor hard enough to fly off (sprawl) before a sharp tool. It may, therefore, be cut with great precision. The wages given by the day to our best carvers is from \$3 to \$2.50, or from about \$750 to \$900 per annum. They are considered good wages, but the workmen who receive them are very indifferent carvers and do not deserve the name of sculptors. My object is to procure a first-rate sculptor in the particular branch of architectural decoration. He should be able to model and bring with him another good, though inferior, workman as his assistant, to whom we could pay from \$1.50 to \$2 per day.

It is not my intention to confine you to these prices, but to leave it to you to do the best you can for the public interest both as to the excellence of the talents and the moderation in the wages of the person you may

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

be pleased to select. Should you even—which I do not think improbable—find a man of superior merit willing to come hither on lower terms than those we pay to our very indifferent carvers, it were well to contract with him at the terms with which he will be perfectly satisfied, as he may depend on receiving such an addition to his stipulated salary if his conduct merits it as will place him in proper relation as to salary as well as to abilities with our other workmen. There are, however, other qualities which seem so essential as to be at least as necessary as talents. I mean good temper and good morals. Without them an artist would find himself most unpleasantly situated in a country the language and manners of which are so different from his own, and we should have no dependence upon a person discontented with his situation. For though every exertion would be made upon my part to make his engagement perfectly agreeable to him, the irritability of good artists is well known and it is often not easily quieted.

The American consul at Leghorn, who does me the favor to forward this to you, will provide all the expenses and make the arrangements necessary to the voyage of the persons you may select. I think it necessary that they should enter into a written contract to remain with us two years. We will pay all their expenses hither, their salary to commence on the day on which they shall be ready to leave Leghorn, and any

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reasonable advance to enable them to wind up their affairs at home would be paid to them. Single men would be preferred, but no objection would be made to a married man, whose family may come over with him. On expiration of the time, and should he choose to return, the expenses of the voyage will also be paid to him on his arrival again in Italy and not before. But this stipulation should not be made unless absolutely demanded. I have a further favor to ask which I hope will give you less trouble than the preceding. It is proposed to place in the chamber of Representatives a sitting figure of Liberty nine feet in height. I wish to know for what sum such a figure would be executed by Canova in white marble, and for what sum he would execute a model in plaster (the only material I believe, in which it could be brought hither), to be executed here in American marble from the model.

If Canova should decline the proposal altogether, as he must now be an old man, what would be the price of such a statue and such a model by the artist he should recommend as in his opinion the nearest to himself in merit?

Although I have not the honor to be personally known to you, I shall not take up your time by apologies for giving you this trouble.

The time is already approaching when our vines and our olives will spread your name and our gratitude over a great portion of our country. Let us also owe



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

to your kindness the introduction of excellence in the most fascinating branch of art.

With true respect, etc., etc.

WILMINGTON, DEL., May 5, 1805.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Dear Sir:* I herewith transmit to you two sheets containing the drawing of the buildings proposed to connect the President's house with the public offices on each side. The height of the story indispensably necessary in the fireproof of the Treasury, of which I by this post also transmit a plan to the Secretary of the Treasury, as well as the general appearance and the connection of the colonnade with the offices at different heights, have induced or rather forced me to make the colonnade of the exact height of the basement story. This throws up the blocking course to the window of the President's house and gets over all difficulties.

WASHINGTON, June 18, 1805.

TO THE MASONS AND BRICKLAYERS EMPLOYED AT  
THE CAPITOL:

(In answer to a written memorial signed by all of them, the work of Clotworthy Stevenson, carpenter, formerly employed by the commissioners and one of the principal peculators.)

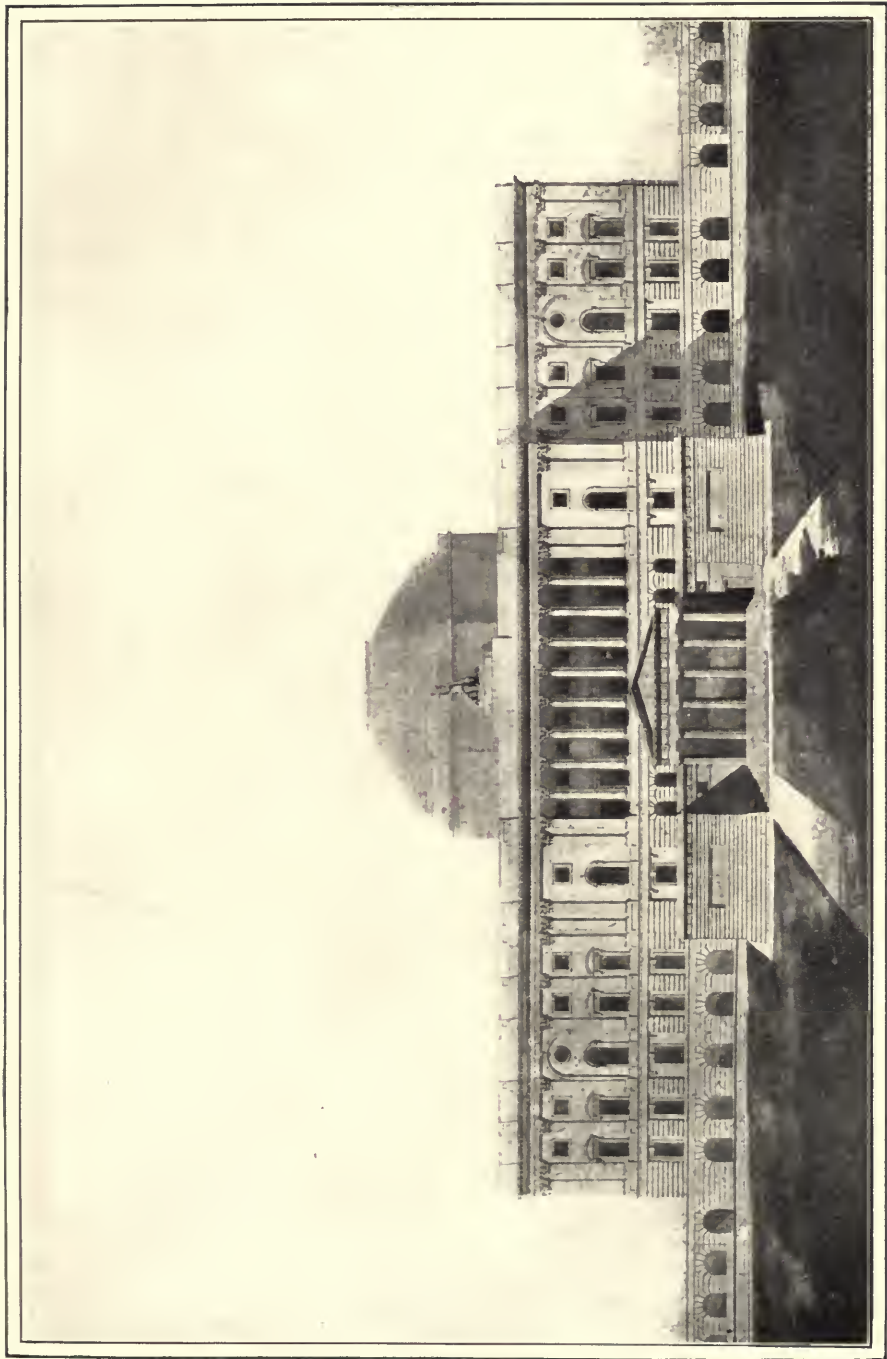
I should have sooner noticed your application to me had it not been necessary to make some previous

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inquiry into the facts which ought to govern my decision on it.

Your request that the hours of work may begin only at six o'clock in the morning and end at six o'clock in the evening is founded upon the practice adopted in the erection of the north wing. Whatever circumstances may have rendered this regulation proper at the time, you will, I am sure, agree that it is the duty of every public officer to take care that the public work shall not be performed on worse terms than those that prevail in private business in the same place. Punctuality and certainty of payment render the employment on public works much more advantageous to the workmen than any private undertaking, and there cannot, therefore, be any good reason why the public, paying with more punctuality and with more certainty, should also consent to pay more in amount than what may be called the market price of labor.

For it is the same thing whether the wages be raised or the hours of labor reduced. It is also necessary that uniformity should prevail in the terms on which the public work is done in different departments. At the navy yard the same hours are observed which are now kept at the Capitol, and though two hours are allowed at dinner time, no rest is permitted in the course of the morning or afternoon as with us. You will therefore perceive, with the best disposition to consult your advantage, these considerations forbid the adoption of the



WEST ELEVATION OF THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

alteration in the working hours at the Capitol to the extent you propose.

Allowing, however, the justice of your statement, as to the inconvenience and heat of the place to which your work is confined, two hours will be granted at dinner time from this day to the 1st of September next, and one hour and a half from the 1st of September to the 21st of September, after which day the old regulation will again prevail. The usual time of refreshment in the morning and afternoon will also be continued during *this* season in consideration of the situation of the work.

In respect to the time lost by the deficiency of material, I most sincerely regret that your interests should have suffered by the faults of the contractors for materials as well as the interest of the public. But I confess that neither I nor those to whom my conduct is amenable can see in what manner any reparation can be made to you by us for an injury which did not arise out of any fault of ours. And besides, the plain principle that the public ought not to be placed on worse terms with you than an individual would be must govern the case. And I should ask you what individual would consent to such allowance?

It is the most unpleasant part of my duty to act contrary to the expectations of men who have so faithfully and in so workmanlike a manner carried on the public work, but while I in this respect act agreeably

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to my conscience and to my instructions, I assure you that I consider your general conduct to be deserving of every encouragement that it is in my power to give.

August 12, 1806.

Bishop Carol (one of the best men in the world) being here, I walked a little before sunset to Mr. Brent's to see him. As I passed over the uninhabited part of the town between the Capitol and his house, which was a low swampy piece of ground covered with bushes, a tall, middle-aged woman popped out upon me from a crossroad with a gun in her hand. As I was thinking certainly not upon a gun in the hands of a woman, I started a little back.

"Sir," said she, "pray, for God's sake, buy this piece of me."

There was a wildness in her look which induced me to think her crazy. I therefore took the gun from her and putting the ramrod into it found it was loaded. I asked her how she came to carry a loaded gun and laughing said that she would get more by *presenting* it than by asking money for it.

She said she did not know it was loaded and seemed frightened at the circumstance, but in order to account for offering it for sale she said she was a widow with several small children; that her husband had money when he came hither, but had on his death left her in

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

great distress; that the present drought had prevented her getting any meal; that all her children were sick, her money gone, and that she was now beginning to live upon her furniture and clothes. The thing she could best spare was the fowling-piece, etc., etc.

Her distress seemed unfeigned and extreme. While I was talking to her one of my people came up who knew her. I gave her some trifling relief and he bought the gun.

But what is to become of a widow with sick children in this wretched and desolate place when the temporary relief is expended. The city abounds in cases of extreme poverty and distress. The families of workmen whom the unhealthiness of the city, and idleness arising from the capricious manner in which the appropriations for the erection of the public buildings have been granted, give to them for a short time high wages and again for a whole season do not afford them a week's work. The result is distressing. Workmen who are ruined in circumstances and health are to be found in extreme indigence scattered in wretched huts over the waste which *the law* calls the American metropolis. They inhabit the half-finished houses, now tumbling to ruins, which the madness of speculation has erected. Besides these wretched remnants of industrious and happy families enticed hither by their own golden dreams, or the golden promises of swindling or deceived speculators, there are higher orders of

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beings quite as wretched and almost as poor, though as yet not quite so ragged. These are master tradesmen, chiefly building artisans, who have purchased lots and perhaps built houses in which they have invested their all. Many of them brought hither have sunk the earnings of a laborious life, which in any other spot would have given to them ease and to their children education. Distress and want of employment has made many of them sots. Few have saved their capital. Most of them hate, calumniate, or envy each other, for they are all fighting for the scanty means of support which the city affords.

Above these again are others who brought large fortunes to this great vortex that swallowed everything irrecoverably that was thrown into it. Law, Duncannon, Stoddart, and many others, from affluent circumstances, are involved by their sanguine hopes in embarrassments from which nothing but the grave will set them free.

Of the adventurers and swindlers whom the establishment of the city brought hither, few remain. S. Blodget is confined in the bounds of the prison, but collects five-dollar subscriptions for the establishment of the university. Greenleaf pays annual visit to the courts of justice for the purpose of *testing titles* to lots, and also as agent for his creditors who hold assignments on his city property. The rest have disappeared or are dead.



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

Daily through the city stalks the picture of famine, L'Enfant and his dog. The plan of the city is probably his, though others claim it. This singular man, of whom it is not known whether he was ever educated to his profession or not, had the courage to undertake any public work that might be offered to him. He has not succeeded in any, but was always honest, and is now miserably poor. He is too proud to receive any assistance and it is very doubtful in what manner he subsists.

George Hadfield, once a promising young artist, sent hither by the English Society of Dillitanti at the requisition of General Washington, and employed to direct the public buildings, was too young to possess experience and education. Proficient more in the room of design than in the practical execution of great work, he was no match for the rogues then employed in the construction of the public buildings, or for the charlatans in architecture who had designed them. All that he proposed, however, proved him a man of correct tastes, of perfect theoretic knowledge, and of bold integrity. He waged a long war against the ignorance and the dishonesty of the commissioners and of the workmen. But the latter prevailed, for General Washington, led by his feelings and possessing no knowledge of the subject, sided against him. Thus has Hatfield lost the most precious period of his life, that of the practical study of his profession in the first works he

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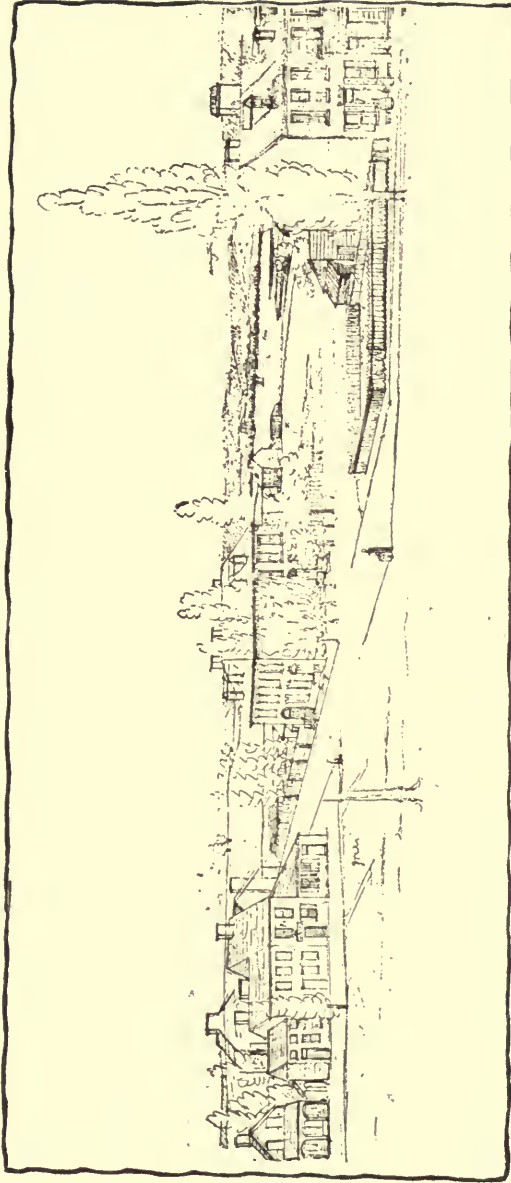
might have executed. He loiters here, ruined in fortune, in temper, and reputation, nor will his irritable pride and neglected study ever permit him to take the station in the art which his elegant taste and excellent talent ought to have obtained.

To go through the list of injured fortunes or ruined characters which this establishment has caused would fill a volume. The conduct of the original proprietors who have killed the goose that would have laid the golden eggs, is another very copious subject for remark.

At present the expenditure of money under my direction on the public buildings relieves in some measure the general despair. I employ scarce any master workmen that do not do the work by the day under proper superintendence, of whom the chief—and he would be the chief anywhere—is John Lenthall, great-grandson of the *ci-devant* president of the Rump Parliament under Cromwell.

I found him here nearly as badly off as any of the rest who had sunk their prosperity in buildings. I wish I could reward his merit as it deserves.

This mode of executing the work by the day has this effect, that the laboring mechanics receive with certainty their wages, instead of the moneys going to prop the credit and pay the debts of the masters. In one instance, in which I cannot act freely, *the master swallowed all*. It would be so in most cases.



PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN 1813.



# BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

WASHINGTON, April 29, 1807.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Sir:* At the President's house I have laid out the road on the principle of the plan extended to you. A small alteration of the outline of the inclosures to the south was necessarily made, which renders the whole ground infinitely more handsome and accommodates the public with an easier access from the Pennsylvania Avenue to the New York Avenue. In the plan submitted to and approved by you a semicircle was struck to the south from the center of the bow of the house. The semicircle carried the inclosure too far to the south. Mr. King will lay before you the new plan, which differs from the other in being of oblong figure instead of a semicircle.

By this alteration many very important objects are gained:

1. The Pennsylvania and New York avenues are by the wall and gate opposite to them at right angles.
2. A direct access is obtained from the New York to the Pennsylvania Avenue and on the shortest line.
3. The wall is straight from point to point, and thus all circular work is avoided.
4. The nature of the ground is consulted so far as to obtain the best level for the road with the least removal of earth.
5. The road runs in such a manner that the Presi-

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dent's house is not overlooked from the *low* ground and is covered by the rising knolls as the road rises.

Having laid out the ground with the assistance of Mr. King, to whose kindness and skill I am under the greatest obligations, the next consideration was how to do the greatest quantity of business with the fund appropriated, and if possible to get at least the south half of the wall built this summer. I therefore bought a cargo of lime, made a contract for stone, and preparatory arrangements for the work itself.

The next step was to get down to the foot of the wall on the south side by cutting out the road to its proper width, leaving the internal dressing of the ground to the last. The building of the wall rendered it necessary to go to the permanent depth of the road, otherwise I should have contented myself with laying it down on its right place, removing only so much earth as would have made the declivities convenient to the carriages. But this could not be done, and I contracted to loosen the ground from the first walnut south-east of the President's house to the War Office, the width of the road, footpath, and wall.

The next consideration was to execute your directions as to the north side of the President's house, and to level the ground regularly and gradually from the level of the stones in front of the steps, which nearly agrees with the site of the offices, sloping in their direction toward the inclosure. The earth which was to

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

effect this necessarily was removed from the site of the offices between the President's house and the War Offices.

PHILADELPHIA, May 21, 1807.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Sir:* In arranging the papers which I brought with me from Washington I have had the mortification of finding the inclosed letter, written immediately before my departure from the city and intended to have been forwarded by the post of the evening, but which, it appears, in the hurry of packing up, had slipped into my paper case. I still beg the favor of you to read it, as it contains my reason for the measures I took previous to my departure, and will explain the manner in which I hope to accomplish your objects as respects the arrangement of the ground around the President's house.

