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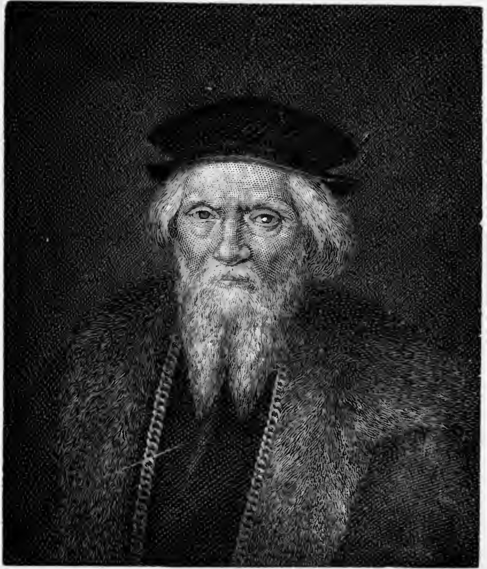

SEBASTIAN CABOT

AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY

EDITED BY

JARED SPARKS

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

By WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON

By CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK

SEBASTIAN CABOT

By CHARLES HAYWARD, JR.

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LIFE

OF

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

BY

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN.

The class of professed men of letters, if we exclude from the account the conductors of periodical journals, is certainly not very large even at the present day in our country. But before the close of the 18th century, it was nearly impossible to meet with an individual who looked to authorship as his only, or indeed his principal means of subsistence. This was somewhat the more remarkable, considering the extraordinary developement of intellectual power exhibited in every quarter of the country, and applied to every variety of moral and social culture; and formed a singular contrast with more than one nation in Europe, where literature still continued to be followed as a distinct profession, amidst all the difficulties resulting from an arbitrary government, and popular imbecility and ignorance.

Abundant reasons, indeed, are suggested for this, by the various occupations afforded to talent of all kinds, not only in the exercise of political functions, but in the splendid career opened to enter-

prise of every description in our free and thriving community. We were in the morning of life, as it were, when every thing summoned us to action; when the spirit was quickened by hope and youthful confidence; and we felt that we had our race to run, unlike those nations, who, having reached the noontide of their glory, or sunk into their decline, were naturally led to dwell on the soothing recollections of the past, and to repose themselves, after a tumultuous existence, in the quiet pleasures of study and contemplation. "It was amidst the ruins of the Capitol," says Gibbon, "that I first conceived the idea of writing the history of the Roman Empire." The occupation suited well with the spirit of the place, but would scarcely have harmonized with the life of bustling energy, and the thousand novelties which were perpetually stimulating the appetite for adventure, in our new and unexplored hemisphere. In short, to express it in one word, the peculiarities of our situation as naturally disposed us to active life, as those of the old countries of Europe to contemplative.

The subject of the present memoir affords an almost solitary example, at this period, of a scholar, in the enlarged application of the term, who cultivated letters as a distinct and exclusive profession, resting his means of support, as well as his fame, on his success; and who as a writer of fic-

tion is still further entitled to credit, for having quitted the beaten grounds of the old country, and sought his subjects in the untried wilderness of his own. The particulars of his unostentatious life have been collected with sufficient industry by his friend, Mr. William Dunlap, to whom our native literature is under such large obligations for the extent and fidelity of his researches. We will select a few of the most prominent incidents from the mass of miscellaneous fragments and literary lumber, with which his work is somewhat encumbered. It were to be wished, that, in the place of some of them, more copious extracts had been substituted from his journal and correspondence, which, doubtless, in this as in other cases, must afford the most interesting, as well as authentic materials for biography.

Charles Brockden Brown was born at Philadelphia, January 17, 1771. He was descended from a highly respectable family, whose ancestors were of that estimable sect, who came over with William Penn to seek an asylum, where they might worship their Creator unmolested in the meek and humble spirit of their own faith. From his earliest childhood Brown gave evidence of his studious propensities, being frequently noticed by his father on his return from school poring over some heavy tome, nothing daunted by the formidable words it contained, or mounted on a table and

busily engaged in exploring a map which hung on the parlor wall. This infantine predilection for geographical studies ripened into a passion in later years. Another anecdote recorded of him at the age of ten, sets in a still stronger light his appreciation of intellectual pursuits, far above his years. A visitor at his father's having rebuked him, as it would seem without cause, for some remark he had made, gave him the contemptuous epithet of "boy." "What does he mean," said the young philosopher, after the guest's departure, "by calling me boy? Does he not know that it is neither size nor age, but sense, that makes the man? I could ask him a hundred questions, none of which he could answer."

At eleven years of age, he was placed under the tuition of Mr. Robert Proud, well known as the author of the *History of Pennsylvania.* Under his direction, he went over a large course of English reading and acquired the elements of Greek and Latin, applying himself with great assiduity to his studies. His bodily health was naturally delicate, and indisposed him to engage in the robust, athletic exercises of boyhood. His sedentary habits, however, began so evidently to impair his health, that his master recommended him to withdraw from his books, and recruit his strength by excursions on foot into the country. These pedestrian rambles suited the taste of the pupil,

and the length of his absence often excited the apprehensions of his friends for his safety. He may be thought to have sat to himself for this portrait of one of his heroes. "I preferred to ramble in the forest and loiter on the hill; perpetually to change the scene; to scrutinize the endless variety of objects; to compare one leaf and pebble with another; to pursue those trains of thought which their resemblances and differences suggested; to inquire what it was that gave them this place, structure, and form, were more agreeable employments than ploughing and threshing." "My frame was delicate and feeble. Exposure to wet blasts and vertical suns was sure to make me sick." The fondness for these solitary rambles continued through life, and the familiarity which they opened to him with the grand and beautiful scenes of nature undoubtedly contributed to nourish the habit of reverie and abstraction, and to deepen the romantic sensibilities, from which flowed so much of his misery, — as well as happiness, in after life.