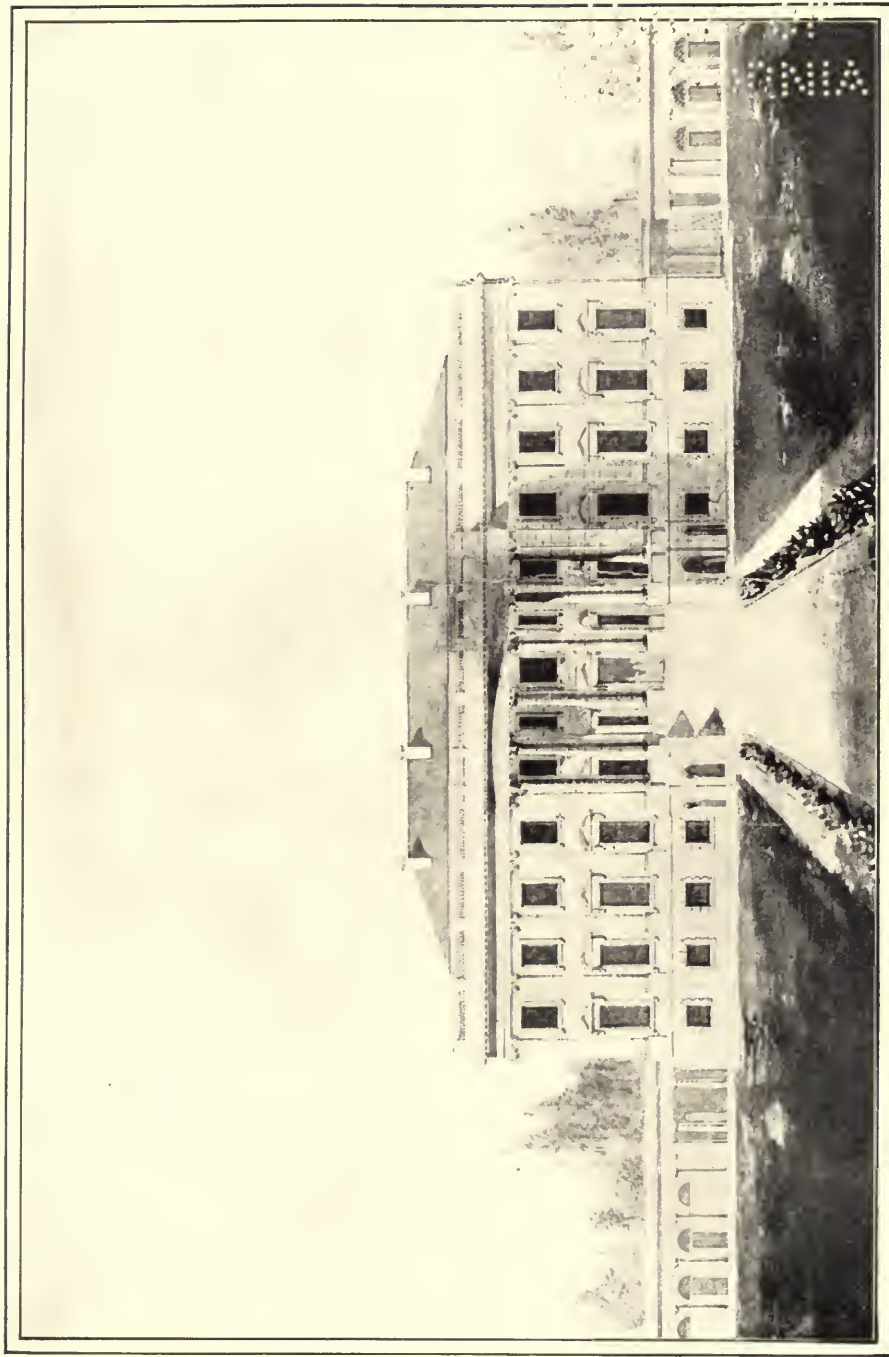
On the 16th inst. your letter, Monticello, April 22, reached me here, being forwarded by Mrs. Lenthall. Hoping to be at Washington as soon at least as you return I did not immediately answer it. But I am waiting from day to day for the arrival of one of the Georgetown packets in order to put my things on board previous to my removal.

I am very sensible of the honor you do me in discussing with me the merits of the detail of the public building. I know well that *to you* it is my duty to obey

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implicitly or to resign my office: to myself it is my duty to maintain myself in a situation in which I can provide for my family by all honorable means. If in any instance my duty to you obliged me to act contrary to my judgment, I might fairly and honorably say with Shakespeare's apothecary: "My poverty, not my will consents." Such excuse, however, I have never wanted, for although in respect to the panel lights I am acting diametrically contrary to my judgment, no mercenary motive whatever has kept me at my post, but considerations very superior to money—the attachment arising from gratitude and the highest esteem. At the same time I candidly confess that the question has suggested itself to my mind: What shall I do when the condensed vapor of the hall showers down upon the heads of the members from one hundred skylights, as it now does from the skylights of our anatomical hall, as it did from the six skylights of the Round House, as it does from the lantern of the Pennsylvania Bank, and as it does from that of our university—an event I believe to be as certain as that cold air and cold glass will condense warm vapor? This question I have asked myself for many months past. I shall certainly not cut my throat as the engineer of Staines Bridge did when the battlement failed, and his beautiful bridge fell because the commissioners had ordered him to proceed contrary to his judgment. But I dare not think long enough on the subject to frame an answer to my





SOUTH ELEVATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE.

Copied from the design of proposed alterations, 1807.



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

own mind, but go blindly on, hoping that “*fata viano invenient.*”

In respect to the general subject of cupolas, I do not think that they are *always*, nor even *often*, ornamental. My *principles* of good taste are rigid in Grecian architecture. I am a bigoted Greek in the condemnation of the Roman architecture of Baalbec, Palmyra, Spaletro, and of all the buildings erected subsequent to Hadrian's reign. The immense size, the bold plan and arrangements of the buildings of the Romans down almost to Constantine's arch, plundered from the triumphal arches of former emperors, I admire, however, with enthusiasm, but think their decorations and details absurd beyond tolerance from the reign of Severus downward. Wherever, therefore, the Grecian style can be copied without impropriety, I love to be a mere, I would say a *slavish*, copyist, but the forms and the distribution of the Roman and Greek buildings which remain are in general inapplicable to the objects and uses of our public buildings. Our religion requires churches wholly different from the temples, our Government, our legislative assemblies, and our courts of justice, buildings of entirely different principles from their basilicas; and our amusements could not possibly be performed in their theaters or amphitheaters. But that which principally demands a variation in our buildings from those of the ancients is the difference of our climate. To adhere to the sub-

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ject of cupolas, although the want of a belfry, which is an Eastern accession to our religious buildings, rendered them necessary appendages to the church, yet I cannot admit that because the Greeks and Romans did not place elevated cupolas upon their temples, they may not when necessary be rendered also beautiful. The Lanthorne of Demosthenes, than which nothing of the kind can be more beautiful, is mounted upon a magnificent mass of architecture harmonizing with it in character and style. The question would be as to its real or apparent utility in the place in which it appeared, for nothing in the field of good taste, which ought never to be at warfare with good sense, can be beautiful which appears useless or unmeaning.

If our climate were such as to admit of doing legislative business in open air, that is under the light of an open orifice in the crown of a dome, as at the Parthenon, I would never put a cupola on any spherical dome. It is not the *ornament*, it is the *use* that I want.

If you will be pleased to refer to Degodetz, you will see that there is a rim projecting above the arch of the Parthenon at the opening. This rim, in the dome projected for the centerpiece of the Capitol, is raised by me into a low pedestal for the purpose of covering a skylight, which could then be admitted, although I think it inadmissible in a room of business. But I should prefer the hemisphere, I confess. As to the members of Congress, with the utmost respect for

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the Legislature, I should scarcely *consult*, but rather *dictate* in matters of taste.

I beg pardon for this trespass on your time. You have spoiled me by your former indulgence in hearing my opinions expressed with candor. A few days will give me the pleasure of personally assuring you of the profound respect of yours faithfully.

WASHINGTON, August 13, 1807.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

My whole time, excepting a few hours now and then devoted to the President's house, is occupied with drawing and directions for the north wing, in the arrangements for which I am pursuing the eventual plan approved and presented by you to Congress at the last session, and in pushing on the work of the south wing. But I am again almost in despair about the roof. We had a gentle northeast storm without much wind, but with a persevering rain of thirty-six hours. It began on Wednesday evening and did not cease raining till Friday morning (yesterday). I was often under the roof and upon it during this time, and must say that the leakage was such that Congress could not have sat either on Thursday or Friday in the room. And what is as bad as the leakage, the ceiling is stained all over, and the entablature of the colonnade is in some places black with the water soaking through the ribs and receiving iron from the numerous nails.

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Yesterday I took off one of the strips which cover the joints, and discovered one cause of leakages.

It is now too late to make experiments. Nothing appears clearer to me than that we are in a situation in which there is no room to deliberate on the cost of any method whatsoever which to common sense and experience appears effectual. To place Congress at its next session under a leaky roof would be considered almost an insult to the Legislature after what passed at the last session. Of the total destruction of my individual reputation, of the personal disgrace I should incur after the censure implied by my reports of my predecessors, I say nothing. I dare not think of it. It would drive me, who have never yet failed in any professional attempt, to despair. But there are public considerations which seem to involve higher interests. Your administration, sir, in respect of public works, has hitherto claims of gratitude and respect from the public and from posterity. It is not flattery to say that you have planted the arts in your country. The works already erected in this city are the monuments of your judgment and of your zeal and of your taste. The first sculpture that adorns an American public building perpetuates your love and your protection of the fine arts. As for myself, I am not ashamed to say that my pride is not a little flattered and my professional ambition roused when I think that my grandchildren may at some future day read that after

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the turbulence of revolution and of faction which characterized the two first presidencies, their ancestor was the instrument in your hands to decorate the tranquillity, the prosperity, and the happiness of your government. Under this stimulus I have acted, and I hope, by the character of what I have executed hitherto under your orders, obtained an influence over the feelings and opinions of Congress, which, without some fatal disaster or miscarriage, would insure the progress and completion of all your objects of which you can make me the instrument. But I am now in despair. The next session is to decide not my fate only, but the whole dependence which Congress shall in future place upon anything which may be proposed by you on the subject of public works. My former representations on the certain event of the panel lights prove that I am not now attempting by flattery to obtain the prevalence of my individual opinions. How unworthy of all your kindness and confidence should I be, could I for a moment degrade myself and insult you by insincerity. If I offend it will be by too indiscreetly laying before the Chief Magistrate of the Union, the nervous, irritable, and perhaps petulant feelings of an artist. But you will forgive me for the sake of my candor.

I have strayed from my subject to represent my feelings.

I cannot add any consideration to what I have said which will not occur to you, and I beg you will have

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the goodness to give me as early a decision as convenient to you, that we may proceed to work. I cannot help thinking that it would be highly useful to present to Congress fair drawings of the Senate chamber, etc., as proposed to be executed. It would probably be the means of carrying the point, and perhaps progressing with the center. I am at present entirely without a clerk. Might I engage the assistance of a clerk, for my time is so wholly occupied that it is scarcely possible for me to take the necessary rest, and the most pressing engagements of the *practical* execution are such that I can only make the working drawings, and that at home and in the evenings?

With highest respect and gratitude, I am faithfully.

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1807.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Dear Sir:* The greatest inconvenience we suffer is from the most troublesome multitudes of visitors, who crowd the house at all times, and who do infinite mischief to the plastering and the stone work, and the lower classes who carry off whatever they can lay their hands on. The building was for some time the regular play place for all the boys in the city, and nothing but great exertion has kept them in better order. It appears to me absolutely necessary, whenever the furniture shall be brought into the house, and much of it is already there, that access should be denied to every-



## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

one without exception, otherwise great offense will be given by a partial restriction, and indeed the visits of the more respectable would be very inconvenient. It has, therefore, occurred to me that after the 15th of September admittance will be prohibited, and also to put up the notice at the Capitol. In favor of strangers passing through I might make what exceptions appeared proper. It would give additional sanction and weight to this notice could I plead the direction of the President of the United States, but if you do not think it of sufficient importance to use so mighty a sanction, I have no reluctance to take upon me all the obloquy which I know it will occasion.

WASHINGTON, April 13, 1808.

JOHN RANDOLPH, ESQ.

*Sir:* Since I had the honor of seeing you this morning the report on the debate of the appropriations for the public buildings, as reported in the *United States Gazette*, fell into my hands. I am very sensible of the impropriety of noticing, out of the House, anything that has been said by a member in debate, and therefore it would be perhaps more discreet in me to leave the present letter unwritten than even attempt to attain its very innocent and respectful object by writing at all in reference to anything you may have said in your speech. But you have been too long known to me and to the public to permit me to doubt your receiving this proof

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of my confidence in your candor otherwise than it is meant.

You received my thanks for having expressed your good opinion of my talents with kindness, and I cannot believe that you will refuse to hear an explanation on a point in which I am much more interested—my capacity as a man of business and accountant.

Nothing has so much injured my utility to the public and to my family as the very prevailing opinion that men who, unfortunately for themselves, are called men of genius are incapable of the management of money. I, unfortunately, have, very undeservedly, acquired this nickname merely because I stand alone in a profession in which there is not room in our country for more than one, and which requires some portion of imagination. It is a mark upon me the effects of which I feel daily, and which keeps me from acquiring the independence which a dull usurer or a dealer in dry goods can easily and honorably attain.

It is by many believed that to employ me to design a building is the shortest road to ruin, and when I have been employed, it has been under the terrors of calling for that knowledge and talent which could not be had elsewhere, but which could not possibly be dispensed with.

Now it happens very unluckily that the professions of architecture and painting are supposed to be of the same grades and require the same sort of head and

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

habits, and that as Stuart, the greatest painter we have ever seen, was a profligate and spendthrift, the only architect we know may possibly be just such another. But I am sure that the professions, and I hope that the men, are widely different.

The architect indeed requires all the imagination of the painter. The building exists in his mind before it is sketched upon paper, and if the operation of design is the same in other heads as in mine, arrangement, construction, and decoration are attained so simultaneously that I seldom materially change the design first elaborated. But when imagination has done her duty, her aid is no longer wanted, and to a moment of enthusiasm succeed months of dry mechanical labor in drawing and the more dry and tedious application to it of calculations. When the castle in the air has been made to descend into the office, and such constructions in writing and drawing shall guide the hard hand and iron tool of the mechanic, imagination is busy only to distract. To execute such a building as the Capitol without relaying a brick or altering the shape of a single piece of timber or of stone, a competent knowledge of eighteen mechanical arts is necessary, a tolerably perfect command of every part of mechanical science, and, above all, a very correct mastery of accounts. Where these are not combined, the architect is the slave of his mechanics; he is either ignorant of or must wink at their deceptions for fear of ex-

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posing his own ignorance, and alteration and experiment constitute a very considerable portion of his expense.

If I should lay before you the accounts of all the buildings in which I have been engaged, I am sure that you would never again pay a compliment to my imagination at the expense of my common understanding. For I could prove that whenever I have committed myself upon an estimate I have never exceeded it, unless great alterations of the design have been made to induce greater expense.

In the south wing of the Capitol I can also assert that no alterations whatever have been made during the progress of the work, because from the general design to the minutest molding everything has been conceived and drawn by my own labor, and when the work was finished the measurements of every part have been taken by me personally, the calculations made, the prices determined, the bills made and sent in my own handwriting into the office of the superintendent. The calculations of the dimensions of the plasterers' work alone occupied one hundred and twenty-eight columns of my measuring book.

But the truth is that previous estimates have never, but once, in 1804, been required of me, and the responsibility of an estimate for such a work as the Capitol will never be courted by me for a salary of \$1,700 per annum, which for several years did not pay

## BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL CAPITOL

the expenditures of my office, but left me the honor of presenting my labors to the public.

In the course of the debate I am informed I was by some gentlemen supposed to be a contractor to build the Capitol for a limited sum, and that if it had exceeded that sum I ought to lose it. I wish I had been such a contractor at the cost of the north wing. I should have put \$60,000 into my pocket instead of being poorer than I was when I undertook the direction of the work.

I might pass all this over with the proud but little satisfactory consolation of *virtute mea mi involero*. But this will do only for myself, not for my wife and children. That which robs me of reputation, robs them of bread.

The freedom with which I have written is the best evidence of my respect for you. I will therefore say no more but to assure you of its sincerity.

Yours most respectfully.

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1810.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Sir:* It is my duty to take up so much of your time as to inform you of the progress of the public business under my charge.

As the uncertainty of public employment increases annually, I have thought it prudent to get some business independently of my profession, and am going to

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establish in connection with a few of the most wealthy men in Baltimore a manufactory of cotton stuff, of the success of which I have no doubt. I shall thus escape the calumny and abuse which it is very foolish to regard, but which it is not human nature to entirely despise, and from which, as neither you nor your immediate predecessor have escaped, a public man, even if his importance be as trifling as mine, cannot expect to remain exempt.

With the highest esteem and respect, I am,  
Very sincerely your obd't servant.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, ESQ.,  
Monticello, Va.

*Dear Sir:* The columns of the rotunda (Senate chamber), sixteen in number, must be more slender than the Ionic order will admit, and ought not to be of a Corinthian because the chamber itself is of the Ionic order. I have, therefore, composed a capital of leaves and flowers of the tobacco plant which has an intermediate effect approaching the character of the Corinthian order and retaining the simplicity of the Attic column of the Clepsydra or Temple of the Winds.

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1817.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Sir:* My situation as architect of the Capitol has become such as to leave me no choice between resigna-

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tion and the sacrifice of all self-respect. Permit me then, sir, to resign into your hands an office in which I fear I have been the cause to you of much vexation while my only object has been to accomplish your wishes. You have known me more than twenty years. You have borne testimony to my professional skill—and my integrity has never been questioned. You will, I am confident, do me justice, and in time know that never the delay nor the expense of the public works are chargeable to me.

I am aware that much inconvenience may arise from my retiring from my office so suddenly. But I pledge myself to furnish drawings and instructions for all the parts of the works that are in hand for a reasonable compensation being made, which my circumstances do not permit me to decline.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obdt. srt.

## CHAPTER VIII

BY SEA TO NEW ORLEANS

*D*ECEMBER 17, 1818. On board the brig *Clio*; Captain Wynne, master. Left Baltimore twenty minutes before one o'clock, with a strong northwest wind, passed North Point at quarter-past two o'clock; at three, off Magotty, the wind chopped round to the southwest, and died away. Cast anchor. At sunrise, the 18th, the wind fresh from the northwest, a very fine day, fair and fresh wind. Got the cabin into order, and arranged our domestic hours of breakfast, dinner, and supper.

*December 19th, about 1 A. M.* Cast anchor off Old Point Comfort, to wait for a boat to take off the pilot. At sunrise weighed anchor, all hands sick.

*Tuesday, the 22d, about 2 A. M.* A perfect calm. The wind then shifted to the southwest, remarkably smooth sea without swell. At eight a very large shoal of porpoises played for an hour about the ship.

I have often heard that a shoal of porpoises round a ship indicates an approaching gale, and their direction to the point toward which they leave the ship to



## BY SEA TO NEW ORLEANS

be that from which the storm will blow. In this instance the case was certainly so, for toward night the violence of the wind increased to a gale.

*Thursday, the 24th.* The wind during the night had got round to the north. The sea still as high as ever and wind not abated, but being quite favorable, the brig was put before it, and scudded under close reefed maintopsail and close reefed foresail. Got on deck and sat on the taffrail, from whence the motion of the brig through the most awful sea I ever beheld or imagined, at the rate of nine or ten knots, appeared the most wonderful effect of human art, and indeed of human courage, that can be imagined. The vessel is a most admirable sea boat, and skips over these mountainous waves without appearing to labor in the least. Several birds, of a species unknown to anyone on board, were flying near the water at no great distance from the ship, during the great part of the morning; the outer edge of the wing dark brown, pennon light ash color, back dark brown; could not distinguish the legs and bill.

### A CONVERSATION AT SEA

*Question.* Hoooooooooagh!

*Answer.* Hooooooooooooagh!

*Question.* Whence came ye?

*Answer.* From Stoningtown.

*Question.* Where's that?

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*Answer.* You're a fine fellow for a captain not to know where Stoningtown is.

*Question.* (*Aside.* Damn your Yankee soul!) Where are you bound?

*Answer.* To Savannah, if ye know where that is.

*Question.* What have you in?

*Answer.* Only a few notions.

*Question.* What's your longitude?

*Answer.* Right enough. Tebadiah, make sail, up helm.

*Friday, the 25th, Christmas day.* Wind strong from the N.N.W. Got up more sail. All the passengers are dressed in honor of the day. The weather is now delightful, wind gentle, and, as I judge from my feelings, temperature about seventy degrees. Our party is so good-humored, from the captain to the second mate, that the day was spent very pleasantly, and the passengers remained on deck until eleven o'clock at night. A heavy dew reminded us of the necessity of retiring.

*Saturday, the 26th.* A magnificent sunset. The sky of Italy is deservedly celebrated. The singularity and brilliancy of this sky are not altogether peculiar to Italy, for in all latitudes, near to or upon the ocean, a similar sky prevails. It is a sky inimitable by the pencil.

*Sunday, the 27th.* A general shave and clean shirts.



A CONVERSATION AT SEA.



## BY SEA TO NEW ORLEANS

The captain's birthday; celebrated by hot rolls at breakfast, a hog killed, apple pies for dinner, and a great variety of similar demonstrations of satisfaction. All these things are important in a sea voyage, and scatter flowers over the monotonous surface of so barren an existence.