He quitted Mr. Proud's school before the age of sixteen. He had previously made some small poetical attempts, and soon after sketched the plans of three several epics, on the discovery of America, and the conquests of Peru and Mexico. For some time, they engaged his attention to the exclusion of every other object. No ves

tige of them now remains, or at least has been given to the public, by which we can ascertain the progress made towards their completion. The publication of such immature juvenile productions may gratify curiosity by affording a point of comparison with later excellence. They are rarely, however, of value in themselves sufficient to authorize their exposure to the world, and notwithstanding the occasional exception of a Pope or a Paschal, may very safely put up with Uncle Toby's recommendation on a similar display of precocity "to hush it up, and say as little about it as possible."

Among the contributions, which at a later period of life he was in the habit of making to different journals, the fate of one was too singular to be passed over in silence. It was a poetical address to Franklin, prepared for the Edentown newspaper. "The blundering printer," says Brown in his journal, "from zeal or ignorance, or perhaps from both, substituted the name of Washington. Washington therefore stands arrayed in awkward colors; philosophy smiles to behold her darling son; she turns with horror and disgust from those who have won the laurel victory in the field of battle, to this her favorite candidate, who had never participated in such bloody glory, and whose fame was derived from the conquest of philosophy alone. The printer by his blundering

ingenuity made the subject ridiculous. Every word of this clumsy panegyric was a direct slander upon Washington, and so it was regarded at the time." There could not well be imagined a more expeditious or effectual recipe for converting eulogy into satire.

Our hero had now reached a period of life, when it became necessary to decide on a profession. After due deliberation, he determined on the law; a choice, which received the cordial approbation of his friends, who saw in his habitual diligence and the character of his mind, at once comprehensive and logical, the most essential requisites for success. He entered on the studies of his profession with his usual ardor; and the acuteness and copiousness of his arguments, on various topics proposed for discussion in a law-society, over which he presided, bear ample testimony to his ability and industry. But however suited to his talents the profession of the law might be, it was not at all to his taste. He became a member of a literary club, in which he made frequent essays in composition and eloquence. He kept a copious journal, and by familiar exercise endeavored to acquire a pleasing and graceful style of writing; and every hour that he could steal from professional schooling was devoted to the cultivation of more attractive literature. In one of his contributions to a journal, just before

this period, he speaks of "the rapture with which he held communion with his own thoughts, amidst the gloom of surrounding woods, where his fancy peopled every object with ideal beings, and the barrier between himself and the world of spirits seemed burst by the force of meditation. In this solitude, he felt himself surrounded by a delightful society; but when transported from thence, and compelled to listen to the frivolous chat of his fellow-beings, he suffered all the miseries of soli tude." He declares that his intercourse and conversation with mankind had wrought a salutary change; that he can now mingle in the concerns of life, perform his appropriate duties, and reserve that higher species of discourse for the solitude and silence of his study. In this supposed control over his romantic fancies, he grossly deceived himself.

As the time approached for entering on the practice of his profession, he felt his repugnance to it increase more and more; and he sought to justify a retreat from it altogether, by such poor sophistry as his imagination could suggest. He objected to the profession as having something in it immoral. He could not reconcile it with his notions of duty to come forward as the champion indiscriminately of right and wrong; and he considered the stipendiary advocate of the guilty party as becoming, by that very act, participator in the

guilt. He did not allow himself to reflect, that no more equitable arrangement could be devised, none which would give the humblest individual so fair a chance for maintaining his rights, as the employment of competent and upright counsel, familiar with the forms of legal practice, necessarily so embarrassing to a stranger; that so far from being compelled to undertake a cause manifestly unjust, it is always in the power of an honest lawyer to decline it; but that such contingencies are of most rare occurrence, as few cases are litigated, where each party had not previously plausible grounds for believing himself in the right, a question only to be settled by fair discussion on both sides; that opportunities are not wanting, on the other hand, which invite the highest display of eloquence and professional science, in detecting and defeating villany, in vindicating slandered innocence, and in expounding the great principles of law, on which the foundations of personal security and property are established; and finally, that the most illustrious names in his own and every other civilized country have been drawn from the ranks of a profession, whose habitual discipline so well trains them for legislative action, and the exercise of the highest political functions.

Brown cannot be supposed to have been insensible to these obvious views, and indeed, from one of his letters in later life, he appears to have clearly

recognised the value of the profession he had deserted. But his object was, at this time, to justify himself in his fickleness of purpose, as he best might, in his own eyes and those of his friends. Brown was certainly not the first man of genius, who found himself incapable of resigning the romantic world of fiction, and the uncontrolled revels of the imagination for the dull and prosaic realities of the law. Few, indeed, like Mansfield, have been able so far to constrain their young and buoyant imaginations, as to merit the beautiful eulogium of the English poet; while many more comparatively, from the time of Juvenal downwards, fortunately for the world, have been willing to sacrifice the affections plighted to Themis on the altars of the Muse.

Brown's resolution at this crisis caused sincere regret to his friends, which they could not conceal, on seeing him thus suddenly turn from the path of honorable fame, at the very moment when he was prepared to enter on it. His prospects, but lately so brilliant, seemed now overcast with a deep gloom. The embarrassments of his situation had also a most unfavorable effect on his own mind. Instead of the careful discipline, to which it had been lately subjected, it was now left to rove at large wherever caprice should dictate, and waste itself on those romantic reveries and speculations, to which he was naturally too much addicted. This was the

period when the French Revolution was in its heat, and the awful convulsion experienced in one unhappy country seemed to be felt in every quarter of the globe; men grew familiar with the wildest paradoxes, and the spirit of innovation menaced the oldest and best established principles in morals and government. Brown's inquisitive and speculative mind partook of the prevailing skepticism. Some of his compositions, and especially one on the *Rights of Women*, published in 1797, show to what extravagance a benevolent mind may be led, by fastening too exclusively on the contemplation of the evils of existing institutions, and indulging in indefinite dreams of perfectibility.