The conversation is as multifarious as the habits and professions of the company—slave dealers, steamboats, tobacco, sea voyages, New Orleans and its manners, inhabitants, police, Mississippi, shipbuilding, etc. Mr. W. is the least informed of the company. He appears to be a sort of English agent, a most good-humored creature, less opinionated than could be expected from his confined education and knowledge. He pointedly dislikes the government of his country, and sees clearly enough in what particulars America possesses superior advantages, both for the acquisition of wealth and on account of more generally diffused knowledge among the mass of the people. On this subject he one day discoursed very largely, and gave many instances within his own knowledge of the ignorance of the lower orders of the English respecting America and other foreign countries. After all were in their berths, M. and he continued their conversations from their beds across the cabin. M., who as a sailor has been several times in the East Indies and twice in China, was giving an account of the peculiar customs of the Chinese, and the difficulty of obtaining admission

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into their cities. Mr. W. observed that he should, of all things, like to be admitted to see the buildings of the cities of China; that he knew that foreigners could get into the suburbs of the city of China, which he believed was called Canton, but not into the city itself. It was with great difficulty, and much to the entertainment of his silent auditors, that M. explained to him that China is not a city but an extensive empire, of which Canton is a trading port, into the suburbs of which only foreigners could have access. W. persisted, and M. explained and exemplified for an hour, but I believe without convincing W. that China is not a walled town, for he suddenly recollected to have somewhere heard of the wall of China, and nobody could be so absurd as to believe that a country could be walled.

In truth, no greater proof of the want of a knowledge of the true state of foreign countries among the English in general could be adduced than this very conversation with W., unless it were the conduct of the English minister and of the generals during the late war.

*Monday, 28th.* I got up at the first dawn, and, remaining on deck till the sunrise, contemplated the magnificent star-spangled heavens with feelings that are not to be excited by any theological discussion, and which, founded on an exhibition of the power and benevolence of God that always exists and is not in the

## BY SEA TO NEW ORLEANS

remotest degree dependent on opinion, must leave a permanent, habitual, and highly devotional impression on the heart. The gradual gilding of light clouds along the horizon preceded the glorious rise of the sun from the ocean. The increased knowledge of the construction of our solar system, of the general laws that govern the motion to the heavenly bodies, will forever prevent the revival of a religion in which the sun is considered as the living God of the world, to be adored as such, and propitiated by prayers and offerings, but surely no error deserves more indulgence, or is more natural, than the adoration of this glorious luminary as the God of our life and of our enjoyments. A trace of this idea remains in all the churches of Christendom excepting those having their origin more or less in the Reformation by Calvin and his followers. The situation of Catholic, Greek, and Church of England, as well as Lutheran altars, in the east of the church, and the consequent direction of the faces of worshipers to that point, is a vestige of the original religion of all uncivilized nations.

One of our black passengers, Tom, a negro belonging to the notorious slave dealer Anderson, died this morning. He had been, with another, who came also sick aboard, sometime before his being sent off, in jail. He was most faithfully attended by our most humane captain and Dr. Day, and everything done for his recovery that the confined room in the vessel permitted.

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He had a mother and sisters on board, who treated him with very little kindness, and he would probably have recovered had they taken better care of him. As soon as we were off the bank, about 3 P. M., his body was committed to the sea. I read the Episcopal burial service on the occasion, every person on board attending. This man had cost Anderson \$800 and his passage \$30 more. He was a light mulatto and was expected to fetch \$1,000 to \$1,200 in Louisiana.

It appears to me, whatever may be said of the difficulty of suppressing the internal slave trade without infringing upon the rights of private property, as long as these men are considered as articles of legal traffic, that it certainly ought not to be aided by the Government or its officers. But this is certainly done, while the public jail is permitted to be a place of deposit for this sort of goods until they can be shipped. There is another man on board, half Indian, half negro, who came out of the same depot, the public jail of Baltimore, the same time with Tom, also sick—and, what is more noisome on board, absolutely eaten up with vermin. The only rags he possesses are those that were on his back on his being shipped. Captain Wynne, whose humanity to these poor wretches has been very active, and who has personally attended their wants, had him stripped and wrapped up in a blanket; his rags then were towed overboard, but I doubt whether the vermin would be expelled from them.



## BY SEA TO NEW ORLEANS

The other colored people on board, and who are well clad and seem very respectable and orderly in their way, will neither approach nor assist this poor wretch, and had it not been for the captain's attention, he would have starved, for they gave him nothing to eat for two days.

*January 1, 1819.* This being New Year's, an extraordinary exertion was made to furnish our dinner table, and a boiled turkey marked the day, which, like all the rest, was spent in great good humor.

*January 9, 1819.* At daylight the wind, though very light, was favorable. The fog continued. We soon got under way and proceeded up the river, first through the wide bay from which the several passes, south and southwest, find their way into the Gulf of Mexico, then through a margin of reeds on both sides of the river about a mile wide. Presently large trees present themselves, thinly scattered on the west bank upon a narrow margin of more elevated ground. This growth continued to Fort Plaquemine or Fort St. Phillip, bombarded by the British during the late war and successfully defended by Colonel Overton.

After passing Plaquemine, low and mean houses, the residences of planters, appear occasionally on both sides of the river. Orange trees in the open air formed a short vista on the west bank, the first I had seen.

It is not easy to assign a cause for the present course of the Mississippi, although there is certainly

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an invincible necessity in the physical circumstances that belong to this mighty stream, which confines it to its present bed and forbids it to form any other.

The planters in the lower parts of the river are cultivators of rice. A large capital is required for the cultivation of sugar and coffee. The sugar plantations do not begin until within fifty miles of New Orleans. The first on a large scale is Johnson's, formerly at the Balize, now a very rich man, as his solid and extensive sugar works prove. It has a large house of two stories of brick, with a portico on each front. All the other houses which I observed were of one story, low, and having a portico or piazza either all round, which is the old French style of building, or on each front. There are generally some orange trees growing about every house, sometimes forming a vista from the road to the door, sometimes planted in quincunx like an orchard. The larger plantations have a regular street of negro houses near the dwelling, many of them looking commodious and comfortable, with a belfry in the center to call the negroes to work. I saw an overseer directing the repair of the levee, with a long whip in his hand. The creole French have the reputation of working their slaves very hard and feeding them very badly; the Americans are said to treat and feed them well.

On arriving at New Orleans in the morning, a sound more strange than any that is heard anywhere

## BY SEA TO NEW ORLEANS

else in the world astonishes a stranger. It is a most incessant, loud, rapid, and various gabble of tongues of all tones that were ever heard at Babel. It is more to be compared with the sounds that issue from an extensive marsh, the residence of a million or two of frogs, from bullfrogs up to whistlers, than to anything else. It proceeded from the market and levee, a point to which we had cast anchor, and which, before we went ashore, was in a moment, by the sudden disappearance of the fog, laid open to our view.

New Orleans has, at first sight, a very imposing and handsome appearance, beyond any other city in the United States in which I have yet been. The strange and loud noise heard through the fog, on board the *Clio*, proceeding from the voices of the market people and their customers, was not more extraordinary than the appearance of these noisy folk when the fog cleared away and we landed. Everything had an odd look. For twenty-five years I have been a traveler only between New York and Richmond, and I confess that I felt myself in some degree again a cockney, for it was impossible not to stare at a sight wholly new even to one who has traveled much in Europe and America.

The first remarkable appearance was that of the market boats, differing in form and equipment from anything that floats on the Atlantic side of our country. We landed among the queer boats, some of which carried the tricolored flag of Napoleon, at the foot

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of a wooden flight of steps opposite to the center of the public square, which were badly fixed to the ragged bank. On the upper step of the flight sat a couple of Choctaw Indian women and a stark naked Indian girl. At the top of the flight we arrived on the levee extending along the front of the city. It is a wide bank of earth, level on the top to the width of perhaps fifty feet, and then sloping gradually in a very easy descent to the footway or banquet at the houses, a distance of about one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet from the edge of the levee. This footway is about five feet below the level of the levee, of course four feet below the surface of the water in the river at the time of the inundation, which rises to within one foot, sometimes less, at the top of the levee. Along the levee, as far as the eye could reach to the west, and to the market house to the east, were ranged two rows of market people, some having stalls or tables with a tilt or awning of canvas, but the majority having their wares lying on the ground, perhaps on a piece of canvas or a parcel of palmetto leaves. The articles to be sold were not more various than the sellers. White men and women, and of all hues of brown, and of all classes of faces, from round Yankees to grizzled and lean Spaniards, black negroes and negresses, filthy Indians half naked, mulattoes curly and straight-haired, quadroons of all shades, long haired and frizzled, women dressed in the most flaring yellow and

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scarlet gowns, the men capped and hatted. Their wares consisted of as many kinds as their faces. Innumerable wild ducks, oysters, poultry of all kinds, fish, bananas, piles of oranges, sugarcane, sweet and Irish potatoes, corn in the ear and husked, apples, carrots, and all sorts of other roots, eggs, trinkets, tinware, dry goods, in fact of more and odder things to be sold in that manner and place than I can enumerate. The market was full of wretched beef and other butcher's-meat, and some excellent and large fish. I cannot suppose that my eye took in less than five hundred sellers and buyers, all of whom appeared to strain their voices to exceed each other in loudness. A little farther along the levee, on the margin of a heap of bricks, was a bookseller, whose stock of books, English and French, cut no mean appearance. Among others, there was a well-bound collection of pamphlets printed during the American war, forming ten octavo volumes, which I must get my friend Robertson of Congress, if here, to buy.

I was so amused by the market that I spent half an hour or more in it, walking from one end of the levee to the other, as far as it was occupied by the market people.

The public square, which is open to the river, has an admirable general effect, and is infinitely superior to anything in our Atlantic cities as a water view of the city. The whole of the wide parallel to the river is occupied by the cathedral in the center, and by two

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symmetrical buildings on each side. That to the west is called the Principal, and contains the public offices and council chamber of the city. That on the east is called the Presbytery, being the property of the church. It is divided into seven stores, with dwellings above, which are rented and produce a large revenue.

At the southwest corner of the square is a building of excellent effect. The lower story and entresol are rented by storekeepers; the upper story is a hotel, Tremoulet's, at which I have taken up my quarters. The rest, to the west side of the square and the whole of the east side, is built in very mean stores, covered with most villainous roofs of tiles, partly white, partly red and black, with narrow galleries in the second story, the posts of which are mere unpainted sticks, but they let at an enormous rent. The square itself is neglected, the fence is ragged, and in many places open. Part of it is let for a depot of firewood, paving stones are heaped up in it, and along the whole of the side next to the river is a row of mean booths in which dry goods are sold by yellow, black, and white women, who dispose, I am told, of incredible quantities of slops and other articles fit for sailors and boatmen, and those sort of customers. Thus a square which might be made the handsomest in America is rather a nuisance than otherwise.

Tremoulet, who keeps this house, was, I am told, formerly a cook, an excellent station from which to

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rise to the dignity of the master of a large hotel. He has lived here under the Spanish, French, and American governments, and prefers the former. He has lost three large fortunes made in this place by his hotels, and is now poor and old. He and Madame Tremoulet, however, are the most vigorous and cheerful and generous old people imaginable. The causes of Tremoulet's failures have been the bank and his generous disposition. When the American Government took possession, the bank soon offered facilities to commerce that had not before existed. Tremoulet, although he did not meddle with commerce, aided those who did by indorsement. Nothing, to a man unused to the terrible consequences of becoming security for others with no other counter security than their honesty or success, seems so pleasant as to be able to assist a friend, and perhaps make his fortune, by writing his name across the back of a slip of paper. That caution is indeed lulled to sleep which would be awake if the security were given in the shape of a bond or lien upon an estate, because a man who indorses a note for another, while he himself does not require the aid of a bank, naturally conceives that the loss of credit attending the nonpayment of the note by the drawer is a coercion operating in his favor, and tends to render him more certain that he will not be called upon to pay it, but that the drawer will make any sacrifices rather than have the note protested.

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Tremoulet, from having built and owned the two largest hotels in the city, is now the tenant of Madame Castillion, to whom the stores in the public square belong. His house is by far the filthiest which I have ever inhabited, but my room is kept clean by an excellent servant whom I have bribed to attend me particularly. The growing Americanism of this city is strongly evident by the circumstance that Tremoulet's is the only French boarding house in the city, that it is unfashionable, and when he removes, for he is going to the Havana, there will be no other open. My object in preferring this house is to reacquire a facility in speaking French, a facility which I have lost by thirty years' disuse of that language. Whether my object will be answered I am doubtful, for the company is exceedingly mixed and daily changing, and some courage is required to venture to converse with strangers in a language imperfectly spoken. Another obstacle exists in the excessive rapidity with which they speak, and a greater, in their all speaking at once, and excessively loud. Some, among them Tremoulet himself, occasionally strike up a song, in which others join; in fact the noise and gabble is so incessant that Tremoulet, seeing me look with astonishment and a smile at the vociferous party, thought some sort of an apology necessary, and said: "*Voyez vous, nous autres Français sont un peu bruyans.*" It must, indeed, be acknowledged that the party of this house is not ex-



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actly that which would constitute the best society anywhere: storekeepers, planters, and some of Lallemand's ruined party from the Trinity River. But they are all decent men, and two or three of them seem to be men of excellent information and polished manners.

The construction of the house, and of two or three others which I have seen, is entirely French. A lower story, divided into and let as stores, and an entresol in which the shopkeepers live, or which is let to other families; then a handsome range of apartments surrounding a court of thirty by twenty-four feet. The appearance externally of the house is very good, and if the whole square were thus built up it would be one of the handsomest in any country.

In the interior, the court gives light to all the stories, but is reserved only for the use of the principal story and is entered by a porte-cochère. Part of the entresol is also appropriated to the use of the hotel, which thus becomes very roomy and commodious. The proportions of this are not correct, the house being longer from north to south than from east to west, but the subdivision is correct.

I asked Tremoulet whether, as his house is much frequented, he could not find it to his interest to remain here where he is known and respected, and where in the same line he had already made two fortunes. He answered with a shrug, "*Chacun n'aime point ce*

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*Gouvernement,*” and then told me a romantic story that must for the present be deferred, but which proves that gratitude has not entirely disappeared from the surface of the earth, and that he will probably succeed better in Cuba.

## CHAPTER IX

### NEW ORLEANS AND ITS PEOPLE

**W**HAT is the state of society in New Orleans? is one of many questions which I am required to answer by a friend, who seems not to be aware that this question is equivalent to that of Shakespeare's Polonius. He might as well ask: What is the shape of a cloud? The state of society at any time here is puzzling. There are, in fact, three societies here—first the French, second the American, and third the mixed. The French side is not exactly what it was at the change of government, and the American is not strictly what it is in the Atlantic cities. The opportunity of growing rich by more active, extensive, and intelligent modes of agriculture and commerce has diminished the hospitality, destroyed the leisure, and added more selfishness to the character of the creoles. The Americans, coming hither to make money and considering their residence as temporary, are doubly active in availing themselves of the enlarged opportunities of becoming wealthy which the place offers. On the whole, the state of society is similar to that of

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every city rapidly rising into wealth, and doing so much, and such fast increasing business, that no man can be said to have a moment's leisure. Their business is to make money. They are in an eternal bustle. Their limbs, their heads, and their hearts move to that sole object. Cotton and tobacco, buying and selling, and all the rest of the occupation of a money-making community, fill their time and give the habit of their minds. The post which comes in and goes out three times a week renders those days, more than the others, days of oppressive exertion. I have been received with great hospitality, have dined out almost every day, but the time of a late dinner and a short sitting after it have been the only periods during which I could make any acquaintance with the gentlemen of the place. As it is now the Carnival, every evening is closed with a ball, or a play, or a concert. I have been to two of each.

To entitle a stranger to describe the character of a society, more is required than to have looked at it superficially, and through the medium of habits acquired elsewhere. More than a superficial use of the senses is required to ascertain facts of which the senses are the only judges. The great fault of travelers, I was going to say, especially of English travelers—because we Americans have suffered most by the false accounts of our country—is to impose first impressions upon themselves and the public for the actual states

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of things. To determine upon the relative moral or political character of a community requires more time, more talent, and a more philosophical investigation of the history of its habits, and of those causes of them over which no control can be exercised, than traveling bookmakers possess or can command.

It would therefore be very impertinent in me, after ten days' residence only, to call anything which I may put into these brochures by a name more decided than my impressions respecting New Orleans.

My impressions, then, as to the surface of female society, are that there are collected in New Orleans at a ball, many women, below the age of twenty-four or twenty-five, of more correct and beautiful features, and with faces and figures more fit for the sculptor, than I ever recollect to have seen together elsewhere in the same number. A few of them are perfect, and a great majority are far above the mere agreeable. I have said faces for the sculptor, not altogether for the painter, for the lilies have banished the roses. The Anglican slang of a painted French woman does not apply here. A few American ladies, not long resident here, had rosy cheeks, but very few. The French creoles are universally of healthy color, fair, but the cheeks are of the color of the forehead. At a *bal paré* the number of brunettes was small, and my attention being alive to the subject, I could not see one face that had the slightest tinge of rouge. There was a face and a head, the beau-

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tiful hair of which was decorated with a single white rose, surmounting a figure exquisitely formed and moving with perfect grace, belonging to some young lady apparently of eighteen, whom I am glad I do not know, but which was as perfect in all respects as anything I have ever seen in or out of marble.

The dancing of the ladies was what is to be expected of French women; that of the gentleman, what Lord Chesterfield would have called, too good for gentlemen. I hope and believe that we Americans have qualities which make up for our deficiency in dancing, a deficiency which marked those young Americans that were upon the floor.

I have never been in a public assembly altogether better conducted. No confusion, no embarrassment as to the sets having, in their turn, a right to occupy the floor, no bustle of managers, no obtrusive solicitors of public attention.

Altogether the impression was highly favorable. The only nuisance was a tall, ill-dressed black in the music gallery, who played the tambourine standing up, and in a forced and vile voice called the figures as they changed.

The French population in Louisiana is said to be only 20,000, in the city not above 5,000 or 6,000. The increase is of Americans. Some French have come hither since the return of the Bourbons, but they did not find themselves at home; some joined General Lalle-



VIEW FROM A WINDOW OF TREMOULET'S HOTEL, NEW ORLEANS.





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mand in his settlement on Trinity River, a few remained so as sensibly to increase the French population. The accession, if worth mentioning, did not exceed the emigration which has taken place of those who did not like the American Government, or had amassed fortunes and have returned to France or settled in the West Indian islands. Since the breaking of Lallemand's colony, a few have returned to New Orleans, but so few that they are not a perceptible quantity, even in the comparatively small French community.

On the other hand, Americans are pouring in daily, not in families, but in large bodies. In a few years, therefore, this will be an American town. What is good and bad in the French manners and opinions must give way, and the American notions of right and wrong, of convenience and inconvenience, will take their place.

When this period arrives, it will be folly to say that they are better or worse than they now are. They will be changed, but they will be changed into that which is more agreeable to the new population than what now exists. But a man who fancies that he has seen the world on more sides than one cannot help wishing that a mean, an average character, of society may grow out of the intermixture of the French and American manners.

Such a consummation is, perhaps, to be more devoutly wished than hoped for. There is a lady, and I am told a leading one among the Americans, who

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can speak French well, but is determined never to condescend to speak to the French ladies in their language, although in New York she prided herself on her knowing that language. Many of the leading gentlemen, when not talking of tobacco or cotton, find it very amusing to abuse and ridicule French morals, French manners, and French houses. In truth, there is evidently growing up a party spirit, which in time will give success to the views of the Americans, and everything French will in time disappear. Even the miserable patois of the creoles will be heard only in the cypress swamps.

At present the most prominent, and, to the Americans, the most offensive feature of French habits is the manner in which they spend Sunday. For about ten years the recoil of the French revolutionary principles has made religious profession fashionable, especially in England, from whence our American public mind always, more or less, receives its tone. The Holy Alliance of Greek, Roman, Lutheran, and Calvinistic sovereigns, who before the battle of Waterloo most piously consigned each other, as far as religious belief went, to eternal damnation, has given authority of high effect to this fashion. For my part, the effect of this impious farce upon my own mind is to make me retire with the more humility into my own heart and seek there a temple unprofaned by external dictation. Sunday in New Orleans is distinguished only, first, by the

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flags that are hoisted on all the ships; second, by the attendance at church (the cathedral) of all the beautiful girls in the place, and of two or three hundred quadroons, negroes, and mulattoes, and perhaps of one hundred white males to hear high mass, during which the two bells of the cathedral are jingling; third, by the shutting up of the majority of the shops and warehouses kept by the Americans, and fourth, by the firing of the guns of most of the young gentlemen in the neighboring swamps, to whom Sunday affords leisure for field sports; fifth, the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist churches are also open on that day, and are attended by a large majority of the ladies of their respective congregations.

In other respects, no difference between Sunday and any other day exists. The shops are open, as well as the theater and the ballroom, and in the city, at least, "Sunday shines no holiday" to slaves and hirelings.

In how far the intermarriage of Americans with French girls will produce a less rigid observance of the gloom of an English Sunday, it is impossible to foresee. For some time an effect will be produced; for I have spent Sunday in a family in which a devout Quaker and a Presbyterian, who have married two sisters, joined in a very agreeable dance after a little concert. But the pulpit, now filled very ably by the Presbyterian clergyman, Mr. Learned, and the Episcopalian, Mr. Hull, directs its principal energy against this pretended

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profanation of the Sabbath; and with the countenance of the American majority perseverance will at last prevail, and Sundays will become gloomy and *ennuyant*, as elsewhere among us.

A bill was moved, I think, at the last session of the Legislature to put down the practice of dancing and shopkeeping prevailing here on Sunday. I am not quite sure of the fact, but I have heard it stated; but if the attempt was made, it did not succeed. Perhaps my early education on the continent of Europe has still an influence over my opinions, but certainly, had I been in the Legislature, I should have voted against the law to prohibit recreation of any sort on Sunday, on principle. If gambling is a recreation, it is also a vice; that is, it produces certain inevitable misery to the winner as well as the loser, and certain injury to their families and to the community at large. The more effectually, therefore, that sort of recreation is put down, not on Sunday only, but on all days, and the sooner, so much the better. I was also of the opinion that the shopkeeping ought to be put down, independently of any religious motives, because it forces those who have no interest in the sales—that is, the hired people and apprentices—to labor, and deprives them of the privilege of divine worship or of recreation, if you please, which every other individual, and probably the masters themselves, enjoys once in seven days. But my opinion is altered after being better in-

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formed, principally by conversation with Mr. Thomas Urquhart, one of the oldest inhabitants and most sensible men of this place. The slaves are by no means obliged to work anywhere in the State on Sunday, as has been stated, and is believed in the Eastern States by many—excepting in the sugar-boiling season, and to prevent danger from inundation when the river rises on the levee. They do, indeed, work at other seasons by the desire, perhaps by the order, of their masters; but it is understood, I believe it is a law, that if they do work they shall be paid for their labor, both in boiling sugar on Sunday and for every other kind of work.

In the neighborhood of New Orleans the land is valuable for the cultivation of sugar, and there is so little of it that were it not for the vegetables and fowls and small marketing of all sorts, raised by the negro slaves, the city would starve. To the negroes it is not labor, but frolic and recreation, to come to market. They have only Sunday on which to sell their truck. If more good than evil grows out of the license to these wretches to come to town and earn some comfort, some decent clothing, or even some finery for their families, by the sale of their articles, if the town is fed and the negro slave clothed thereby, it would be difficult to show how the prohibition of the practice and its consequences would be compensated by the forced idleness of these people throughout the week, as well as their idleness or forced attendance at church on Sunday.

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I have often listened to the Puritan doctrine on the subject of Sunday with astonishment, in so far as it prohibits as sin, a word of very elastic meaning, every innocent act satisfactory to the human heart as constituted by our Creator on one day in the week, which it allows on every other, and justifies this rigor by the Ten Commandments and the example of the early Christians. All that the second commandment directs is contained in these words: "Six days shalt thou labor, and on the seventh [not on the first] thou shalt do no manner of work, neither thou," etc., etc. Now, recreation is certainly not herein forbidden, neither walking, nor dancing, nor music, nor any other act that gives innocent pleasure, and to which forced labor, either of servant or animal, is not required. In the country in which the Sabbath was instituted a more benevolent, a more just, and a more politic law could not have been established by the common Father of master and slave. There the relation of slave to the master was infinitely more distant and more oppressive than with us. The master was master of the life, as well as of the labor, of his servant. But there is no country, not even the countries in which this relation is wholly unknown to the laws, in which the difference of rank and of wealth does not put the labor of the poor at the disposal of the rich. It is, therefore, a wise and benevolent institution that says to power: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." But shall

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the slave, released from the constraint of his master, be told: "You are not compelled to work, but you shall not play; you shall listen for six days to the sound of the tabor and pipe issuing from your master's mansion, and see at a distance, when you return to your hovel, the blaze of his festivity, and through his windows gape at the dance and the revel without sharing it, but on the seventh you shall go to church for an hour or two and the rest of the day you shall sit idle by force, 'for every step in the dance is a step toward hell fire?' It is no sin for your master to spend, during six days, the product of the sweat of your brow on musicians and gardeners and coachmen and footmen, and all the other means of innocent pleasure which the most pious allow themselves; but for you to do the little dancing, and playing of football or cricket, which you can do on the seventh, is a crying sin." It will be hard to find this doctrine in the second commandment; still less will it be found that at the risk of real injury to themselves, and to the city which their labor during the week tends to supply with food, they are forbidden to indulge the useful recreation of going to market.

This long dissertation has been suggested by my accidentally stumbling upon an assembly of negroes, which, I am told, every Sunday afternoon meets on the Common in the rear of the city. My object was to take a walk on the bank of the Canal Carondelet as far as the Bayou St. John. In going up St. Peter's

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Street and approaching the Common, I heard a most extraordinary noise, which I supposed to proceed from some horse-mill—the horses tramping on a wooden floor. I found, however, on emerging from the house to the Common that it proceeded from a crowd of five or six hundred persons, assembled in an open space or public square. I went to the spot and crowded near enough to see the performance. All those who were engaged in the business seemed to be blacks. I did not observe a dozen yellow faces. They were formed into circular groups, in the midst of four of which that I examined (but there were more of them) was a ring, the largest not ten feet in diameter. In the first were two women dancing. They held each a coarse handkerchief, extended by the corners, in their hands, and set to each other in a miserably dull and slow figure, hardly moving their feet or bodies. The music consisted of two drums and a stringed instrument. An old man sat astride of a cylindrical drum, about a foot in diameter, and beat it with incredible quickness with the edge of his hand and fingers. The other drum was an open-staved thing held between the knees and beaten in the same manner. They made an incredible noise. The most curious instrument, however, was a stringed instrument, which no doubt was imported from Africa. On the top of the finger board was the rude figure of a man in a sitting posture, and two pegs behind him to which the strings were fastened. The body was



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a calabash. It was played upon by a very little old man, apparently eighty or ninety years old. The women squalled out a burden to the playing, at intervals, consisting of two notes, as the negroes working in our cities respond to the song of their leader. Most of the circles contained the same sort of dances. One was larger, in which a ring of a dozen women walked, by way of dancing, round the music in the center. But the instruments were of different construction. One which from the color of the wood seemed new, consisted of a block cut into something of the form of a cricket bat, with a long and deep mortise down the center. This thing made a considerable noise, being beaten lustily on the side by a short stick. In the same orchestra was a square drum, looking like a stool, which made an abominable, loud noise; also a calabash with a round hole in it, the hole studded with brass nails, which was beaten by a woman with two short sticks. A man sung an uncouth song to the dancing, which I suppose was in some African language, for it was not French, and the women screamed a detestable burden on one single note. The allowed amusements of Sunday have, it seems, perpetuated here those of Africa among its former inhabitants. I have never seen anything more brutally savage and at the same time dull and stupid, than this whole exhibition. Continuing my walk about a mile along the canal, and returning after sunset near the same spot,

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the noise was still heard. There was not the least disorder among the crowd, nor do I learn, on inquiry, that these weekly meetings of the negroes have ever produced any mischief.

The general opinion of the masters and mistresses of the slaves in this city and neighborhood is that the Americans treat and feed and clothe their slaves well, but that the creoles are, in all these respects, comparatively cruel to all these unfortunate people. In going into Davis's ballroom and looking around the brilliant circle of ladies, it is impossible to imagine that any one of the fair, mild, and somewhat languid faces could express any feeling but of kindness and humanity. And yet several, I had almost said many, of these soft beauties had themselves handled the cowskin with a sort of savage pleasure, and those soft eyes had looked on the tortures of their slaves, inflicted by their orders, with satisfaction, while they had coolly prescribed the dose of infliction, the measure of which should stop short of the life of their property.

Madame Tremoulet—why should I conceal the name of such a termagant—is one of these notorious for their cruelty. She is a small, mild-faced creature, who weeps over the absence of her daughter, now with her husband in France. She has several servants; one a mulatto woman, by far the best house servant of her sex that I know of, famous also as a seamstress and for her good temper, so much so that she can at any

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time be sold for \$2,000, and Tremoulet actually asks \$3,000. Independently of her duty in a large boarding house, in waiting, and making beds, she is expected to make two shirts a day (and night) for the benefit of her mistress' private purse. In six weeks I have never seen in her conduct the smallest fault; she is modest, obliging, and incredibly active. A few days ago she failed, because it was impossible, to make the bed of a stranger at the hour prescribed. In consequence of this fault, Madame Tremoulet had her stripped quite naked, tied to a bedpost, and she herself, in the presence of her daughter, Mrs. Turpin, the mother of three beautiful children, whipped her with a cowskin until she bled. Mrs. Turpin then observed: "*Maman, vous êtes trop bonne; pourquoi prenez vous la peine de la fouetter vous-même, appelez donc Guillaume.*" William was called and made to whip her till she fainted. This scene made a noise in the house, and the blood betrayed it. Poor Sophy is ill and constantly crying. I shall leave the house as soon as convenient to me.

Madame — is another of these hell cats. Her husband is a very amiable man, president of the Bank of Louisiana, whom she had driven to seek a divorce, but the matter has been compromised lately. She did actually whip a negress to death, and treated another so cruelly that she died a short time afterwards. Mr. —, a principal merchant of this place, stated the

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facts to the grand jury, but it was hushed up from respect to the lady's husband.

My landlady, a sensible Irish woman, saw through the fence preparations making by Madame C—— to punish several of her negroes. A ladder was brought and laid down and a naked man tied upon it. She was so shocked that she left her house for several hours and did not return until she supposed the execution was over. The first wife of —— was a beast of the same kind. A gentleman, whom I will not name, saw her stand by, some years ago, while a naked woman was tied on a ladder by her orders to undergo the punishment of the whip. He immediately turned about and departed.

At the ball on Washington's birthday, the 22d, the idea of these things destroyed all the pleasure I should otherwise have felt in seeing the brilliant assemblage of as many beautiful faces and forms as I ever saw collected in one room. All pale, languid, and mild. I fancied that I saw a cowskin in every pretty hand, gracefully waved in the dance; and admired the comparative awkwardness of look and motion of my countrywomen, whose arms had never been rendered pliant by the exercise of the whip upon the bound and screaming slaves. Whatever, therefore, this community may lose in taste and elegance and exterior suavity, and acquire of serious and awkward bluntness, and commercial stiffness, may the change be as rapid as possible,

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if at the same time active humanity is introduced into the deplorable system of slavery, which, I fear, must long, perhaps forever, prevail in this State.

I begin to understand the town a little, as a collection of houses; and a curious town it is. It would be worth while, and if I can find time I will try to do something of the sort, to make a series of drawings representing the city as it now is, for it would be a safe wager that in a hundred years not a vestige will remain of the buildings as they now stand, excepting, perhaps, a few public buildings, and of houses built since the American acquisition of the country. The three most prominent buildings in the city are the cathedral, the Principal, and the Presbytery, already alluded to. They form the northwest side of the Place d'Armes. The cathedral occupies the center, the two others are perfectly symmetrical in their exterior, the Principal to the south, the Presbytery to the north of the church. Although in detail these buildings are as bad as they well can be, their symmetry and the good proportions and strong relief of the façades of the two latter and the solid mass of the former produce an admirable effect when seen from the river or the levee.

The construction of these buildings is curious. The foundations are laid about six inches below the natural surface, that is, the turf is shaved off, and logs then being laid level along the shallow trench, very solid

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piers and thick walls of brick are immediately built upon the logs. The cathedral is bound together by numerous iron clamps, which appear externally in S's and other forms; but I do not think they were very necessary, the settlement of buildings here being very equal and general, and few, if any, cramps appear on the outside of a few other buildings. The southeast corner of the Principal, however, has not settled as much as the rest of the front; for though no crack appears, the horizontal moldings are swayed down at least four inches toward the northeast. The corner that has not settled, as I was informed by the mayor, was built upon the foundation of an old wall; from which circumstance it would appear that the earth, once pressed down by considerable weight, does not afterwards admit of further condensation. In digging the foundation of my boring mill, I found the ground hardest at the very surface, and almost a quicksand on the northwest side, where the foundation of the old building obliged me to dig deeper.

These three buildings are, in fact, the best looking in New Orleans at present. The hospital is a good design by my son. The New Orleans theater joined to Davis's Assembly rooms is a thing that had not a striking effect. It is tame, but otherwise not a bad composition. The old theater of St. Philip has an unfinished front, which, if complete, would be rather pretty. After a longer residence I shall be better qualified to

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speak of the private houses. But this much I may say, that although the sort of house built here by the French is not the best specimen of French arrangement, yet it is infinitely, in my opinion, superior to that arrangement which we have inherited from the English. But so inveterate is habit that the merchants from the old United States, who are daily gaining ground in the manners and habits, the opinions and the domestic arrangements of the French, have already begun to introduce the detestable, lop-sided London house, in which a common passage and stairs acts as a common sewer to all the necessities of the dwelling, and renders it impossible to preserve a temperature within the house materially different from that of the atmosphere without, as the coughs, colds, and consumptions of our Eastern cities amply testify. With the English arrangement, the red brick fronts are also gaining ground, and the suburb St. Mary, the American suburb, already exhibits the flat, dull, dingy character of Market Street in Philadelphia, instead of the motley and picturesque effect of the stuccoed French buildings of the city. We shall introduce many grand and profitable improvements, but they will take the place of much elegance, ease, and some convenience.

The change which is gradually taking place in the character of this city is not very rapid compared with the march of society on the continent generally, but to the old inhabitants it must appear extraordinary

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enough. Much of what was a daily practice has entirely disappeared, never to return; for instance, the military parade of the intendant, and all the ceremony that belongs to the government of a city in which the people were only an appendage to the magistracy. The governor of the State is certainly the head of a much more important and powerful community than the Spanish authority ever reigned over. But the difference of respect with which the former is treated, compared with the submission shown to the latter whenever he appeared, is in an immense ratio entirely. I observed a remarkable instance of the democratic character of the citizens at the magnificent ball given at Davis's, on Washington's birthday. There were about three hundred gentlemen present, and probably four hundred ladies. When supper was ready, old Mr. Fortier, an old creole of about seventy, with the spirits and manners of a boy of seventeen, who is a sort of self-elected master of the ceremonies, not only at balls, but at all private parties to which he is invited, stopped the dancing, and called out: "*Il y a cinquante couverts, cinquante dames au souper, au souper, au souper!*" About one hundred, however, sat down, and the gentlemen stood behind their chairs; another and another set succeeded. The third set did not fill the table, and the gentlemen sat down to it as fast as they could. The governor, Villere, the chief judge of the United States Circuit Court, an officer whom I do not know, Commo-



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dore Patterson, and the Mayor of Orleans, were shown to the head of the table by the managers. But all the places were occupied by young men, not one of whom would give way. I happened to be among them and immediately rose, offering my place to the governor, and giving a hint to my neighbors. They looked round, but not a man of them followed my example, and as I vacated only one place and did not sit down again, it was soon filled by somebody else.

The Catholic religion formerly was the only one permitted, and was carried on with all the pomp and ceremony of a Spanish establishment. The Host was carried to the sick in great parade, and all those whom it encountered knelt devoutly till it had passed. All that is now over, and I understand that the procession of the Host through the streets has not been seen here for several years.

When the American Government took possession of New Orleans, it found here a bishop, who was in full possession of all the ecclesiastical power belonging to his rank, and of a considerable share of civil authority. He did not remain here, but went to the Havana, where I am told he now resides. A vicar was appointed, I do not know by what authority, and the famous Abbé Dubourg was the man. There is here an old Spanish monk, Father Anthony, whose influence among the Catholics is unbounded. He did not like this new vicar, Abbé Dubourg, who—ambition is equal to his talents,

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and both are of the first magnitude—exerted himself to maintain his authority. He twice entered the pulpit. But as soon as his voice was heard, a number in the church were seized with the most violent colds; they sneezed, coughed, spat, and, as decency required, rubbed out their spittle on the floor with their feet. They sat, in fact, so uneasily on their benches that they were obliged to be in perpetual motion, and did not recover anything like tranquillity until the abbé had finished his sermon.

The conduct of Father Antoine, in fact, was such that Archbishop Carrol suspended him, and I think Archbishop Mareschal has been obliged to do the same. He made his submission and was restored. Abbé Dubourg acquired a temporary *éclat* on the 8th of January, when he collected all the ladies in the church and performed high mass, while the men were fighting at the lines. The subsequent parade and a flaming oration *à la Française* kept him up for some time, and he then went to Italy and France. The Pope consecrated him Bishop of Orleans and he returned; but Father Anthony remained refractory, and yet refused to acknowledge his authority, no regular deposition or abdication of the Spanish bishop having taken place. The Catholic Church here, therefore, is in a kind of schismatic state. All matters of ceremony and faith are, I presume, as elsewhere; but the authority of the Holy Father at Rome appears to be disavowed in the person of the

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bishop he has consecrated and sent out. In the meantime, Bishop Dubourg, with the collection of priests, ornaments, and money which he has collected and begged in Europe, and which amount to forty of the former and a very large sum of the latter, has established himself at St. Louis, where he is about to build his cathedral. In speaking on this subject to Archbishop Mareschal, at Baltimore, he seemed very rationally to think it best to let the schism die with Father Anthony.

Although the procession of the Host no longer parades the streets, the parade of funerals is still a thing which is peculiar to New Orleans, among all the American cities. I have twice met, accidentally, a funeral. They were both of colored people; for the coffin was carried by men of that race, and none but negroes and quadroons followed it. First marched a man in a military uniform with a drawn sword. Then came three boys in surplices, with pointed caps, two carrying staves with candlesticks in the form of urns at the top, and the third, in the center, a large silver cross. At some distance behind came Father Anthony and another priest, who seemed very merry at the ceremony of yesterday, and were engaged in loud and cheerful conversation. At some distance farther came the coffin. It was carried by four well-dressed black men, and to it were attached six white ribbons about two yards in length, the ends of which were held by six colored girls, very well dressed in white, with long

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veils. A crowd of colored people followed confusedly, many of whom carried candles lighted. I stood upon a step till the whole had passed, and counted sixty-nine candles.

About a month ago I attended high mass at the cathedral. All the usual motions were made; I think in greater profusion, indeed, than ordinary, and the common service performed in the common way. But what was unusual was the procession of the Host round the church; the Mortranza (literally the "showbox," Latin *pix*, from which the exclamation "Please the pigs"—*pix*—is derived) was a very fine affair indeed, and an embroidered canopy was carried over it upon six silver staves, held by six very respectable-looking men.

One of my motives for going to the cathedral was the hope of hearing good and affecting church music. In this I was most sadly disappointed. There was no organ, at least the miserable organ which they have was not played. The voices, half a dozen, at least, of them, that chanted the service were the loudest and most unmusical that I ever heard in a church. The loudness was terrific, of one of them particularly, and as they chanted in unison, and in the most villainous taste imaginable, something between a metrical melody and a free recitative, it is not easy to conceive anything more diabolical.

The congregation consisted of at least four-fifths

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women, of which number one-half, at least, were colored. For many years I have not seen candles offered at the altars; but at each of the side altars there were half a dozen candles stuck upon the steps by old colored women, who seemed exceedingly devout.

At Baltimore, the metropolis of American Catholicism, the stages of the mass performing within the church is no longer announced to those who do not attend there. But here, the pious Catholic confined to his bed at home can follow the congregation in the church through the whole exhibition. The bell is kept at work as a signal, and when the Host is elevated, it rings a peal that is heard all over the city.

Father Anthony is said to be near eighty. He looks, indeed, so. He has a long, sharp face, with an aquiline nose and a gray beard, long and thin, which has once been red.