There is no period of existence when the spirit of a man is more apt to be depressed, than when he is about to quit the safe and quiet harbor, in which he has rode in safety from childhood, and launch on the dark and unknown ocean, where so many a gallant bark has gone down before him. How much must this disquietude be increased, in the case of one, who, like Brown, has thrown away the very chart and compass, by which he was prepared to guide himself through the doubtful perils of the voyage. How heavily the gloom of despondency fell on his spirits at this time is attested by various extracts from his private correspondence. "As for me," he says, in one of his etters, "I long ago discovered that Nature had

not qualified me for an actor on this stage The nature of my education only added to these disqualifications, and I experienced all those deviations from the centre, which arise when all our lessons are taken from books, and the scholar makes his own character the comment. A happy destiny, indeed, brought me to the knowledge of two or three minds, which Nature had fashioned in the same mould with my own, but these are gone. And, O God! enable me to wait the moment, when it is thy will that I should follow them." In another epistle he remarks, "I have not been deficient in the pursuit of that necessary branch of knowledge, the study of myself. I will not explain the result, for have I not already sufficiently endeavored to make my friends unhappy by communications, which, though they might easily be injurious, could not be of any possible advantage? I really, dear W., regret that period, when your pity was first excited in my favor. I sincerely lament, that I ever gave you reason to imagine, that I was not so happy, as a gay indifference with regard to the present, stubborn forgetfulness with respect to the uneasy past, and excursions into lightsome futurity could make me; for what end, what useful purposes were promoted by the discovery? It could not take away from the number of the unhappy, but only add to t, by making those who loved me participate in

my uneasiness, which each participation, so far from tending to diminish, would, in reality, increase, by adding those regrets, of which I had been the author in them, to my own original stock." It is painful to witness the struggles of a generous spirit, endeavoring to suppress the anguish thus involuntarily escaping in the warmth of affectionate intercourse. This becomes still more striking, in the contrast exhibited between the assumed cheerfulness of much of his correspondence at this period, and the uniform melancholy tone of his private journal, the genuine record of his emotions.

Fortunately his taste, refined by intellectual culture, and the elevation and spotless purity of his moral principles, raised him above the temptations of sensual indulgence, in which minds of weaker mould might have sought a temporary relief. His soul was steeled against the grosser seductions of appetite. The only avenue, through which his principles could in any way be assailed, was the understanding; and it would appear, from some dark hints in his correspondence at this period, that the rash idea of relieving himself from the weight of earthly sorrows, by some voluntary deed of violence, had more than once flitted across his mind. It is pleasing to observe with what beautiful modesty and simplicity of character he refers his abstinence from coarser indulgences to

his constitutional infirmities, and consequent disinclination to them, which, in truth, could be only imputed to the excellence of his heart and his understanding. In one of his letters he remarks, "that the benevolence of nature rendered him, in a manner, an exile from many of the temptations that infest the minds of ardent youth. Whatever his wishes might have been, his benevolent destiny had prevented him from running into the frivolities of youth." He ascribes to this cause his love of letters, and his predominant anxiety to excel in whatever was a glorious subject of competition. "Had he been furnished with the nerves and muscles of his comrades, it was very far from impossible that he might have relinquished intellectual pleasures. Nature had benevolently rendered him incapable of encountering such severe trials."

Brown's principal resources for dissipating the melancholy, which hung over him, were his inextinguishable love of letters, and the society of a few friends, to whom congeniality of taste and temper had united him from early years. In addition to these resources, we may mention his fondness for pedestrian rambles, which sometimes were of several weeks' duration. In the course of these excursions, the circle of his acquaintance and friends was gradually enlarged. In the city of New York, in particular, he contracted an intimacy with several individuals of similar age and kindred

mould with himself. Among these, his earliest associate was Dr. E. H. Smith, a young gentleman of great promise in the medical profession. Brown had become known to him during the residence of the latter as a student in Philadelphia. By him our hero was introduced to Mr. Dunlap, who has survived to commemorate the virtues of his friend in a biography already noticed, and to Mr. John son, the accomplished author of the New York Law Reports. The society of these friends had sufficient attractions to induce him to repeat his visit to New York, until at length, in the beginning of 1798, he may be said to have established his permanent residence there, passing much of his time under the same roof with them. His amiable manners and accomplishments soon recommended him to the notice of other eminent individuals. He became a member of a literary society, called the *Friendly Club*, comprehending names which have since shed a distinguished lustre over the various walks of literature and science.

The spirits of Brown seemed to be exalted in this new atmosphere. His sensibilities found a grateful exercise in the sympathies of friendship, and the powers of his mind were called into action by collision with others of similar tone with his own. His memory was enriched with the stores of various reading, hitherto conducted at random, with no higher object than temporary amusement

or the gratification of an indefinite curiosity. He now concentrated his attention on some determinate object, and proposed to give full scope to his various talents and acquisitions in the career of an author, as yet so little travelled in our own country.

His first publication was that before noticed, entitled "*Alcuin*, a Dialogue on the Rights of Women." It exhibits the crude and fanciful speculations of a theorist, who, in his dreams of optimism, charges exclusively on human institutions the imperfections necessarily incident to human nature. The work, with all its ingenuity, made little impression on the public; it found few purchasers, and made, it may be presumed, still fewer converts.

He soon after began a romance, which he never completed, from which his biographer has given copious extracts. It is conducted in the epistolary form, and, although exhibiting little of his subsequent power and passion, is recommended by a graceful and easy manner of narration, more attractive than the more elaborate and artificial style of his later novels.

This abortive attempt was succeeded, in 1798, by the publication of *Wieland*, the first of that remarkable series of fictions, which flowed in such rapid succession from his pen, in this and the three following years. In this romance, the author,

deviating from the usual track of domestic or historic incident, proposed to delineate the powerful workings of passion, displayed by a mind constitutionally excitable, under the control of some terrible and mysterious agency. The scene is laid in Pennsylvania. The action takes place in a family by the name of Wieland, the principal member of which had inherited a melancholy and somewhat superstitious constitution of mind, which his habitual reading and contemplation deepened into a calm but steady fanaticism. This temper is nourished still further by the occurrence of certain inexplicable circumstances of ominous import. Strange voices are heard by different members of the family, sometimes warning them of danger, sometimes announcing events seeming beyond the reach of human knowledge. The still and solemn hours of night are disturbed by these unearthly summons. The other actors of the drama are thrown into strange perplexity, and an underplot of events is curiously entangled by the occurrence of unaccountable sights as well as sounds. By the heated fancy of Wieland they are referred to supernatural agency. A fearful destiny seems to preside over the scene, and to carry the actors onward to some awful catastrophe. At length, the hour arrives. A solemn, mysterious voice announces to Wieland, that he is now called on to testify his submission to the Divine will, by the

sacrifice of his earthly affections, — to surrender up the affectionate partner of his bosom, on whom he had reposed all his hopes of happiness in this life. He obeys the mandate of Heaven. The stormy conflict of passion, into which his mind is thrown, as the fearful sacrifice he is about to make calls up al. the tender remembrances of conjugal fidelity and love, is painted with frightful strength of coloring. Although it presents, on the whole, as pertinent an example as we could offer from any of Brown's writings, of the peculiar power and vividness of his conceptions, the whole scene is too long for insertion here. We will mutilate it, however, by a brief extract, as an illustration of our author's manner, more satisfactory than any criticism can be. Wieland, after receiving the fatal mandate, is represented in an apartment alone with his wife. His courage, or rather his desperation fails him, and he sends her, on some pretext, from the chamber. An interval, during which his insane passions have time to rally, ensues.

"She returned with a light; I led the way to the chamber; she looked round her; she lifted the curtain of the bed; she saw nothing. At length she fixed inquiring eyes upon me. The light now enabled her to discover in my visage what darkness had hitherto concealed. Her cares were now transferred from my sister to myself, and she said in a tremuluous voice, 'Wieland'

you are not well; what ails you? Can I do nothing for you?' That accents and looks so winning should disarm me of my resolution, was to be expected. My thoughts were thrown anew into anarchy. I spread my hand before my eyes, that I might not see her, and answered only by groans. She took my other hand between hers, and, pressing it to her heart, spoke with that voice which had ever swayed my will and wafted away sorrow 'My friend! my soul's friend! tell me thy cause of grief. Do I not merit to partake with thee in thy cares? Am I not thy wife?'

"This was too much. I broke from her embrace, and retired to a corner of the room. In this pause, courage was once more infused into me I resolved to execute my duty. She followed me, and renewed her passionate entreaties to know the cause of my distress.

"I raised my head and regarded her with steadfast looks. I muttered something about death, and the injunctions of my duty. At these words she shrunk back, and looked at me with a new expression of anguish After a pause, she clasped her hands, and exclaimed, —

"'O Wieland! Wieland! God grant that I am mistaken; but surely something is wrong. I see it; it is too plain; thou art undone, — lost to me and to thyself.' At the same time, she gazed on my features with intensest anxiety, in hope that

different symptoms would take place. I replied with vehemence, — 'Undone! No; my duty is known, and I thank my God that my cowardice is now vanquished, and I have power to fulfil it. Catharine! I pity the weakness of nature; I pity thee, but must not spare. Thy life is claimed from my hands, thou must die!'

"Fear was now added to her grief. 'What mean you? Why talk you of death? Bethink yourself, Wieland; bethink yourself, and this fit will pass. O why came I hither! Why did you drag me hither?'

"'I brought thee hither to fulfil a divine command. I am appointed thy destroyer, and destroy thee I must.' Saying this I seized her wrists. She shrieked aloud, and endeavored to free herself from my grasp; but her efforts were vain.

"'Surely, surely, Wieland, thou dost not mean it. Am I not thy wife? and wouldst thou kill me? Thou wilt not; and yet — I see — thou art Wieland no longer! A fury resistless and horrible possesses thee — spare me—spare — help — help —'

"Till her breath was stopped she shrieked for help, — for mercy. When she could speak no longer, her gestures, her looks appealed to my compassion. My accursed hand was irresolute and tremulous. I meant thy death to be sudden, thy struggles to be brief. Alas! my heart was

infirm; my resolves mutable. Thrice I slackened my grasp, and life kept its hold, though in the midst of pangs. Her eyeballs started from their sockets. Grimness and distortion took place of all that used to bewitch me into transport, and subdue me into reverence.

"I was commissioned to kill thee, but not to torment thee with the foresight of thy death; not to multiply thy fears, and prolong thy agonies. Haggard, and pale, and lifeless, at length thou ceasedst to contend with thy destiny.

"This was a moment of triumph. Thus had I successfully subdued the stubbornness of human passions; the victim which had been demanded was given; the deed was done past recall.

"I lifted the corpse in my arms and laid it on the bed. I gazed upon it with delight. Such was the elation of my thoughts, that I even broke into laughter. I clapped my hands and exclaimed, 'It is done! My sacred duty is fulfilled. To that I have sacrificed, O my God! thy last and best gift, my wife!'

"For a while I thus soared above frailty. I imagined I had set myself for ever beyond the reach of selfishness; but my imaginations were false. This rapture quickly subsided. I looked again at my wife. My joyous ebullitions vanished, and I asked myself who it was whom I saw. Methought it could not be Catharine. It could not

be the woman who had lodged for years in my heart; who had slept nightly in my bosom; who had borne in her womb, who had fostered at her breast, the beings who called me father; whom I had watched with delight, and cherished with a fondness ever new and perpetually growing; it could not be the same.

"Where was her bloom? These deadly and blood-suffused orbs but ill resemble the azure and ecstatic tenderness of her eyes. The lucid stream that meandered over that bosom, the glow of love that was wont to sit upon that cheek, are much unlike these livid stains and this hideous deformity. Alas! these were the traces of agony; the gripe of the assassin had been here!