## CHAPTER X

### PECULIAR CUSTOMS, WITH SOME DISJECTA MEMBRA UPON ART CONVENTIONS

NEW ORLEANS, March 8, 1819.

I WALKED to-day to the burial grounds on the northwest side of the town. There is an inclosure for the Catholic Church of about three hundred feet square, and immediately adjoining is the burial place of the Protestants, of about equal dimensions. The Catholic tombs are of a very different character from those of our Eastern and Northern cities. They are of brick, much larger than necessary to inclose a single coffin, and plastered over so as to have a very solid and permanent appearance. They are of many shapes of similar character, covering each an area of seven or eight feet long and four or five feet wide, and being from five to seven feet high. They are crowded close together, without any particular attention to aspect. The range of the sides of the area is southwest and northeast, and northwest and southeast. It appeared to me possible that the confusion might arise from the different degrees of importance which the friends or priests might attach to the east

## PECULIAR CUSTOMS

and west position of the tomb, a position which was once considered an essential in the construction of a church, as well as in the placing of a tomb; and is a surviving remnant of Eastern worship which still hangs about our religious practice after being disavowed by our creeds. I was once told by a Catholic priest that the position of the coffin, with the feet to the east and the head to the west, was of the first importance, because that at the resurrection Christ would appear in the east, and if they were placed otherwise they would rise with their backs toward Him. Without intending to place this subject in a ludicrous light, I mention this opinion as a strong proof that the worship of the sun rising in the east has strongly impregnated the religious practices of the Christian church; and assuredly, of all false worship, none appears to me more natural and pardonable than that of the rising sun.

In one corner of the Catholic burying ground are two sets of catacombs, of three stories each, roughly built, and occupying much more room than is necessary. Many of the catacombs were occupied, but not in regular succession, and the mouths of some were filled up with marble slabs having inscriptions. But more were bricked up and plastered, without any indication of the person's name who occupies it. Of the tombs there are very few that are furnished with any inscription whatever. The few that are record only the name and the date of the birth and death of the deceased,

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with a very few exceptions. One of the catacombs had this simple epitaph on L. M. M. Villouet, aged twenty years:

“ Qui, qui tu sois, respecte ce monument  
dernier asile d'une fille bonne et vertueuse.”

More needed not to be said.

The Protestant burying ground has tombs of much the same construction, but a little varied in character, and they are all ranged parallel to the sides of the inclosure. The monument of the wife, child, and brother-in-law of Governor Claiborne is the most conspicuous, and has a panel enriched with very good sculpture. A female lies on a bed with her child lying across her body, both apparently just departed. A winged figure, pointing upward, holds over her head the crown of immortality. At the foot of the bed kneels the husband in an attitude of extreme grief. The execution is very good, and it is less injured than might have been expected from its exposure in an open burial place. The governor's rank is indicated by the fasces at the head of the bedstead.

There were two or three graves opened and expecting their tenants. Eight or nine inches below the surface they were filled with water and were not three feet deep. Thus all persons are here buried in the water. The surface of the burying ground must now be seven or eight feet below the level of the Mississippi,



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which has still five or six feet to rise before it attains its usual highest level. The ground was everywhere perforated by the crawfish, the amphibious lobster (*écrevisse*). I have, indeed, seen them in their usual attitude of defiance in the gutters of the streets. The French are fond of them, and make excellent and "handsome" soup of them, their scarlet shells being filled with forced meat and served up in the tureen. But the Americans, with true English anti-Gallican prejudices, disdain this species of the Cancer, although we delight in crabs and lobsters, the food of which we all know to be in the last degree disgusting. They pretend that the sellers of this fish collect them principally in the churchyards, which is not, I believe, true, and, in fact, impossible, considering the quantity that are sold.

We are all slaves, nationally and individually, of habit; our minds and our bodies are equally fashioned by education, and although the original dispositions of individuals give specific variety to character, the general sentiment, like the general manners, modes of living, and cooking, of sitting and standing and walking, can only be slowly changed by the gradual substitution of a new habit for the old.

In nothing does habit and general and long-continued practice guide a community more despotically than in the disposal of the bodies of the dead. The Parsees, in Hindostan, expose them in the open air to

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be devoured by vultures, and judge of the happiness or misery of the departed soul by the attack of the birds upon the right or left eye. The rich Hindoos burn and the poor throw their dead into the river to be devoured by alligators or fish. We bury them, as food for worms and crawfish. At sea we deliver them to the sharks, crabs, and lobsters. Those who can afford it inclose them in leaden and stone coffins, as if jealous of the appetites of the vermin to whom they might give nourishment; while the ancient Egyptians and the European princes and nobles embalm the bones and fleshy parts and leave the bowels to shift for themselves in leaden boxes. In many places in Sicily and Italy and Malta the bodies are preserved by drying. The Greeks and Romans committed them to the flames. Of all these modes of getting rid of the dead body, the latter is, after all, productive of the least annoyance, and most completely avoids that accumulation which we find so very inconvenient, and which inevitably attends our mode of burial.

I do not recollect to have met in any author, ancient or modern, with any account of the manner and the reasons of the change in the usual mode of disposing of the dead, after the promulgation of Christianity, and of the substitution of the grave for the funeral pile. But it seems to have naturally grown out of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, of the very body which the soul inhabited in this state of our existence. The



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dissipation of all its parts by the action of fire appeared so near an approach to annihilation that it was, I presume, the natural consequence of the new doctrine that the body, after death, should be as well preserved in the ground as possible. "The graves shall give up their dead." Besides, the early Christians were of opinion that the day of judgment and the resurrection of the body would take place during the existence of the first or second generation after Christ—an opinion which appears to have been that of St. Paul. "We shall not all die, but we shall be all changed." And though this text is explained away, as well as that of Christ, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass away before these things come to pass," yet those who are not polemical theologians have a right to take them in their natural sense.

The whole event of the resurrection of the natural body must be the work of omnipotence; and it cannot, therefore, be of any importance whether the particles of which it consists be dissipated by fire or by any other mode of dissolution. In either mode the individuality is destroyed, and a new synthesis must take place.

I cannot, therefore, help wishing on many accounts that the burning of bodies had continued to be the practice of Christians. The health of cities, the convenience, as respects public squares and building grounds, are greatly involved in our practice. At the

cathedral in Baltimore, and, in fact, in most great cities, the existence of graveyards has been found a serious nuisance. The great operation at Paris, in removing the dead from the cemetery of *Les Innocents*, is an astonishing instance of the expensive efforts that have been found necessary to get rid of them, an operation that none but Frenchmen could have conceived or executed. But there are other reasons for which I would give a preference to the Greek and Roman practice. Those who have lost friends, especially of a different sex from themselves, and have hearts to feel, need not be told that whatever philosophical indifference may have existed respecting the fate of their own bodies after death, those of their friends become infinitely dear to them, and that no display of their affection is considered too extravagant or too expensive to be indulged and executed. But if habit did not reconcile us to everything, how inconsistent with the delicate enthusiasm of a husband respecting the body of his wife and child does it not seem to put it into a hole full of stagnant water about three feet deep, to be there devoured by crawfish, as is done unavoidably in New Orleans, or to place it in a catacomb where the worms may dispose of it!

Now, if the body were burned, and the ashes separately retained, which may easily be done by many methods, besides the expensive one of sheets of asbestos, if they ever were used, the space occupied would

## PECULIAR CUSTOMS

be so small and the remains so entirely inoffensive to any sense that all objections, public and private, would vanish which render the preservation of what is left behind of those we loved so difficult, expensive, and, in most cases, impossible. And if the urns that inclose the ashes of our departed friends were placed in our view, the delightful sentiment of posthumous affection would be longer kept alive, and its moral effect be stronger and more beneficial.

I have a confused recollection of the account given to me by Mr. Foster, the British minister, of the discovery of the tomb of *Aspasia*. Within the monument was a large marble urn, or vase, exquisitely sculptured, with decorations of cheerful import. Within this outer vase was found an urn of bronze of small size, but of the most exquisite workmanship, containing the ashes of that extraordinary woman, who, to the talents and acquirements of the *Baroness de Staël*, added a most refined and graceful taste and exquisite beauty, although her moral character, judged on the most latitudinarian of Athenian libertinism, must always be an object of disgust. Upon the ashes, which only partly filled the urn, lay a wreath of gold, the most perfect effort of art, a wreath composed of a sprig of laurel and one of myrtle.

There is some difference between such a monument to departed worth and the death's heads and cross bones of our churchyards.

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March 16, 1819.

I happened this morning to be in the dry-goods store of Mrs. Herries, a lady who formerly, as the wife of the rich Banker Herries, of Buffalo, figured in the highest circles of fashion; and now, one of the many ruins of the French Revolution, still exhibits in her manners and language the characters of former taste and elegance. At the same time she has had the good sense not to be ashamed of her present situation and employment, and is a most admirable and attentive shopwoman, both to her customers and to her interest.

While I was in the shop a mulatto man came in and asked for some shawls. Mrs. Herries produced some very elegant ones, which the man looked at with an apparent intention to buy, but said he had no money with him, but that, if her woman was out with shawls and she called at the house, one would be bought and paid for. Mrs. Herries replied that her woman was not out that morning, but should go out, and the man went away.

This circumstance induced me to make inquiries as to the details of a mode of retail trade which I had long observed, and which had excited my curiosity. In every street, during the whole day, women, chiefly black women, are met carrying baskets upon their heads and calling at the doors of houses. These baskets contain assortments of dry goods, sometimes, to appearance, to a considerable amount. The shawls at Mrs.



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Herries's which the man looked at cost from \$28 to \$50 each, and were many of them exceedingly handsome.

These female peddlers are slaves belonging either to persons who keep dry-goods stores or who are too poor to furnish a store with goods, but who buy as many at auction as will fill a couple of baskets, which baskets are their shops. I understand that the whole of the retail trade in dry goods was carried on in this way before the United States got possession of the country. It was not then, nor is it now, the fashion for ladies to go shopping. The creole families stick still to the peddlers. Although many inducements are held out by the better arrangement and exhibition of the shops to the ladies to buy, still, as in everything else, the old habit wears away very slowly. I am informed that it is a very unprofitable mode of dealing; that the infidelity of the peddlers, their ignorance or forgetfulness of prices at which they ought to sell, and the slow sales, render it even more so than it might be. But it is continued by two circumstances: by the dependence of those who live by the labor of their slaves upon this traffic, and by the necessity thus imposed upon the shopkeepers to meet their petty rivals on the same ground. This retail trade is so far worthy of notice as it forms one of the characteristic features of this city at present.

The existence of slavery brings with it many things

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which seem contradictory. Servants who are slaves are always treated with more familiarity than hirelings; probably because if you indulge and behave familiarly to a hireling you cannot, if he presume upon it, correct him as you can a slave, and make him feel his inferiority by corporal punishment. Therefore we find cruelty and confidence, cowhiding and caressing, perfectly in accord with one another among the creoles of this place and their slaves.

There are poor creole families and individuals who live upon the labor of their slaves. Their fuel is collected by them wherever they can find it, and the house is kept either by the petty traffic above described or by some other species of industry of the slaves, in which the master or mistress takes no share. I have heard of mistresses who beat their slaves cruelly if they do not bring them a sufficient sum of money to enable them to keep the house or fuel to warm them. I know, also in my neighborhood, an old, decrepit woman who is maintained entirely by an old slave whom she formerly emancipated, but who, on her mistress getting old and helpless, returned to her and devoted her labor to her support.

Judge M——, of this city, a severe miser and very rich, is said to be entirely maintained by his slaves, to a few of whom he has given the liberty to earn as much as they can for themselves, provided they kept a good table for him.

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March 18, 1819.

I went, this morning, with Mr. Planton to see his wife's picture of the Treaty of Ghent. It is an excellent painting in many points of view, and there are parts of it, separate figures and groups, that have very extraordinary merit. But its inherent sin, especially in America, is its being an allegorical picture. When the mythology of antiquity was the substance of its religion, and the character and history of every deity were known to every individual of the nation, allegorical representations were a kind of written description of the subject represented, and might be generally understood. But since Hercules and Minerva and the rest of the deities are in fashion only as decorations of juvenile poetry, and are known by character only to those few who have had classical educations, an allegorical picture stands as much in need of an interpreter as an Indian talk.

Mrs. Planton has painted exceedingly well, but has judged very ill. In another respect, also, her American feeling has betrayed her into error. She has painted a picture of the largest size in oil, of course a picture calculated for duration, and forming an historical record, to represent evanescent feelings, the feelings of unexpected and, of course, riotous and unreasonable triumph. Britannia is represented as laying her flag, her rudder (emblems of naval superiority), her laurels, and other symbols of victory and dominion, at the feet

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of America, who approaches in a triumphal car. She kneels in the posture of an humble suppliant, while Hercules and Minerva threaten her with the club and the spear: all this is caricature. But the whole of this group, excepting Hercules, is admirably painted. The figure of Britannia is very graceful and well drawn, and the drapery has superior merit. The group on the right is also uncommonly well conceived and executed. The whole picture does, indeed, infinite credit to the artist and to her country, for she is a Philadelphian. The great fault is the choice of the subject, for the signing of negotiation of a treaty, as a matter of fact, can at best be but a collection of expressive likenesses of persons writing or conversing, and has nothing picturesque about it. Strength, fortitude, courage, and some good luck, on our side, were not wanting to "conquer the treaty," in the French fashionable phrase; and admirable talent was displayed in the negotiation. But these are not very well paintable.

As to allegory, generally it is a most difficult branch of the art of the painter and sculptor, and belongs rather to the poetical department. Yet sometimes the sculptor and painter have succeeded in rendering sentiment intelligible by the chisel and pencil; for instance, in the personification of Peace, by Canova, where a pair of doves make their nest in a helmet.

Some years ago Dr. Thornton, of Washington, described, before a large company, the allegorical group

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which it was his intention, as commissioner of the city of Washington, to place in the center of the Capitol, around the statue of the general.

“I would,” said he, “place an immense rock of granite in the center of the dome. On the top of the rock should stand a beautiful female figure, to represent Eternity or Immortality. Around her neck, as a necklace, a serpent—the rattlesnake of our country—should be hung, with its tail in its mouth—the ancient and beautiful symbol of endless duration. At the foot of the rock another female figure, stretching her hands upward in the attitude of distressful entreaty, should appear, ready to climb the steep. Around her a group of children, representing Agriculture, the Arts and Sciences, should appear to join in the supplication of the female. This female is to personify Time, or our present state of existence. Just ascending the rock, the noble figure of General Washington should appear to move upward, invited by Immortality, but also expressing some reluctance in leaving the children of his care.

“There,” said he, “Mr. Latrobe, is your requisite in such works of art; it would represent a matter of fact, a truth, for it would be the very picture of the general’s sentiments, feelings, and expectations in departing this life—regret at leaving his people, but hoping and longing for an immortality of happiness and of fame. You yourself have not ingenuity sufficient

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to pervert its meaning, and all posterity would understand it.”

The doctor was so full of his subject that I was unwilling to disturb his good humor; but I said that I thought his group might tell a very different story from what he intended. He pressed me so hard that at last I told him that, supposing the name and character of General Washington to be forgotten, or at least that the group had been found in the ruins of the Capitol, and the learned antiquarians of two thousand years hence were assembled to decide its meaning, I thought then that they would thus explain it:

“There is a beautiful woman on the top of a dangerous precipice, to which she invites a man, apparently well enough inclined to follow her. Who is this woman? Certainly not a very good sort of a one, for she has a snake about her neck. The snake indicates, assuredly, her character—cold, cunning, and poisonous. She can represent none but some celebrated courtesan of the day. But there is another woman at the foot of the rock, modest and sorrowful, and surrounded by a family of small children. She is in a posture of entreaty, and the man appears half-inclined to return to her. She can be no other than his wife. What an expressive group! How admirable the art which has thus exposed the dangerous precipice to which the beauty and the cunning of the abandoned would entice

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the virtuous, even to the desertion of a beautiful wife and the mother of a delightful group of children!"

I was going on, but the laughter of the company and the impatience of the doctor stopped my mouth. I had said enough, and was not easily forgiven.

March 22, 1819.

New Orleans, beyond Royal Street toward the swamp, retains its old character without variation. The houses are, with hardly a dozen exceptions among many hundred, one-story houses. The roofs are high, covered with tiles or shingles, and project five feet over the footway, which is also five feet wide. The eaves, therefore, discharge the water into the gutters. The height of the stories is hardly ten feet, the elevation above the pavement not more than a foot and a half, and, therefore, the eaves are not often more than eight feet from the ground. However different this mode is from the American manner of building, it has very great advantages, both with regard to the interior of the dwelling and to the street. In the summer the walls are perfectly shaded from the sun and the house kept cool, while the pedestrians are shaded from the sun and protected from the rain. From my lodging to Mr. Nolte's is a distance of six hundred and fifty feet, independent of the crossing of two streets, and yet in the heaviest rains I can walk to his house perfectly dry, excepting for about two hundred feet in

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front of a dead wall and some high houses in Toulouse Street.

These one-story houses are very simple in their plan. The two front rooms open into the street with glass French doors. Those on one side are the dining and drawing-rooms, the others chambers. The front rooms, when inhabited by Americans, are the family rooms, and the back rooms the chambers. We derive from the English the habit of desiring that every one of our rooms should be separately accessible, and we consider rooms that are thoroughfares as useless. The French and continental Europeans generally live, I believe, as much to their own satisfaction in their houses as we do in ours, and employ the room they have to more advantage, because they do not require so much space for passages. The comfort is a matter of habit. The offices are in the back of the buildings.

In the Faubourg St. Mary and wherever the Americans build they exhibit their flat brick fronts, with a sufficient number of holes for light and entrance. The only French circumstance which they retain is the balcony in the upper story, which, although generally too elevated for the protection of the passenger, is still a means of shade as far as it goes. The French stucco the fronts of their buildings, and often color them; the Americans exhibit their red, staring brickwork, imbibing heat through the whole unshaded substance of the wall. The old English side-passage house, with the



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stairs at the end, is also gaining ground, and is taking the place of the French porte-cochère, or corridor, which, carrying you quite through the house, leads to the staircase at the back, where it takes up no room from the apartments, and is protected by a broad and convenient gallery.

An American bricklayer, a very worthy man, consulted me as to a house he has built for himself on the London plan. I objected to many parts of his design as contrary to every principle of good architecture. He could not well answer my objections, and at last cut the argument short by exclaiming: "I have been at war with architecture all my life, and will continue so to the end, having all New York in my favor."

I have no doubt that the American type will ultimately be that of the whole city, especially as carpenters from the Eastern border of the Union are the architects, and of course work on in their old habits for men accustomed to these very sort of houses. But although room may be thereby gained, the convenience of the houses will by no means be promoted, nor the health of the city improved.

The streets are, in the city, all of them, thirty-six French feet wide (about thirty-eight feet six inches English), and the squares (islets) three hundred French (or about three hundred and twenty English) feet square. The old lots are sixty French feet front by one hundred and twenty deep. In the Faubourg St. Mary

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the streets are wider; but in that of Marigny, the same as in the city. Provision is made for several public squares, an ornament and convenience in which our other cities are most remarkably deficient. In this respect New Orleans will always maintain its superiority.

Habit governs our preferences in everything so extensively, if not entirely, that it is a very presumptuous man indeed who undertakes to decide on the positive merit of any national practice in which morality is not concerned. The English writers of the most candid and enlightened minds have been more guilty of this presumption than those of any other nation, more especially when the question has been about anything relative to France and Frenchmen. One of the most delightful of English writers, Goldsmith, has blotted his elegant pages with more illiberality toward the French than any other respectable English author. All this is to be regretted, but national hatred and jealousy seems to be implanted in the very essence of the human mind, and is considered by all governments to be so essential a machine in the management of a war that it never will be corrected entirely, although I think that since the American Revolution somewhat more liberality prevails.

But there are national sources of pleasure which are so entirely artificial that it is a fair subject of inquiry whether habit, alone, gives to them their fascination, whether they cannot be improved or corrected, and



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## PECULIAR CUSTOMS

even whether they are not so far founded in error and prejudice as to require correction for the benefit of the public taste generally.

These thoughts were suggested some time ago by the French tragedy of "Mahomet," at the performance of which I was present, and by the perusal of many of Molière's comedies, and have been revived by stepping, a few nights ago, into the Theater of St. Philip and listening to a tolerably good English recitation by a Mr. Philips.

Mr. Skipworth, who has resided many years in France, accompanied me, and I take it for granted that the declamation was very bad, for he, who is almost a Frenchman, declared that he could not understand one-fourth part of it. I was happy if I could understand the general drift of what was going forward, being entirely out of the habit of hearing or speaking the French language. And yet I observed many ladies, as well as gentlemen, who were much affected by the scene, and the piece certainly commanded the most silent attention of the whole audience.

So much has been said and written on the subject of the French rhymed plays that nothing new remains to be discovered. The ridiculous in them is equal to the unnatural. And yet to this day, when a revolution has taken place in many very prominent habits of the whole world, Frenchmen still listen in rapture to the strings of declamation, impossible and absurd as they

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are as representations of nature, which constitute the tragedies of their greatest as well as of their more moderate writers. The nasal terminations of the French words, and the latitude of rhyme which they allow themselves (in turning over the "Henriade" I see *fenêtre* rhymed to *maître, connaître*, etc., etc.), and the distinctness with which the actors impress the couplets upon the ear, adds, in French, an effect of harshness to the rhymed declamation, which may be avoided in English and in German, in which languages a good declaimer can render the rhyme scarcely perceptible.

Molière, as far as I may venture to judge, after so long a disuse of the French language, has managed his rhymed speeches with great dexterity. But he is wonderfully loose in his rhyming, I think, which in comedy may be pardoned and perhaps approved as slackening considerably the fetters of the verse.

I have somewhere or other either read or imagined that that which disgusts and shocks us in waxwork, colored and dressed to the life, is that it exactly resembles living men and women, excepting in the principal evidence of life—motion. On a beautiful statue we look with delight, because we see in everything belonging to it, in its color, its hardness, the evidence that it does not and cannot be anything but a representation of a living form; whereas the nearer a figure in waxwork resembles a living individual, the more we are embarrassed by its presence, while we are deceived to

## PECULIAR CUSTOMS

believe it alive, and the more shocked when we discover that it is really dead. Just such I might suppose would be the effect of a French tragedy on one who had never seen or heard any performance of the kind. The dress and scenery would first deceive him to believe that the scene is real; but the moment the actors open their mouths he would find that they come from another world, where emperors and executioners, kings, lackeys, and ladies talk and make love and commit murder, and abuse one another in measured and rhymed language. On the other hand, when a story written in verse, even in dialogue, is read, the want of dress and scenery and dramatic action has the same advantage which is possessed by the marble statue. Nothing resembling the business of the world in all its minute details is expected; the mind is left at liberty to admire the elegance of the poetry and the correctness of the rhyme and meter, and to be affected by the description of events and feelings. It creates its own scenery around, just as it warms the cheeks of a marble Venus with blushes, her eyes with fire and color, and her skin with the hue and velvet of life. The statue gives you nothing but the form. The waxwork pretends to give you the life, and the employment of life with the form, and you find nothing but death in the mask of life. So the French tragedy pretends to represent real men and women, and you find a race you never heard of before.

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April 8, 1819.

The Holy Week is here celebrated with much less pomp than formerly, but still with many ceremonies that do not well accord with the simplicity of the American character, even of the Catholic religion in the old United States. The arrival of the *Missouri* with my machinery has so occupied me that I have been unable to attend the church as much as I wished. Every year clips off a little more of the old Spanish *régime*. The Host is no longer carried in procession through the streets, and the public square before the church is not any more the parade ground of the clergy. The business is all done within the walls of the building.

The altar has been, during this whole week, covered with a black drapery, without ornament. On Thursday I went into the church about five o'clock in the evening. A temporary piece of scenery was erected at the end of the south aisle, which covered the side altar at that place. The side altar at the north aisle was lighted up and a priest was officiating. The church was excessively crowded, especially about the door, and in the south aisle, and about one thousand people were in the square fronting the church, where, indeed, I had observed a great crowd the whole day. The decoration at the end of the south aisle consisted of a sort of gate. It was made of boards, badly painted in imitation of marble. The steps were narrow and flat and not intended for use. Four rows of candles and five of flower-



## PECULIAR CUSTOMS

pots, with very bad artificial flowers, stood on the steps, and a row of candles on the balusters, so as altogether to look like what the children would call a very pretty baby house on a large scale. Within the arch was an altar covered with drapery and tinsel, and at each side of the altar stood a wax doll, about the size of a child of five or six years old, dressed up in scarlet and a profusion of tinsel. Each held a candle in its hand. I could not make out what all this represented, and nobody that I asked could inform me. On one side of the altar is a door. This door was shut up and covered with a white muslin curtain, festooned round the arch and hanging down on each side. Within the niche was an image of the Virgin, about two feet high, dressed in black velvet; her robe was drawn out on each side and fastened to the back of the niche so as to give the whole figure a triangular shape. A silver embroidered cross extended from her chin to her feet, and at each ear she had a large silver shell. The face appeared to be of wax. This figure stood upon two steps, upon an ordinary table covered with muslin, with a little tinsel about it and four candles burning before it.

Before these two altars a carpet was spread, upon the edge of which lay a crucifix, with a figure about two feet long, and two tea-waiters.

On the south side of the nave, near the principal door of the church, was placed a common small table. Behind it was a long bench, on which sat an old, gray-

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headed man in an ordinary and rather mean dress, and upon the table stood a crucifix. The cross was of black wood and the figure painted to represent flesh, with a gray drapery round the middle. This figure was admirably executed, but on this very account was a horrible object. The artist had represented his subject so naturally that nothing but habit could reconcile the eye to such an exhibition. The body hung, as usual, by nails through the palms of the hands. The sinews of the hands and arms were strained to the utmost, the fingers open and the flesh swelled and puckered by the weight hanging to it. The body had fallen to the left side. All the pectoral muscles strained upward. The head sinking into the cavity of the collar bones, the legs bending again to the right, and the feet, where nailed to the body of the cross, twisted upon the nails and the wounds opening, the knees bending a little forward—in fact, so well had the artist studied his subject, and so naturally was the bloody and death-colored image painted, that nothing but habit could have reconciled the people to its use.

This was the apparatus of the ceremony that was going on the whole day. The people, of whom three-fourths, at least, were colored, and of those a very large majority were women in their best dresses, crowded down to the altar at the bottom of the south aisle, and after crossing themselves they knelt down and kissed the hands, feet, and body of the crucifix which

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lay upon the carpet, and at the same time put a piece of money into the waiters, which, when I saw them, were heaped with bits and halfbits (escalins and picayunes—six and a quarter and twelve and a half cents), and among these many quarters and half-dollars, and some dollars.

The same ceremony of kissing the image was going on near the entrance of the church, where there was a waiter filled with money. The business of the old man seemed to be twofold: to guard the money and to hold the crucifix steady. On each side of the other crucifix at the altar was a soldier in uniform, with his musket and bayonet fixed. They stood on the carpet, and a large crowd were kneeling around, praying, looking about at the newcomers, and occasionally laughing and conversing together upon their knees.

The earnestness and devotion with which the devotees kissed these images was very remarkable. Most of them kissed each of the hands and the feet, but many bestowed their kisses also upon the knees and breast, and repeated them several times. Several young women appeared to mix a sort of devotional passion with their kisses, and one woman, after getting near the door, turned back, and kissed the image again most passionately, while tears were running down her cheeks.

As to the contribution of money, it seemed to be optional, for I observed many who gave nothing.

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April 9, 1819.

I went, about twelve this morning, to the church. The scenery at the end of the south aisle was removed, and they were sweeping the building. It was full of dust, and yet a large concourse were in it, and as many on the outside. The crucifix and the old man near the door were still there, and many men and women, all colored people, were still performing the ceremony of kissing it, and the more substantial one of putting money into the waiters. Several women were there with small children, whose little mouths they put to the hands and feet of the image.

Although the Catholic inhabitants of this city do business on Sunday as on any other day, yet on this day, Good Friday, even the notaries have, to my great injury, shut up their offices; and the police officer has summoned one of my carters and threatened him with a fine of fifty dollars for hauling lime on this day.

April 18, 1819.

Before I went to church this morning I had occasion to go to the upper end of the Faubourg St. Mary. A Sunday in New Orleans may be pretty well understood by recounting the various sights that occur in such a walk. For instance:

After taking leave of two friends who accompanied me as far as the levee, and conversed on the relative merits of the different flags which were flying on board

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the numerous ships along the shore, I bought three oranges for a bit (twelve and a half cents) of a black woman, and watched the mooring of a market boat which carried the broad pennant of Napoleon. Out of the boat came ashore a basket of pecan nuts, twenty or thirty wild ducks of different sorts, rather too late in the season, a great quantity of carrots, and some sugar cane. The boat was principally loaded with corn. On the cabin was a coop, well filled with poultry, and in it two black women in madras turbans, and gowns stripped with scarlet and yellow. Round their necks a plentiful assortment of bead necklaces—in fact, they were in full dress. The man who seemed to be the owner was an old sunburned creole, slovenly in his whole appearance; and two old black men, in blanket frocks with pointed hoods (capots), were the navigators, and were carrying the cargo ashore, with many a curse at being so late at market (ten o'clock). A little farther on were three drunken Indians who afforded sport to several boys that surrounded them: Then half a dozen Kentuckians, dirty, savage, and gigantic, who were selling a horse or two to a group of genteel-looking men, who spoke English. Being now arrived near the steamboats, everything like business seemed suspended, and the levee was full of persons, well dressed, without any apparent object but to take the air. I left the levee and walked along the houses on the old levee. Here some sailors were buy-

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ing, in a French shop, of a black shopwoman, slops, and trying on their pantaloons, she helping them. Many shops shut up, but some open and doing business. At last, as the houses became thinner, I reached my destination, which was to call on a gentleman by appointment. I stayed some time with him, during which we sat in the gallery and saw two ships come to at the levee—a very beautiful view. Returning, to avoid the dust, into Magazin Street, I called, in passing, at Mr. Brand's to inquire after Mrs. Brand, who is sick. I found him going to church, with some others. Passing Mr. Morgan's, I overtook another church party. On the steps of a store, a little farther on, lay two boatmen, drunk and half-asleep, swearing in English at some boys who were teasing them. Going along the Levee Street, I encountered a large group of colored gentlemen and ladies, who seemed to be about to separate. I stopped for a moment to listen to a pretty loud conversation, and found that a blackish sort of mulatto was discussing the merits of a new priest who has a very fine voice. A cream-colored lady differed from him, and gave the preference to one of the other priests, "*qui a la voix si forte et si haute comme une cloche; mon Dieu! comme une cloche, si haute.*" Other opinions were given in creole French, and were unintelligible to me. These folks, then, came from church; and, by the bye, these singers, or musical reciters, had treated them to a chapter or two of Latin. The voice, there-

## PECULIAR CUSTOMS

fore, was the only subject of discussion, for to them it was certainly *vox, et præterea nihil*.

It was now eleven o'clock, and I went myself to Mr. Hull's church, following many a group who were directing their steps thither also. The church service was just beginning; the prayers always excellent; the music more than tolerable, and the sermon very well composed and delivered. The church was just full. I left the church with the congregation. In Bourbon Street, passed a cooper who was at work with some mulatto boys. He was scolding them in very good English. A little farther along, passed a shoemaker's. The house had a door, and a wide window on each side of it. All were well open. Opposite to one window sat a broad-faced, dark mulatto, on his bench. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, and he sat with a very large draughtboard on his knees; and facing him, on another shoemaker's bench, sat a good-looking, well-dressed white man, apparently eighteen or nineteen, with his hat on, who was playing at draughts with him. They seemed to be arguing, on terms of perfect equality, some knotty point of the game. Opposite to the open door stood a white woman, with a gaudily dressed child, having a large hat and feathers on his head, in her arms. She looked as if much interested in the discussion. The other window discovered four boys and an enormous man, all black, hard at work at their trade.

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At the corner of Bourbon and St. Louis stood a boy of about fifteen or sixteen years old, with his fowling piece and hunting net, and some gentlemen were examining its contents. It contained a mocking bird, a red bird (the Virginia nightingale), a heron (Indian hen), and a number of small martins. This shooting is the common sport of the young creoles on Sunday, but it is to be regretted that the war should be carried on at this season, to destroy the melody of the woods and interrupt the connubial happiness of birds that cannot be eaten.

I turned down St. Louis Street, and on coming near the French coffee-house, I heard the blow of the cue and the rebound of billiard balls upstairs. The coffee-house was full. I came home then, and in a short time was called upon by three tall Kentuckians, who came to make contracts for logs; and as they were to go up the river the next morning, I attended to their business, which occupied me till dinner. I walked downstairs with them, and as I stood at the gate of the corridor there passed a cabriolet, or chair, in which was a white man and a bright quadroon woman holding an umbrella out of the chair, the hood of which was up. A ragged black boy sat at their feet and drove, and a girl of thirteen or fourteen years old sat up on the trunk board behind.



## CHAPTER XI

### LOUISIANA LIMITATIONS

April 25, 1819.

**T**AKING a peep into the cathedral, *en passant* this morning, I observed an old black woman by herself before one of the altars, on her knees, and her body bent to the earth. She had drawn away her clothes from under her in such a way as to kneel on the bare bricks, which are exceedingly rough and broken. She was much too old and ugly to be suspected of having incurred the penance she was suffering for any such sin as a younger penitent might have committed; and it would not be easy to imagine what actual and injurious breach of morality she had disclosed in the confessional which could have deserved its infliction. Perhaps she had eaten a little meat in Holy Week, or on Friday, or broken some other precept of mere discipline.

Of the astonishing and rigorous despotism which religious opinions exercise over the imagination not only of old black women, but of men otherwise of strong and cultivated minds, there is hardly any more curious

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example than that of the restrictions submitted to in respect to diet. If, for the first time, the Christian world were told that the Almighty Creator of the universe would doom to everlasting perdition, or even to purgatory, every one that should eat meat on particular days, but that he would except a very delicious kind of duck called a mallard (*sarcelle*) and also the eggs of all sorts of birds from his prohibition,\* the preacher of such absurdity would be ranked with Richard Brothers and Jemima Wilkinson, or perhaps be sent to the lunatic hospital. And yet the force of example and general practice aids the inculcation of this belief by the Catholic priests, so as to make it as powerful in its effect upon the minds of all good Catholics as the plainest rule of common sense.

Mr. Wilmer, the Episcopal clergyman of Alexandria, in Virginia, once told at my house a story, for the truth of which his character is a certain pledge.

He was riding alone over the Allegheny Mountains, when he was overtaken by a well-dressed man on a good horse, who, with the familiarity of our backwoodsmen, proposed to join his company. The man seemed extremely grave, and his conversation was abrupt and unconnected. He had evidently something upon his mind which distressed him. Mr. Wilmer at

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\* The *sarcelle*, which abounds in the neighborhood of New Orleans, is a small duck, considered to be the most delicate of the many kinds which are brought to market. It has been decided to be *maigre*, and is eaten on fast days, as fish and eggs are.

## LOUISIANA LIMITATIONS

last asked him whether he had met with any misfortune that could be the occasion of his apparent melancholy. The man told him that that was actually the case. He said that he had rode that morning from a great distance; that he had left his home, in the lower part of Maryland, about ten days before, and, having much business to do before he could cross the mountain, he had been almost always on horseback, and had not kept a very strict account of the days of the week; that the week before he had arrived, fatigued and hungry, at a tavern, where they were just sitting down to a most excellent dinner; that he was asked to join the dinner company, and, totally forgetting that it was Friday, he had eaten a most plentiful dinner of all sorts of meat; that he had been extremely unhappy and miserable as soon as he had recollected the terrible sin which he had committed, but no priest resided near to whom to confess and from whom to receive absolution; that he had traveled on, resolving never to be again similarly guilty, and had a few hours ago arrived at Cumberland, at the foot of the Allegheny Mountains. His mind had been filled all the week with penitent ideas and pious resolutions not again to commit a similar breach of duty; and when he entered Cumberland he was fully aware of the sacrifice he had to make this day, Friday, of his appetite to his religious obligations. But alas! the enemy was all the while watching for his fall. He came into the dinner room fatigued,

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hungry, and his head full of the business he had to transact. He was accosted by an acquaintance, and entered into conversation. Never was his appetite keener, nor a good solid dinner more welcome. He ate and ate, and thought he never could have enough. At last he was satisfied; but scarcely had he swallowed the last morsel before the recollection of the day rushed upon him, and he was the most miserable of men. He feared he never could be forgiven. Mr. Wilmer happened at that moment to open his great coat and to exhibit his clerical dress under it. The man saw it. "Good God!" cried he, "and you are a priest!" He slipped from his horse and kneeled down in the road. But Mr. Wilmer begged him to rise, told him he was a priest, but that he was a Protestant, or what he might call a heretic priest, and would prescribe to him no penance. The man got up again, half-comforted, half-ashamed; and during the rest of the journey Mr. Wilmer succeeded pretty well in persuading him that "To enjoy is to obey."

A very disagreeable circumstance is of daily occurrence in the neighborhood of the city and along the levee. It is the abominable squealing of ungreased cart-wheels. With the unpleasant noise, there are many ideas connected that render it still more unpleasant—the difficulty in dragging the carriage, to which the oxen are unnecessarily subjected, the barbarous state of the commonest arts among the planters, and the thick ears

## LOUISIANA LIMITATIONS

and idleness of the savage slaves that drive. But, in fact, these ungreased and screaming cartwheels are neither an indication of idleness nor of ignorance, but are a legacy left to the country by the Spaniards, and they still scream in obedience to a positive law of the Spanish Government. Incredible as this may seem, it is true. I should have taken the whole relation for a hoax had I not received it from Judge Hale, as well as from other sources.

The case is this. There is no country so favorably situated as to the facility of smuggling as Louisiana. Innumerable bayous, or creeks, lead from the ocean to the back of the narrow strips of cultivatable land on each side of the Mississippi. Into these bayous the contraband goods can be easily brought, but they must be carried from the swamps in wheel carriages, a distance of from one to two or three miles. If the wheels of the carts were greased this part of the business might be carried on in perfect silence. Therefore it is ordered that all carts shall remain ungreased, and that they shall scream, in order that they may give notice to the revenue officers of the illegal traffic that is going on, and thus become informers against their owners. A round-about way, in more senses than one, this, of obtaining information. The greased carts—that is, carts that did not scream—were liable to seizure. Such a revenue regulation is, indeed, worthy of the ingenuity of the Spanish Government. No other would have thought of

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it. The framers thereof did not know that a negro, with a gallon of water at each wheel gradually poured upon it, would as effectually prevent the wheel from screaming as if it were as well greased as possible. The cart might at any time be examined without betraying the smuggler.

May 4, 1819.

In going home to my lodgings this evening, about sunset, I encountered a crowd of at least two hundred negroes—men and women—who were following a corpse to the cemetery. Of the women one-half, at least, carried candles; and as the evening began to be dark, the effect was very striking, for all the women, and many of the men, were dressed in pure white. The funerals are so numerous here, or rather occupy so much of every afternoon, in consequence of their being, almost all of them, performed by the same set of priests, proceeding from the same parish church, that they excite hardly any attention. But this was so numerously attended that I was tempted to follow it; and, getting just in a line with the priests, I entered the churchyard with them and placed myself close to the grave. The grave was about three feet deep, of which eighteen inches were filled with water. It had been dug in a mass of earth and bones which formed a little hillock by its side. Ten or twelve skulls were piled up upon the heap, which looked more like a heap of sticks, so

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numerous were the ribs and thigh bones that partly composed it. As soon as the priests, who were five in number, had entered the cemetery, preceded by three boys carrying the usual pair of urns and crucifix on staves, they began their chant, lazily enough, and continued it till they arrived at the grave. The coffin was then brought and immediately let down. It swam like a boat in the water. The priest began his prayers. In the meantime a great crowd of women pressed close to the grave, making very loud lamentations. At a particular passage the gravedigger, who was a little, gray-headed negro, naked, excepting as to a pair of ragged, short breeches, threw a shovelful of earth upon the coffin, and at the same instant one of the negro women, who seemed more particularly affected, threw herself into the grave upon the coffin, and partly fell into the water, as the coffin swam to one side. The gravedigger, with very little ceremony, thrust his shovel under her, and then seized her with both hands round the throat and pulled her up, while others took hold of her legs and arms, and she was presently removed. On the heap of bones stood a number of boys, who then began to amuse themselves by throwing in the skulls, which made a loud report on the hollow coffin, and the whole became a sort of farce after the tragedy, the boys throwing about the legs and thighs and hunting up the skulls for balls to pelt each other. The noise and laughter was general by the time the service was

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over. The women near the grave each plucked up a little grass before they returned.