"I will not dwell upon my lapse into desperate and outrageous sorrow. The breath of heaven that sustained me was withdrawn, and I sunk into *mere man.* I leaped from the floor; I dashed my head against the wall; I uttered screams of horror; I panted after torment and pain. Eternal fire, and the bickerings of hell, compared with what I felt, were music and a bed of roses.

"I thank my God that this degeneracy was transient, that he deigned once more to raise me aloft. I thought upon what I had done as a sacrifice to duty, and *was calm.* My wife was dead; but I reflected, that, though this source of human consolation was closed, yet others were still open.

If the transports of a husband were no more, the feelings of a father had still scope for exercise. When remembrance of their mother should excite too keen a pang, I would look upon them and *be comforted.*

" While I revolved these ideas, new warmth flowed in upon my heart. I was wrong. These feelings were the growth of selfishness. Of this I was not aware, and to dispel the mist that obscured my perceptions, a new effulgence and a new mandate were necessary.

" From these thoughts I was recalled by a ray that was shot into the room. A voice spake like that which I had before heard, — ' Thou hast done well; but all is not done, — the sacrifice is incomplete, — thy children must be offered, — they must perish with their mother.' "

This too is accomplished by the same remorseless arm, although the author has judiciously refrained from attempting to prolong the note of feeling, struck with so powerful a hand, by the recital of the particulars. The wretched fanatic is brought to public trial for the murder, but is acquitted on the ground of insanity. The illusion which has bewildered him, at length breaks on his understanding in its whole truth. He cannot sustain the shock, and the tragic tale closes with the suicide of the victim of superstition and imposture. The key to the whole of this myste-

rious agency which controls the circumstances of the story is — ventriloquism! ventriloquism exerted for the very purpose by a human fiend, from no motives of revenge or hatred, but pure diabolical malice, or as he would make us believe, and the author seems willing to endorse this absurd version of it, as a mere practical joke! The reader, who has been gorged with this feast of horrors, is tempted to throw away the book in disgust, at finding himself the dupe of such paltry jugglery, which, whatever sense be given to the term ventriloquism, is altogether incompetent to the various phenomena of sight and sound with which the story is so plentifully seasoned. We can feel the force of Dryden's imprecation, when he cursed the inventors of those fifth acts, which are bound to unravel all the fine mesh of impossibilities, which the author's wits had been so busily entangling in the four preceding.

The explication of the mysteries of Wieland naturally suggests the question, how far an author is bound to explain the *supernaturalities*, if we may so call them, of his fictions; and whether it is not better on the whole, to trust to the willing superstition and credulity of the reader (of which there is perhaps store enough in almost every bosom, at the present enlightened day even, for poetical purposes), than to attempt a solution on purely natural or mechanical principles. It was

thought no harm for the ancients to bring the use of *machinery* into their epics, and a similar freedom was conceded to the old English dramatists, whose ghosts and witches were placed in the much more perilous predicament of being subjected to the scrutiny of the spectator, whose senses are not near so likely to be duped, as the sensitive and excited imagination of the reader in his solitary chamber. It must be admitted, however, that the public of those days, when the

> "undoubting mind
> "Believed the magic wonders that were sung,"

were admirably seasoned for the action of super stition in all forms, and furnished, therefore, a most enviable audience for the melo-dramatic artist, whether dramatist or romance-writer. But all this is changed. No witches ride the air now-a days, and fairies no longer "dance their rounds by the pale moonlight," as the worthy Bishop Corbet, indeed, lamented a century and a half ago.

But still it may be allowed, perhaps, if the scene is laid in some remote age or country, to borrow the ancient superstitions of the place, and incorporate them into, or at least color the story with them, without shocking the well-bred prejudices of the modern reader. Sir Walter Scott has done this with good effect in more than one of his romances, as every one will readily call to mind. A fine example occurs in the Boden Glass ap-

parition in Waverley, which the great novelist, far from attempting to explain on any philosophical principles, or even by an intimation of its being the mere creation of a feverish imagination, has left as he found it, trusting that the reader's poetic feeling will readily accommodate itself to the popular superstitions of the country he is depicting. This reserve on his part, indeed, arising from a truly poetic view of the subject, and an honest reliance on a similar spirit in his reader, has laid him open, with some matter-of-fact people, to the imputation of not being wholly untouched himself by the national superstitions. How much, nevertheless, would the whole scene have lost in its permanent effect, if the author had attempted an explanation of the apparition, on the ground of an optical illusion not infrequent among the mountain-mists of the Highlands, or any other of the ingenious solutions so readily at the command of the thorough-bred story-teller.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this way of solving the riddles of romance would hardly be admissible in a story drawn from familiar scenes and situations in modern life, and especially in our own country. The lights of education are flung too bright and broad over the land, to allow any lurking-hole for the shadows of a twilight age. So much the worse for the poet and the novelist. Their province must now be confined

to poor human nature, without meddling with the "Gorgons and Chimeras dire," which floated through the bewildered brains of our forefathers, at least on the other side of the water. At any rate, if a writer, in this broad sunshine, ventures on any sort of *diablerie*, he is forced to explain it by all the thousand contrivances of trapdoors, secret passages, waxen images, and all the other makeshifts from the property-room of Mrs. Radcliffe and Company.

Brown, indeed, has resorted to a somewhat higher mode of elucidating his mysteries by a remarkable phenomenon of our nature. But the misfortune of all these attempts to account for the marvels of the story by natural or mechanical causes, is, that they are very seldom satisfactory, or competent to their object. This is eminently the case with the ventriloquism in Wieland. Even where they are competent, it may be doubted whether the reader, who has suffered his credulous fancy to be entranced by the spell of the magician, will be gratified to learn, at the end, by what cheap mechanical contrivance he has been duped. However this may be, it is certain that a very unfavorable effect, in another respect, is produced on his mind, after he is made acquainted with the nature of the secret spring by which the machinery is played, more especially when one leading circumstance, like ventriloquism in Wieland, is

made the master-key, as it were, by which all the mysteries are to be unlocked and opened at once. With this explanation at hand, it is extremely difficult to rise to that sensation of mysterious awe and apprehension, on which so much of the sublimity and general effect of the narrative necessarily depends. Instead of such feelings, the only ones which can enable us to do full justice to the author's conceptions, we sometimes, on the contrary, may detect a smile lurking in the corner of the mouth, as we peruse scenes of positive power, from the contrast obviously suggested of the impotence of the apparatus and the portentous character of the results. The critic, therefore, possessed of the real key to the mysteries of the story, if he would do justice to his author's merits, must divest himself, as it were, of his previous knowledge, by fastening his attention on the results, to the exclusion of the insignificant means by which they are achieved. He will not always find this an easy matter.

But to return from this rambling digression ; — in the following year, 1799, Brown published his second novel, entitled *Ormond*. The story presents few of the deeply agitating scenes, and powerful bursts of passion, which distinguish the first It is designed to exhibit a model of surpassing excellence, in a female rising superior to all the shocks of adversity, and the more perilous bland-

ishments of seduction, and who, as the scene grows darker and darker around her, seems to illumine the whole with the radiance of her celestial virtues The reader is reminded of the "patient Griselda," so delicately portrayed by the pencils of Boccaccio and Chaucer. It must be admitted, however, that the contemplation of such a character in the abstract is more imposing, than the minute details by which we attain the knowledge of it; and although there is nothing, we are told, which the gods look down upon with more satisfaction, than a brave mind struggling with the storms of adversity, yet, when these come in the guise of poverty and all the train of teasing annoyances in domestic life, the tale, if long protracted, too often produces a sensation of weariness scarcely to be compensated by the moral grandeur of the spectacle.

The appearance of these two novels constitutes an epoch in the ornamental literature of America. They are the first decidedly successful attempts in the walk of romantic fiction. They are still further remarkable, as illustrating the character and state of society on this side of the Atlantic, instead of resorting to the exhausted springs of European invention. These circumstances, as well as the uncommon powers they displayed both of conception and execution, recommended them to the notice of the literary world, although their philosophical method of dissecting passion and analyzing

motives of action, placed them somewhat beyond the reach of vulgar popularity. Brown was sensible of the favorable impression which he had made, and mentions it in one of his epistles to his brother, with his usual unaffected modesty; — "I add somewhat, though not so much as I might if I were so inclined, to the number of my friends. I find to be the writer of *Wieland* and *Ormond* is a greater recommendation than I ever imagined it would be."

In the course of the same year, the quiet tenor of his life was interrupted by the visitation of that fearful pestilence, the yellow fever, which had for several successive years made its appearance in the city of New York, but which, in 1798, fell upon it with a violence similar to that with which it had desolated Philadelphia in 1793. Brown had taken the precaution of withdrawing from the latter city, where he then resided, on its first appearance there. He prolonged his stay in New York, however, relying on the healthiness of the quarter of the town where he lived, and the habitual abstemiousness of his diet. His friend Smith was necessarily detained there by the duties of his profession, and Brown, in answer to the reiterated importunities of his absent relatives to withdraw from the infected city, refused to do so, on the ground that his personal services might be required by the friends who remained in it; a disinterest-

Philad. May 8. 1801

The printer has made considerable progress in the publication which I believe I mentioned to you in my last, as having been begun. It will be, typographically considered, a very beautiful book.—

I'm in haste,

Adieu

Charles B. Brown

edness well meriting the strength of attachment which he excited in the bosom of his companions.

Unhappily, Brown was right in his prognostics, and his services were too soon required in behalf of his friend, Dr. Smith, who fell a victim to his own benevolence; having caught the fatal malady from an Italian gentleman, a stranger in the city, whom he received, when infected with the disease, into his house, relinquishing to him his own apartment. Brown had the melancholy satisfaction of performing the last sad offices of affection to his dying friend. He himself soon became affected with the same disorder; and it was not till after a severe illness that he so far recovered, as to be able to transfer his residence to Perth Amboy, the abode of Mr. Dunlap, where a pure and invigorating atmosphere, aided by the kind attentions of his host, gradually restored him to a sufficient degree of health and spirits for the prosecution of his literary labors.

The spectacle he had witnessed made too deep an impression on him to be readily effaced, and he resolved to transfer his own conceptions of it, while yet fresh, to the page of fiction, or as it might rather be called, of history, for the purpose, as he intimates in his preface, of imparting to others some of the fruits of the melancholy lesson he had himself experienced. Such was the origin of his next novel, *Arthur Mervyn, or Memoirs of the*

Year 1793. This was the fatal year of the yellow fever in Philadelphia. The action of the story is chiefly confined to that city, but seems to be prepared with little contrivance, on no regular or systematic plan, consisting simply of a succession of incidents, having little cohesion except in reference to the hero, but affording situations of great interest, and frightful fidelity of coloring. The pestilence wasting a thriving and populous city has furnished a topic for more than one great master. It will be remembered, as the terror of every schoolboy, in the pages of Thucydides; it forms the gloomy portal to the light and airy fictions of Boccaccio; and it has furnished a subject for the graphic pencil of the English novelist, De Foe, the only one of the three, who never witnessed the horrors which he paints, but whose fictions wear an aspect of reality, which history can rarely reach.

Brown has succeeded in giving the same terrible distinctness to his impressions by means of individual portraiture. He has, however, not confined himself to this, but by a variety of touches lays open to our view the whole interior of the city of the plague. Instead of expatiating on the loath some symptoms and physical ravages of the dis ease, he selects the most striking moral circum stances which attend it; he dwells on the wither ing sensation that falls so heavily on the heart, in

the streets of the once busy and crowded city, now deserted and silent, save only where the wheels of the melancholy hearse are heard to rumble along the pavement. Our author not unfrequently succeeds in conveying more to the heart by the skilful selection of a single circumstance, than would have flowed from a multitude of petty details. It is the art of the great masters of poetry and painting.