I went out in the midst of the confusion and asked one of the mourners in white, who was talking intelligible French to her companions, who the person was who seemed to be so much honored and lamented by her own color. She told me that she was a very old African (Kongo) negress, belonging to Madam Fitzgerald, and that most of those who followed her to the grave were her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, their husbands, wives, and companions. I asked if her granddaughter, who threw herself into the grave, could possibly have felt such excessive distress at the death of an old woman who before her death was almost childish, and was supposed to be above one hundred years old, as to be tired of her own life. She shrugged her shoulders two or three times, and then said, "*Je n'en sais rien, cela est une manière.*"

This assemblage of negroes was an instance of the light in which the quadroons view themselves. There were none that I observed but pitch-black faces.

### MOSQUITOES AT NEW ORLEANS

BRIG EMMA, September 29, 1819.

There is a charm in mountainous, barren countries that has attached the inhabitants of all such countries, in all ages, to their home. Mountains and rocks are the





VIEW OF THE BALIZE AT THE MOUTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI.



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theme of poetry, while little is said in praise of flatlands, let them have ever so much the advantages of fertility and convenience of locomotion; for, although the Dutch appear to have loved the marshes of Batavia and Communipaw on account of their resemblance to Holland, their preference has been a preference of calculation and habit—a sentiment without a spark of the enthusiasm felt by a Swiss.

And yet there are circumstances of convenience belonging to flat countries, and of inconvenience inseparable from mountainous tracts, which render the former desirable residences for the agriculturist, the lazy and rich that ride in their carriages, and those advanced in life, who have left off climbing. Such a country is Louisiana. Its capacity to yield or to receive, by its unparalleled ease of communication with hotter and with colder climates, every necessary and every luxury of life that this earth produces, might make it one of the most delightful abodes of affluence and elegance in the world were it not for the mosquitoes. I say nothing of the yellow fever, because I believe that this calamity may be moderated, if not entirely eradicated, by a good medical police, and under a better understanding of its origin and treatment than now prevails at New Orleans. But the pest inseparable from the locality of New Orleans, which no human effort can extirpate, is the mosquitoes. A few are found every warm day throughout the year; but from June to the

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middle of October, or beginning of November, their swarms are incredible.

This year (1819) is said to have been by far the most remarkable for mosquitoes within the memory of man. Whether the extreme mildness of the winter of 1818-19, or the constant rains of July, August, and the beginning of September have occasioned this, I will not pretend to decide. Probably both have had much effect; the former, by permitting the larvæ to live, the latter by filling all hollows with water throughout the city and country, and providing breeding places for them over the whole surface of the land.

The mosquitoes are so important a body of enemies that they furnish a considerable part of the conversation of every day and of everybody; they regulate many family arrangements; they prescribe the employment and distribution of time, and most essentially affect the comforts and enjoyments of every individual in the country. To observe them minutely, therefore, is natural enough to an inquisitive mind; and, in a long confinement to my room, I have had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with them.

From January to the beginning of June the mosquitoes can well be borne. They are not very troublesome, appearing only in moderate numbers. From June, and especially from the beginning of July, till the weather becomes cold, in October and November, they literally fill the air from sunset to sunrise; and in August

## LOUISIANA LIMITATIONS

and September they are troublesome even in the daytime.

I have observed four distinct species of this insect in my chamber. Those that first made their appearance were black, exactly, in their song, size, and every other respect, similar to the common mosquito of our Eastern marshes. Then succeeded another kind, the legs of which were ringed with white, like the tail of a raccoon. Of this species there seemed to be a variety, much less in size, but in all other respects exactly similar to the larger kind. The note of these spotted mosquitoes is very similar to the first mentioned, but somewhat shriller. The third kind is a little larger than either of the others. They are of a shining black, gaunt, and have remarkably large eyes and long legs. Their note is shrill and loud, and their sting severe. The fourth kind are very small, ash-colored, and have a whistling note easily distinguished from the others. I have not seen the kind called "gallinippers," said to be half an inch long and to be very poisonous.

As soon as the sun sets, the mosquitoes appear in clouds and fill every room in the house, as well as the open air. Their noise is so loud as to startle a stranger at its daily recurrence. It fills the air, and there is a character of occasional depression and elevation in it, like that of a concert of frogs in a marsh. There may also be distinguished, I think, four or five leading voices that are occasionally swelled and intermitted;

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in fact, the whole music has the effect of being performed by unanimous concert. This noise and the activity of these pestiferous animals last about an hour, when they abate and almost cease. The buzzing may, however, be heard through the whole night until day-break, when the general outcry again begins, more loudly, I think, than in the evening, and continues till the sun has risen, when it ceases and no more is heard, and little felt, till the approach of the night. There are other singular circumstances attending these animals. At sunset a black hat appears to have particular attractions for them. If a group of men stand together on the levee, those who wear black hats are seen with a column of innumerable mosquitoes ascending upward above their hats; those in white hats are not so distinguished. They appear to have a means of discovering their food at a distance. In the daytime, if you throw yourself upon a bed, or sit down, very few mosquitoes, if any, surround you. But in a quarter of an hour they appear to discover you, and presently attack you in increasing swarms.

What becomes of them in the daytime, in houses, I can hardly tell. But they appear to hide in every dark hole they can find, and especially in pitchers and vessels that contain moisture, into which they lay innumerable eggs. Pitchers of water that have passed through the dripstone, and appear as clear as crystal in the evening, will be found to have a sediment in the bottom, of

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the appearance of black mud. In a day this mud assumes the character of sand, and in a day or two more the water is filled with the living larvæ of the mosquito. Most of the mosquitoes that infest the houses are thus bred in the rain-water casks and wells, and when (as was the case in Philadelphia) the city shall be supplied with water by pipes, the evil may probably be considerably lessened, at least in the city.

The numbers, the minuteness, and the activity of these enemies to repose render any warfare against them, that is not merely defensive, impossible. But a defensive war is very practicable, and may be, in a great measure, successful. The business of the greatest importance is to secure yourself against their attacks during sleep. The common mosquito bar effects this most completely. It consists of curtains, reaching from the tester nearly to the floor, which surround the bed in one piece, connected by a cover, or top piece, so that the mosquito bar is a kind of a box without a bottom. The best kind of a mosquito bar is furnished all around the top with rings. The rings slide, as in a common set of curtains, upon light iron rods on each side of the bed. Another pair of iron rods run through the rings at the head and foot of the tester, and draw along the side rods when the bar is collected and drawn up to the head or foot. If the bar be collected at the foot of the bed, all the mosquitoes that have accidentally

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entered it can be easily destroyed or driven out every morning. It is easy to slip under the bar at night without admitting any, and there is an indescribably pleasant sense of security in hearing their clamor on the outside without the possibility of being annoyed by them.

The bars are made either of coarse, open canvas, French lino (which are the best), open and figured gauze (which are the most handsome), and most frequently of check muslin, which are, I believe, the cheapest.

The best defense during the day are light boots, loose pantaloons, and thin gloves. The face soon becomes accustomed to them, and they are also easily driven off. Ladies and gentlemen who suffer their stings rather than bear a little additional warmth suffer exceedingly about the ankles. But I know creole ladies who, with bare necks and bosoms and short petticoats, pretend to or actually do not perceive them, and, in fact, appear to suffer very little from them. Several of my friends, lawyers and other studious men, put up in their offices a kind of safe, or frame, covered with gauze or lino, large enough to contain a table and chair, and write till late at night in perfect security. There is room to carry this mode of security to much greater extent, and to render it applicable to companies, as well as to adorn it with elegance.



## LOUISIANA LIMITATIONS

### YELLOW FEVER

Medical practitioners have so differed and disputed with one another on the subject of the yellow fever that the contest appears to give some right to the profane, the uninitiated, to maintain opinions of their own; and, as in matters of theological dogmatism, to await the issue of the wrangling of doctors before they put implicit faith in the tenets of either party.

When I was in Philadelphia during the fever epidemics of 1798 and 1799, which were both of comparatively moderate violence and duration and, to use one of the mystical phrases of a physician of New Orleans in a company of ladies, were "sporadic," I had made up my mind that the fever was imported, and a legitimate descendant of the bulam fever. The intimacy with which I was honored of Dr. Rush, who often urged strong reasons against the probability of importation, did not alter the conviction derived from other sources of information and other reasonings of an opposite character. Having had myself and seen many of my acquaintances labor under very severe bilious fevers, I could not be made to comprehend that this disease, the autumnal fever, and the yellow fever, of which so many cases came under my immediate observation, were the same, differing only in degrees of malignity.

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I have now resided in New Orleans from the commencement of this dreadful pestilence until it has consumed or driven away the majority of those whom experience has proved to be most subject to it—the young strangers—and until, in the opinion of several physicians, the number of cases had diminished for the same reason that a fire abates—when most of the fuel is consumed.

Early in July, or in the latter end of June, a vessel arrived from the Havana, in the river, on board of which, as it was reported to the governor by his physician, there existed a suspicion of yellow fever. The old quarantine law having been repealed at the last session of the Legislature, and power given to the governor to establish a quarantine whenever, in his opinion, danger of the importation of disease should exist, this vessel was immediately put under a quarantine of twenty days; and although it was publicly stated that no single person on board was sick until he became so from confinement on board—and several very respectable citizens were passengers—the quarantine was strictly enforced. Two sailors, however, were said to have reached the city from this vessel, one of whom died in the Faubourg Marigny and the other in the Faubourg St. Mary. From that time, rumors of yellow-fever cases became daily more frequent, and by the beginning of August it was a matter of notoriety that the disease did exist. Every notice, however, of the calamity was care-

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fully kept out of the newspapers. I asked one of the editors from what motive this omission arose; his answer was that the principal profit of a newspaper arising from advertisements, the merchants, their principal customers, had absolutely forbid the least notice of fever, under a threat that their custom should otherwise be withdrawn; thus sacrificing to commercial policy the lives of all those who, believing from the silence of the public papers that no danger existed, might come to the city.

From the beginning of August to the 19th of September, the deaths increased from ten or twelve to forty-six (the greatest number which I could ascertain with tolerable correctness) a day. It was currently stated that on one day fifty-three had been buried, and it is not improbable. But no exact register is anywhere kept of deaths and burials; and uncertainty on this subject is inevitable on many accounts. Those buried by the Catholic Church may be correctly known, for Catholics in general consider the funeral rites as necessary to the future state of the soul of the deceased; and the poorest blacks take care to bring the corpse to the church, to take advantage of the ceremony which may be performed for some richer person. But many others, not Catholics, are buried without the interference of any clergyman—in three cases to my own personal knowledge. Others, buried by the Methodist, Presbyterian, or Episcopal ministry, render an

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inquiry very difficult and laborious, and neither my time nor my health permitted my entering into it as I wished.

Early in July the cotton and tobacco crops of the upper country, constituting the principal materials of the commerce of New Orleans, and by far the greatest part, have arrived, and have been disposed of either by shipment to Europe or to the Atlantic States. The new crops do not arrive until the latter part of October or beginning of November. The principal merchants, therefore, calculate their operations easily so as to find themselves at leisure about the commencement of July. A very large proportion of the commercial community, from October to July, consists of strangers, who purchase or sell, as agents or principals, and leave the city when their business is concluded; so that, even if no disease, or fear of disease, existed, the population would at that time be annually diminished by 8,000 or 10,000 souls, just as it is at the close of the great fairs of Germany in the cities where they are held. Those permanent inhabitants of New Orleans who can afford it, and dread the fever, the solitude, and the *ennui* of the city during July, August, and September, go to the Bay of St. Louis, or to other places of public resort at that period, and do not return until the middle of October or beginning of November. In these respects New Orleans does not differ, excepting in degree, from the great cities south of New York on the Atlantic. Phil-

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adelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Norfolk, and Richmond, and more especially Charleston and Savannah, have their sickly season during the same months. Bilious fevers are the common disorder, and the wealthy fly to the country. The locality of New Orleans may render the unhealthiness of the place more decided; but the strangers' fever has been dreaded and spoken of long before New Orleans became an object of particular notice by falling into the possession of the United States. But this, I think, is a specific and not a mere bilious fever. I am told by the physicians of the place that no year passes in which cases of yellow fever do not occur, although in some years they are much rarer than in others. The year 1817 was remarkable as a year of great mortality, especially among the strangers. The late rise of the river and its uncommon height, even in the month of August, accumulated and detained in the city a very unusual number of boatmen and merchants, or proprietors, from the upper country, and consequently occasioned a later residence in the city of its commercial inhabitants. But in 1818 the cases were few, and it must be generally observed that physicians have a great propensity to call every case of fever a case of yellow fever. If the patient recovers, the cure of that fatal disorder adds to the reputation of the physician; if he dies, his death detracts nothing from his credit, because the majority of such cases are fatal. The public also, without fault of the physicians, take

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it for granted that every funeral is that of a yellow fever patient.

I have had many opportunities of knowing correctly the symptoms of the disorder as they appear this year, and of the principal as well as unsuccessful result of the treatment employed for its cure by different physicians. In the boarding house in which I lodged four cases occurred. All were cured. Most of my workmen were attacked with different degrees of virulence. The sober lived; the drunk died, with few exceptions.

Mr. Ritchie, a most respectable merchant and amiable man, was seized in the middle of the night with a chill and with violent vomiting of yellow and green and slimy matter. Pains in the head, back, and limbs succeeded, with the skin dry, feverish, and pulse often slower, often quicker than natural. For seven or eight days he continued in the same irritable state of stomach, unable to retain anything. Dr. Rice administered an emetic and a cathartic, I believe, the first day, but without apparent good effect. By the advice of Dr. Marshal, when all hope was lost, he was put into the cold bath (the coldest water is not below  $55^{\circ}$  F.). From that time he began to improve, his stomach gradually retained some food, and in ten or twelve days he could sit up and walk about the house. I left him very weak, but considered as quite out of danger.

Mr. Thorne complained unduly, at breakfast, of pain in his head and back, but went to his business.

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At dinner he said he felt very unwell, and as he did not sleep in the house, he asked Mrs. Kennedy, the mistress of the house, to accommodate him with a bed. She had none unoccupied, but he lay down on a sofa, and as he complained of chilliness, he was wrapped up in a flannel dressing gown. He soon broke out into a violent perspiration, so as to wet all his clothes through and through. He was then sent home, took a strong cathartic and emetic, and in four days was able to attend to his business.

Dr. Rice, lately arrived, and having the care of my sick workmen, in order to prepare himself, took, without any particular complaint, a mercurial cathartic, and I think disordered his health thereby so as to render further medical treatment necessary. He attended Mr. Ritchie and his other patients, however, till he was seized with slight pain in the back and head, and a propensity to vomit. He was then obliged to keep to his bed, and continued much debilitated, but without violent symptoms of any sort, and considered himself well when I left New Orleans.

Maria, a black slave, was suddenly seized with pains in her limbs, back and head, a dry skin, and most violent fever. Dr. Rodgers administered a strong cathartic and bled her. In three days her complaint vanished, leaving her only debilitated.

## CHAPTER XII

### FRAGMENTARY CRITICISM

**I**T is often said that as we grow older we become more hard-hearted, and wear out the finer and benevolent feelings of youth. That this is the fact cannot be denied; but if it were differently stated it would not be less true and would, perhaps, be explained as well as stated. As we grow *older*, we grow *wiser*; that is, we find that many of the benevolent feelings of youth are feelings which the objects on which they are bestowed could not possibly excite if they were not viewed in a false light and presumed to be different from what they are. These feelings, then, belong not so much to the objects as to the minds and hearts in which they grow. As we grow older we know by experience the cut and color of the cloaks that are worn to hide every piece of imposture. To the young they are new, and no fact respecting human nature is more verified by its uniform occurrence than that no one will avail himself of any experience but his own. If this is the case in the common course of society, in which the false appearances which excite benevolent feeling in the young



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are of daily occurrence and daily detection, where these feelings operate in respect to individuals that are before our eyes and whose conduct and circumstances we may daily watch and investigate, what must it be in respect to nations at a distance, whose manners and vices and virtues we know only from books, and those books compiled from hearsay and very often with a view to create or uphold a particular system of philosophy.

I remember the time when I was over head and ears in love with *Man in a State of Nature*—by the bye, I never heard of any fine theory spun together in behalf of *Woman in a State of Nature*. Social compacts were my hobbies; the American Revolution—I ask its pardon, for it deserves better company—was a sort of dawn of the Golden Age, and the French Revolution the Golden Age itself. I should be ashamed to confess all this if I had not had a thousand companions in my kaleidoscopic amusement, and those generally men of ardent, benevolent, and well-informed minds, and excellent hearts. Alas! experience has destroyed the illusion, the kaleidoscope is broken, and all the tinsel of scenery that glittered so delightfully is tarnished and turned to raggedness. A dozen years' residence at the republican court at Washington has affected wonderfully the advance of riper years.

Chateaubriand, the disgrace of eloquence and of talents, and many others have founded their systems of human virtue in its most perfect and amiable state on

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the storied descriptions of travelers of the manners, customs, courage, honesty, and independent spirit of our North American Indians, of whom, by the bye, the Choctaws are a very favorable specimen. We hear daily, among ourselves and from people who have lived among them, most high-flown encomiums upon our red brethren, and the most indignant expressions on the subject of the aggression of our frontier settlements against the innocent savages, and at the systematic frauds committed by our Government in treaties for their lands. I have, therefore, lately been pretty inquisitive on their subject; and adding all that I have read in books, from Father Hennepin down to William Darby, Esq., to what I have heard in conversation respecting them, I have almost established an opinion as to their value in a moral and political point of view, in my own mind.

The virtues which the social compact makers are unanimous in attributing to man in a state of nature—that is, to our North American savages—are courage, hospitality, love of mirth, love of freedom. The Choctaws have credit for two others—chastity and honesty. On the debit side stand, and I believe with the consent of these gentlemen, ferocity, cruelty to their captives, idleness, and generally theft, ill treatment of their women. Without going further, I should conceive the account to be pretty nearly balanced.

The courage of a savage is a very different kind

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of courage from that of a civilized being. I do not know that they have ever exhibited courage in the open attack of an enemy or in resistance when attacked in the open field. But they undoubtedly stand first on the list in respect to fortitude under privation and under the most cruel tortures. But in this respect they must admit many individuals of other nations to a participation of their merit. Their superiority consists in the virtue of being national, in its being generally possessed by every individual, and that those who shrink under torture are exceptions. Now, the force of education and the power of opinion have produced martyrs in every country, to whose fortitude nothing that the Indians have exhibited at the stake is superior. But the mass of most other nations have given up their opinions generally to force, and the martyrs form the exceptions. The Jews, however, may be considered as national martyrs.

Hospitality exists everywhere where food cannot be bought or sold. A good market in the neighborhood always puts an end to it. The Choctaws, who live on the roads, from Natchez to Nashville, for instance, though they will not hold your horse or fetch his food for you, that being beneath the dignity of freemen, take good care that you shall not depart without paying for it.

I do not think it worth while to follow up the argument. But unpopular and unfeeling as the orator

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would be held that would defend the anti-Indian side of the question, I think that it might be triumphantly maintained that the sum of human happiness would be greater, in the same space, if the Indians did not exist and the country were peopled by a civilized nation; and that there would also be a greater sum of moral good and less odious vice among the latter than among ten tribes of the former. I am not now speaking of Mexicans, Peruvians, or Tahitians, but of our scalping-women and child-murdering North American Indians.

### A CAMP MEETING

WASHINGTON, August 8, 1809.

I have always endeavored to prevent my wife from being led by her curiosity to attend the meetings of the Methodists. With the most rational, but very pious and sincere religious sentiments, she joins a warmth of imagination which might receive a shock if not an impression from the *incantations* which form the business of their assemblies. A camp meeting, however, is a thing so outrageous in its form and in its practices, that I resolved to go to one held a few miles from Georgetown in Virginia, under the auspices of some very good citizens—principally of Mr. Henry Foxall, the great iron founder.