The same year in which Brown produced the first part of "Arthur Mervyn," he entered on the publication of a periodical entitled *The Monthly Magazine and American Review*, a work, that, during its brief existence, which terminated in the following year, afforded abundant evidence of its editor's versatility of talent and the ample range of his literary acquisitions. Our hero was now fairly in the traces of authorship. He looked to it as his permanent vocation, and the indefatigable diligence with which he devoted himself to it may at least serve to show that he did not shrink from his professional engagements from any lack of industry or enterprise.

The publication of "Arthur Mervyn" was succeeded not long after by that of *Edgar Huntly, or the Adventures of a Sleepwalker*; a romance presenting a greater variety of wild and picturesque adventure, with more copious delineations of natural scenery, than is to be found in his other

fictions; circumstances no doubt possessing more attractions for the mass of readers than the peculiarities of his other novels. Indeed, the author has succeeded perfectly in constantly stimulating the curiosity by a succession of as original incidents, — perils and hair-breadth escapes, — as ever flitted across a poet's fancy. It is no small triumph of the art, to be able to maintain the curiosity of the reader unflagging through a succession of incidents, which, far from being sustained by one predominant passion, and forming parts of one whole, rely each for its interest on its own independent merits.

The story is laid in the western part of Pennsylvania, where the author has diversified his descriptions of a simple and almost primitive state of society with uncommonly animated sketches of rural scenery. It is worth observing, how the sombre complexion of Brown's imagination, which so deeply tinges his moral portraiture, sheds its gloom over his pictures of material nature; raising the landscape into all the severe and savage sublimity of a Salvator Rosa. The somnambulism of this novel, which, like the ventriloquism of "Wieland," is the moving principle of all the machinery, has this advantage over the latter, that it does not necessarily impair the effect, by perpetually suggesting a solution of mysteries, and thus dispelling the illusion, on whose existence the effect of the

whole story mainly depends. The adventures, indeed, built upon it are not the most probable in the world. But waving this, we shall be well rewarded for such concession, — there is no further difficulty.

The extract already cited by us from the first of our author's novels has furnished the reader with an illustration of his power in displaying the conflict of passion under high moral excitement. We will now venture another quotation from the work before us, in order to exhibit more fully his talent for the description of external objects.

Edgar Huntly, the hero of the story, is represented in one of the wild mountain fastnesses of Norwalk, a district in the western part of Pennsylvania. He is on the brink of a ravine, from which the only avenue lies over the body of a tree thrown across the chasm, through whose dark depths below a rushing torrent is heard to pour its waters.

"While occupied with these reflections, my eyes were fixed upon the opposite steeps. The tops of the trees, waving to and fro, in the wildest commotion, and their trunks, occasionally bending to the blast, which in these lofty regions blew with a violence unknown in the tracts below, exhibited an awful spectacle. At length my attention was attracted by the trunk which lay across the gulf, and which I had converted into a bridge. I perceived that it had already swerved somewhat from

its original position, that every blast broke or loosened some of the fibres by which its roots were connected with the opposite bank, and that, if the storm did not speedily abate, there was imminent danger of its being torn from the rock and precipitated into the chasm. Thus my retreat would be cut off, and the evils, from which I was endeavoring to rescue another, would be experienced by myself.

"I believed my destiny to hang upon the expedition with which I should recross this gulf. The moments that were spent in these deliberations were critical, and I shuddered to observe that the trunk was held in its place by one or two fibres which were already stretched almost to breaking.

"To pass along the trunk, rendered slippery by the wet, and unsteadfast by the wind, was eminently dangerous. To maintain my hold in passing, in defiance of the whirlwind, required the most vigorous exertions. For this end it was necessary to discommode myself of my cloak, and of the volume which I carried in the pocket of my cloak.

"Just as I had disposed of these encumbrances, and had arisen from my seat, my attention was again called to the opposite steep, by the most unwelcome object that at this time could possibly occur. Something was perceived moving among the bushes and rocks, which for a time I hoped was no more than a racoon or opossum; but which

presently appeared to be a panther. His gray coat, extended claws, fiery eyes, and a cry which he at that moment uttered, and which, by its resemblance to the human voice is peculiarly terrific, denoted him to be the most ferocious and untamable of that detested race. The industry of our hunters has nearly banished animals of prey from these precincts. The fastnesses of Norwalk, however, could not but afford refuge to some of them. Of late I had met them so rarely that my fears were seldom alive, and I trod without caution the ruggedest and most solitary haunts. Still, however, I had seldom been unfurnished in my rambles with the means of defence.

"The unfrequency with which I had lately encountered this foe, and the encumbrance of provision, made me neglect on this occasion to bring with me my usual arms. The beast that was now before me, when stimulated by hunger, was accustomed to assail whatever could provide him with a banquet of blood. He would set upon the man and the deer with equal and irresistible ferocity. His sagacity was equal to his strength, and he seemed able to discover when his antagonist was armed and prepared for defence.

"My past experience enabled me to estimate the full extent of my danger. He sat on the brow of the steep, eyeing the bridge, and apparently deliberating whether he should cross it. It was

probable that he had scented my footsteps thus far, and, should he pass over, his vigilance could scarcely fail of detecting my asylum.

"Should he retain his present station, my danger was scarcely lessened. To pass over in the face of a famished tiger was only to rush upon my fate. The falling of the trunk, which had lately been so anxiously deprecated, was now with no less solicitude desired. Every new gust, I hoped, would tear asunder its remaining bands, and by cutting off all communication between the opposite steeps place me in security. My hopes, however, were destined to be frustrated. The fibres of the prostrate tree were obstinately tenacious of their hold, and presently the animal scrambled down the rock and proceeded to cross it.

"Of all kinds of death that which now menaced me was the most abhorred. To die by disease, or by the hand of a fellow creature, was propitious and lenient in comparison with being rent to pieces by the fangs of this savage. To perish in this obscure retreat, by means so impervious to the anxious curiosity of my friends, to loose my portion of existence by so untoward and ignoble a destiny, was insupportable. I bitterly deplored my rashness in coming hither unprovided for an encounter like this.