After traveling for about four miles along the Leesburg road, a finger post pointed the way "To the camp." The road lay through thick woods and was



SKETCH OF THE STATUE OF THE RIGHT HONORABLE NORBORNE BERKELEY,

Baron de Botetourt, Governor-General of the Colony of Virginia.



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so narrow that two carriages could pass each other only in very few places. We met with considerable embarrassment on this account in passing a wagon returning from the camp, loaded with women and children.

At the end of three miles more we began to perceive the vicinity of the camp, in parties of well-dressed blacks of both sexes returning on foot toward the city, and of ill-dressed white boys hurrying forward. The number of those we met increased, till at the bottom of a hill we could distinguish among the trees, half-concealed by the underwood, horses, chairs, light wagons, hacks, and a crowd of men and women, among whom we presently arrived. A narrow road wound among the trees, closely lined on both sides with horses and carriages, and their riders and drivers. Some of the horses were tied to the bushes, others fed out of the bottoms of the carriages the doors of which were opened. A numerous party of horsemen, always arriving or departing, galloped with little attention to the convenience of those on foot backward and forward. Bands of negroes, mulattoes tastily dressed, stood among the trees, and the groups looked as if any motive but religious ones had assembled them. Having driven on till we had passed the principal concourse to a place where the carriage could be turned, we alighted and walked back along the road for about 200 yards, following the distant sounds of an orator in full cry,



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accompanied by the groans and ecstasies of a numerous congregation. Crossing a small and muddy brook, we at length reached the camp, the site of which was well chosen. It was placed on the descent of a narrow ridge, at the foot of which ran a small stream, abounding in springs and furnishing the necessary conveniences of water.

We entered the concourse and were proceeding toward the stage when a constable, whose office was designated by a label upon his hat, stopped us, and told us that no ladies could be admitted on that side. We accordingly went back, and passing between the two rows of tents arrived at the upper part of the theater whence everything could be seen and heard. There we stayed about an hour, during which Mr. Munn, a blacksmith at Georgetown, one of the most eminent preachers of the Methodists, spoke with immense rapidity and exertion to the following effect. Indeed what I shall put down is literally what he said as far as it goes, although not one-fourth of what I heard of the same sort, out of his mouth.

It appeared that his subject was the preaching of St. Paul before Felix and Festus. He was in the midst of his discourse, when I heard him exclaim:

“Temperance, temperance, temperance, I say, and so says St. Paul; temperance—not self-denial, no, he asks no favors of you, no, only temperance, and what is temperance? Paul had no communication with women,



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none at all. Peter carried about with him a sister named Lucilla; I suppose she was his wife, else he had no business with her. This I call temperance. One woman was enough for Peter, St. Paul wanted none at all. This is temperance in women—faithful to one woman, your wife. Then temperance in eating; eat enough and drink enough to enjoy it, not to gluttony or drunkenness. St. Paul asks no favors of you; eat while it does you good," etc., etc. Then he spoke of the judgment to come. "That's the point, the judgment to come. When the burning billows of hell wash up against the soul of the glutton and the miser, what good do all his victuals and his wine, and his bags of gold? Do they allay the fiery torment, the thirst that burns him, the parching that sears his lips? Do they frighten away old Satan, who is ready to devour him?—think of that. There's the judgment to come, when hell gapes and the fire roars. O poor sinful damned souls, poor sinful souls, all of you, will ye be damned, will ye, will ye, will ye be damned? No, no, no, no, don't be damned; now you pray and groan and strive with the Spirit." A general groaning and shrieking was now heard from all quarters, which the artful preacher immediately suppressed by returning to his text. "And it was with Festus, he trembled, he trembled, he trembled." During these words the preacher threw out both his arms sideways at full length, and shook himself violently, so as to make his arms quiver with astonishing velocity.

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He must have practiced this trick often, for he introduced it with great success and propriety several times afterwards. "He trembled, every bone shook; he strove, he strove with this spirit, and he was almost overcome; but he conquered, he was afraid of the Jews, saving grace was not for him," etc.

At this part we were turned out. On reaching the upper part of the camp, I found him further advanced in his business. A general groaning was going on—in several parts of the camp women were shrieking, and just under the stage there was an uncommon bustle and cry, which I understood arose from some persons who were under conversion.

He was preaching thus: "There, there stands an unconverted coxcomb; dress is his god and his delight; will it help him then when he must face the fiery gulf, when he cries mercy, mercy, mercy, and there is no mercy? When hell burns and roars, what then is his smartness and his buckishness. Of no use, none, not any, any use to allay hell fire, which calls for him to devour him. But there I see another—a woman. Oh, how grace strives and the Spirit works! Oh for power, power, power; see how her bosom heaves and throbs, how her whole frame is agitated, how the tears start in her eyes, how they burst forth! O my brethren, pray for her, pray for her; see how she trembles, how she trembles [there he repeated his trembling], how she trembles. And now comes the stroke of grace, the

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stroke [every time he pronounced the word he struck his right hand into his left palm so as to produce an astonishingly loud clap], the stroke again and another stroke, another stroke [repeated about twenty times]; and now it works, it works, it works. O God! for power, power, power, power, power, power, power, power, power, power [roaring like a bull]. There it is, now she has it, she has it! Glory, glory, glory, glory," etc. By this time the noise of the congregation was equal to that of the preacher, and he took the opportunity to receive and drink a glass of water, of which he seemed to stand in very great need, for he was quite exhausted.

He then proceeded in a mild voice. "And now God bless you, my dear souls, my dear, dear fellow-sinners; I have only one favor to ask of you, only one favor; God bless you, my dear souls, don't refuse me, God bless you, don't; only one favor, only one, one small favor which I beg and entreat you to grant; and pray, my dear brethren, pray do not be so hard-hearted as to refuse me; it is only one favor, only one; do not refuse it; God help you my dear brethren." These repetitions occupied a long time till everyone was silent and curious to know what the favor was. "Only one small favor—pray with me, pray with me [raising his voice by degrees to a perfect roar], pray, pray, pray with me. Oh how it stirs, oh how it presses and works upon you. As sure as God is in heaven, He is here and presses us to pray. Are there not

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twenty, not thirty to join me? God bless you, don't refuse me; so pray. God is here; He will have it; don't strive with the Spirit. Give it way, there it comes; I know it, I feel it as sure as God is in heaven. See how you resist; but you can't resist, give way; and now for power, power, power," etc.

He soon again exhausted himself and drank some more water. After which, in the true bathos style, he said in a colloquial tone that the managers would go round and collect money for the expenses of establishing the camp, the balance to be applied to the building of a meeting house in the neighborhood.

As it soon afterwards threatened to rain, we got into the carriage to return home, and driving on the road we were overtaken by the most violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain of the season. Henry, our son, who remained at the camp till midnight, reported that the conversions were numerous, and in the same hysterical style in all the tents, and that the negroes after the camp was illuminated sang and danced the Methodist turnabout in the most indefatigable and entertaining manner.

Enthusiasm has its charms, and as this is the only public diversion in which the scattered inhabitants of the country can indulge, it would be a pity to suppress it, even by the ridicule to which it is so open. The night scenery, the illumination of the woods, the novelty of a camp, especially to the women and children, the

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dancing and singing, and the pleasure of a crowd, so tempting to the most fashionable, are in fact enjoyments which human nature everywhere provides for herself, in her most savage as well as most polished state. Let the congregation rejoice and welcome. But as to the preacher, who lives by such dishonest means—"to his own Master he standeth or falleth."

### CONVENTIONS IN WRITING

May 22, 1797.

One of the most sensible and agreeable women I have ever known objected to Shakespeare's plays in general, as containing expressions highly offensive to modesty, and to "Othello," in particular, as not only violating decency in the dialogue, but good manners, and even the character attributed to the hero, in the circumstance of his striking Desdemona in a fit of jealousy. It was impossible to deny the first charge, of indelicacy. Such expressions as fall from the mouth of Iago, Brabantio, and Othello himself are shocking in themselves, and must always have appeared so to the young and the female hearers. But I ventured to excuse our favorite poet by stating the great difference between the manners of our day and those of Shakespeare's. It is certainly a great improvement of manners that teaches us to shun the appearance of licentiousness and to be shocked at its expression, and so far Mrs. Wood had certainly the advantage had the argu-

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ment been whether or no our manners are more favorable to virtue than those of former times; and she was perfectly right in asserting that, to decide upon these expressions as they now appear to us, and especially to those who have not, by long study, brought themselves to conceive that they are living in the time and among the contemporaries of the author they are reading, we must at once condemn them as highly indecent and improper to be read or heard.

By degrees, however, the field of discussion enlarged itself. I found it necessary to attempt the proof that Shakespeare did not so much violate the decency of the manners of his age as ladies of the correct delicacy of Virginia may suppose.

“The Merry Wives of Windsor” was written in the days of Queen Elizabeth. The Bible was translated in the reign of James I, perhaps twenty years after. I mean no disrespect to that book when I say that the translators, who were men of great piety and learning, and in such a work, published for the correction of morals and manners, would no doubt be as cautious as was necessary not to give offense to delicacy, have everywhere used language consonant to the original, no doubt, but highly repugnant to our present ideas of delicacy. They certainly might have avoided it by circumlocution, or a different arrangement of expression; for it happens that every language with which I am acquainted is on no subject more ductile

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than when common expressions are to be rendered equivocally allusive to indelicacy, or natural functions, unfit to be plainly mentioned, are to be intelligently hinted at. How little care has been taken to soften the necessary mention of these things by the translators of the Bible, Leviticus and Ezekiel can fully show. The fact is, I believe, that the manners of the time admitted all the freedom they took, and no one was offended thereby.

I was proceeding to quote Beaumont and Fletcher, Dryden and Congreve, but Mr. Wood very properly observed that, during the reign of Charles II and some time afterwards, the stage partook of the profligacy of the manners of the court; and he might have added that even to the moral authors of that day, whose delicacy of expression when they necessarily mention indelicate subjects is no ways conspicuous, the stage appeared to use a most unjustifiable license of language, and that it was thought highly disreputable for a young, modest woman to appear at the theater.

### SOME NATURAL PHENOMENA

The idea that this continent is not so old as the Eastern Hemisphere is by no means new. All the circumstances and appearances in the actual state of the geology and natural history of North America must favor this opinion. It would only be necessary to compare the whole map of the country with an equal map on the other side of the Atlantic. Everything, how-

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ever, that I have seen of Virginia tends very much to persuade me that at all events the country below the limestone or Blue Ridge is much younger than any country I have seen before. It is evidently all fictitious and has every appearance of having been made by immense deluges of water.

If, according to the very bold, but extremely probable, and in my mind almost certain theory of some philosophers, the moon has been projected from the earth, and perhaps occupied the space now the Pacific Ocean, I can easily imagine that the whole continent of North America from Greenland to Cape Horn may have been raised up by the immense mass starting from it to the westward, and as it were leaned over to the eastern continent. As soon as the enormous explosion had taken place this raised slice would fall back into the vacuum, and its eastern edge would bring up from the bottom of the sea whatever it found there: sand, shells, fishes, etc., etc.

But perhaps there was at that time no Atlantic, perhaps no ocean anywhere.

Perhaps not. But the immense quantity of salt water which forms so great a part of our globe was somewhere. If it was in the center, the explosion of so large a portion of the earth's crust would let another very large mass fall into the water, which by the progress of the convulsion might again be forced upward, and from the exuvix of sea animals brought up with



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it form the limestone hills, and cover their slopes with shells and marine substances as we actually see them.

I do not pretend that this hypothesis is worth half a farthing. I am sick of pursuing it. I hate hypothesis making and mere hypothesis makers. It is a most hypocritical way of confessing ignorance. When I sat down to write I never dreamt of an hypothesis, but merely meant to note an observation, minute indeed compared to an explosion for the purpose of making a moon.

The subject I intended to treat was the gradual mode by which the old valleys of this lower country were made, and by which new valleys are daily making.

I. *Old Valleys.* Without one exception I have observed that all the brows of the hills that are completely rounded and point toward water courses, are covered with pebbles and stones rounded by attrition. Many of these pebbles are siliceous, others quartz ore, others of coarse sand in different states of induration, some of them being very friable. I believe the average height of these hills above the level of the great rivers may be assumed at one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet. The upper face of the flat country behind the edges of the hills (that is, the country between the large rivers or creeks) is in general covered with sand of different depths. Where it has any descent the surface about the clay commonly contains many pebbles. In every one of these old valleys between hills or banks, the sides or

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brows of which are covered with pebbles or rounded stones, runs now a river, a creek, a run, or a spring branch, which is never quite dry.

I should therefore suppose that the water once covered the whole of the country. That while the surface of the water remained above the surface of the present highest land, it deposited the sand now found upon the highest levels. After some time and from some cause at present unknown, it seems to have sunk to a much lower level and to have been acted upon by the influence of the tide, during which time the pebbles forming the brows of the hills were rounded and thrown up at high-water mark at spring tides in the greatest quantities, diminishing gradually to the mark of high water at neap tides, as in the case in every tide river and on the seashore, and is also universally the case in all the valleys, which I call the old valleys of lower Virginia. For it rarely happens that the pebbles extend much more than halfway down the hillsides, excepting where they have evidently rolled down from the top, or have been washed down by the rain or some spring.

During this state of the water the old valleys were formed gradually by the mutual operation of the springs and the tides. Every spring formed at first a small gully in that soft factitious material of which the soil consists. This gully was increased in rainy season by the collections of land water rushing down it. The tide water would of course wash and round off the

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steep banks and wear the sharp points of meeting gullies into round knolls. Thus arose the deep valleys of the large rivers, the creeks, the rivulets and the rills arising from perennial springs.

II. *New Valleys*. All this took place before the growth of forests over the face of the country. I say took place for I cannot allow that what I have said is an hypothesis, against the evidences of the oyster banks and the gravel knolls.

The new valleys have in general begun to be formed since the invasion of America by the Europeans, and are the consequences of the clearing and plowing of the land. They may be said to be yet in a state of progress and ought properly to be called only gullies. Some of them are, however, so very considerable and are so rapidly increasing, that we may as well call them valleys. They differ from the old valleys in the total absence of gravel, unless in their bottoms, and this is brought by the rain from the sides of the hills, in the steepness of their sides, and in their dryness in summer. They are created in the first instance by accidental directions of land water over surfaces unbound by grass or roots of trees. A path or a road commonly gives them their rise. They are so numerous and are so rapidly increasing in this country as to be a very great inconvenience. After the rain has washed their bottoms to a considerable depth the frost in winter pulls down their sides with great expedition. After a mod-

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erate frost, in which the thermometer stood at perhaps twenty-six, for I have no instrument but my feelings, I was passing by a gully which runs to the north of the theater and heard a clatter in it which surprised me. I walked up to it and observed that the bank upon which the sun was shining, and which was perpendicular, was tumbling down with great rapidity. The sides looked uniformly to be of clay with a small mixture of gravel, for it was the side of a hill, but when I looked into the bottom of the gully I saw nothing but pure ice in a thousand fragments. I stepped a little nearer to the edge and tumbled presently to the bottom, about fifteen feet down the steep bank, bringing with me a stratum of ice and clay, which let me into the whole secret at once.

There was first a complete surface of clay and gravel about an inch thick and so compact, though somewhat separated by the frost, that no ice could be seen through it. This stratum—if that which was almost perpendicular may be called a stratum—was succeeded by another consisting of crystals of ice of irregular forms from three inches to one inch long, unmixed with earth. These crystals were fixed to and seemed to have grown out of the natural soil of the bank, which was smooth and compact. As soon as they felt the warmth of the sun and air they fell into the bottom of the gully with the earth adhering to their tops. A few such nights would make a rapid progress in the

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increase of the gully, and indeed the whole of the edge was already undermined to the distance of eight or ten inches, which was the cause of my fall.

The laws of frost—and those who have studied them may, if they please—account for the said crystallization of water under a certain temperature, and inform us how the said crystallization came to commence below the immediate surface, and continued either by attracting moisture from the air or from the earth to extend itself to the length of three inches in one night.

Almost all the bottom of the old valleys contain a new gully, sometimes of twenty or thirty feet deep.

There is a very expeditious method of stopping gullies by building a rough wall across them, or only filling them with brushwood. The soil brought down is thus retained and in a short time weeds and brambles grow in the richer soil, and perhaps restore the land to its original level. This if done in time would prevent many a great inconvenience to the traveler, and to the farmer. But it is generally neglected till the business becomes too serious to be undertaken.

## AN ANECDOTE

General Dearborn, Secretary of War, is a man of plain, rough manners, moderate understanding, but with a good memory and quick observation. He has all his life been in the service of the public in some way

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or another, and he was made prisoner at the attack on Quebec during the Revolution, and afterwards was at the siege of Yorktown. Since then he has practiced as a country physician, built several lighthouses by contract, and is now Secretary of War. He is not altogether popular with the officers of the army. Political prejudices may do something, but a somewhat narrow disposition in settling accounts does more to render him obnoxious. But he is just and honest. I have always found him obliging, and probably as good a man in the present state of our army as could possibly be put into office.

In conversation with him to-day he happened to mention that he was at the siege of Yorktown in Virginia, most casually. I took this opportunity to ask him whether he could exactly remember the detail of the late General Hamilton's conduct and merits at the storming of the fort to the left of the town, the capture of which by the Americans and of that to the right by the French decided the fate of the place.

His answer amounted to the following: "I was at the siege of Yorktown," said he, "deputy quartermaster general. Lieutenant-Colonels Hamilton and Laurens commanded each batallion of a regiment of volunteers, of which Scamel who fell at the siege was colonel. Hamilton had then the rank of lieutenant-colonel in consequence of his having belonged to General Washington's family. Laurens was then one of the general's

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aides-de-camp. There existed at that time a slight coolness between Generals Washington and Hamilton. When the attack on the two forts was resolved upon, the second parallel was not yet completed, and it was thought that the possession of these redoubts would perhaps conclude the siege, or at least enable the besiegers to commence the third parallel immediately.

General Washington had appointed Colonel Laurens to command a party intended to storm the fort to the right of the besiegers. This induced Hamilton to examine the roster, and he found that regularly the routine of command devolved upon himself, Laurens having commanded the preceding night in the trenches.

The party were already in the field when this discovery was made. Hamilton, however, repaired immediately to the general's tent, and stated that *of right* the command devolved upon him, not upon Colonel Laurens. General Washington acknowledged that he might be correct, that dispositions were now made, the necessary orders given and they could not be well altered. Hamilton then demanded the command *as of right*, and even threatened to lay his case before Congress. Washington, contrary to his usual disposition and conduct, yielded; Hamilton commanded the party, and Colonel Laurens went as a volunteer.

A forlorn hope of twenty-five men were chosen for the attack, and advanced. The American pioneers soon leveled the counterscarp a few feet in width, the



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palisades were cut down—having previously been much destroyed by the batteries—a few fascines were thrown into the ditch, and the rampart immediately stormed. Of the forlorn hope who achieved the affair, about five were killed and fifteen wounded. The rest of the party with Hamilton at their head arrived to take possession. It is usually supposed that Hamilton led the storming party. He did his duty but he did not lead it. He had no opportunity to go beyond what his duty called for.

### L'ENVOI

It is impossible for me to deny that I have upon the whole enjoyed much happiness and success in the course of my life, and yet—I confine my observations at present to myself, who am naturally of a most cheerful disposition—I find infinite satisfaction in grumbling and complaining. This is ungrateful, for when I look back on my life as upon a history I am puzzled to find the cause of success in a thousand of my undertakings in which I certainly did not deserve it. And so has it been throughout my whole progress through the world to the present day. I would positively hesitate, and on reflection I am convinced that my vanity renders it impossible for me to write down the actual facts of my history, so little do they possess of merit, much less of brilliancy, yet—I am absolutely ashamed that it is so—I shall never while the arts exist in America hold



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a mean place among the men to whom merit is conceded. I am utterly at a loss to comprehend how it happened that as I never stuck to anything, anything has ever stuck to me; yet I have succeeded and by *work*. The highest encomium and the most flattering I ever received relative to my architectural efforts, was in regard to the bank of Pennsylvania.

Walking up Second Street I observed two French officers standing opposite the building and looking at it without saying a word. I stepped into Black's shop and stood close to them. After some time one of them exclaimed several times, "*C'est beau, et si simple!*" He said no more and stood for a few minutes longer before he walked away with his companion. I do not recollect distinctly anything that has happened that has given me so much particular satisfaction.

(1)

THE END





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