"The evil of my present circumstances consisted chiefly in suspense. My death was unavoida-

ble, but my imagination had leisure to torment itself by anticipations. One foot of the savage was slowly and cautiously moved after the other. He struck his claws so deeply into the bark that they were with difficulty withdrawn. At length he leaped upon the ground. We were now separated by an interval of scarcely eight feet. To leave the spot where I crouched was impossible. Behind and beside me, the cliff rose perpendicularly, and before me was this grim and terrible visage. I shrunk still closer to the ground and closed my eyes.

"From this pause of horror I was aroused by the noise occasioned by a second spring of the animal. He leaped into the pit, in which I had so deeply regretted that I had not taken refuge, and disappeared. My rescue was so sudden, and so much beyond my belief or my hope, that I doubted for a moment whether my senses did not deceive me. This opportunity of escape was not to be neglected I left my place, and scrambled over the trunk with a precipitation which had like to have proved fatal. The tree groaned and shook under me, the wind blew with unexampled violence, and I had scarcely reached the opposite steep when the roots were severed from the rock, and the whole fell thundering to the bottom of the chasm

"My trepidations were not speedily quieted. I looked back with wonder on my hair-breadth escape, and on that singular concurrence of events, which had placed me in so short a period in absolute security. Had the trunk fallen a moment earlier, I should have been imprisoned on the hill or thrown headlong. Had its fall been delayed another moment I should have been pursued; for the beast now issued from his den, and testified his surprise and disappointment by tokens, the sight of which made my blood run cold.

"He saw me and hastened to the verge of the chasm. He squatted on his hind legs and assumed the attitude of one preparing to leap. My consternation was excited afresh by these appearances. It seemed at first as if the rift was too wide for any power of muscles to carry him in safety over; but I knew the unparalleled agility of this animal, and that his experience had made him a better judge of the practicability of this exploit than I was.

"Still there was hope that he would relinquish this design as desperate. This hope was quickly at an end. He sprung, and his fore legs touched the verge of the rock on which I stood. In spite of vehement exertions, however, the surface was too smooth and too hard to allow him to make good his hold. He fell, and a piercing cry uttered below showed that nothing had obstructed his descent to the bottom"

The subsequent narrative leads the hero through a variety of romantic adventures, especially with the savages, with whom he has several desperate rencontres and critical escapes. The track of adventure indeed strikes into the same wild solitudes of the forest, that have since been so frequently travelled over by our ingenious countryman Cooper. The light in which the character of the North American Indian has been exhibited by the two writers, has little resemblance. Brown's sketches, it is true, are few and faint. As far as they go, however, they are confined to such views as are most conformable to the popular conceptions ; bringing into full relief the rude and uncouth lineaments of the Indian character, its cunning, cruelty, and unmitigated ferocity, with no intimations of a more generous nature. Cooper, on the other hand, discards all the coarser elements of savage life, reserving those only of a picturesque and romantic cast, and elevating the souls of his warriors by such sentiments of courtesy, high-toned gallantry, and passionate tenderness, as belong to the riper period of civilization. Thus idealized, the portrait, if not strictly that of the fierce and untamed son of the forest, is at least sufficiently true for poetical purposes. Cooper is indeed a poet. His descriptions of inanimate nature, no less than of savage man, are instinct with the breath of poetry. Witness his infinitely vari-

ous pictures of the ocean; or still more, of the beautiful spirit that rides upon its bosom, the gallant ship, which under his touches becomes an animated thing, inspired by a living soul; reminding us of the beautiful superstition of the simple-hearted natives who fancied the bark of Columbus some celestial visitant, descending on his broad pinions from the skies.

Brown is far less of a colorist. He deals less in external nature, but searches the depths of the soul. He may be rather called a philosophical than a poetical writer; for, though he has that intensity of feeling which constitutes one of the distinguishing attributes of the latter, yet in his most tumultuous bursts of passion, we frequently find him pausing to analyze and coolly speculate on the elements which have raised it. This intrusion, indeed, of reason, *la raison froide*, into scenes of the greatest interest and emotion, has sometimes the unhappy effect of chilling them altogether.

In 1800, Brown published the second part of his *Arthur Mervyn*, whose occasional displays of energy and pathos by no means compensate the violent dislocations and general improbabilities of the narrative. Our author was led into these defects by the unpardonable precipitancy of his composition. Three of his romances were thrown off in the course of one year. These were written with the printer's devil literally at his elbow; one

being begun before another was completed, and all of them before a regular, well digested plan was devised for their execution.

The consequences of this curious style of doing business are such as might have been predicted. The incidents are strung together with about as little connexion as the rhymes in "The house that Jack built"; and the whole reminds us of some bizarre, antiquated edifice, exhibiting a dozen styles of architecture according to the caprice or convenience of its successive owners.

The reader is ever at a loss for a clew to guide him through the labyrinth of strange, incongruous incident. It would seem as if the great object of the author was to keep alive the state of suspense, on the player's principle, in the "Rehearsal," that "on the stage, it is best to keep the audience in suspense, for to guess presently at the plot, or the sense, tires them at the end of the first act. Now here, every line surprises you, and brings in new matter!" Perhaps, however, all this proceeds less from calculation, than from the embarrassment which the novelist feels in attempting a solution of his own riddles, and which leads him to put off the reader, by multiplying incident after incident, until at length, entangled in the complicated snarl of his own intrigue, he is finally obliged, when the fatal hour arrives, to cut the knot which he cannot unravel. There is no other way by which we can

account for the forced and violent *dénouemens* which bring up so many of Brown's fictions. Voltaire has remarked somewhere in his Commentaries on Corneille, that "an author may write with the rapidity of genius, but should correct with scrupulous deliberation." Our author seems to have thought it sufficient to comply with the first half of the maxim.

In 1801, Brown published his novel of *Clara Howard*, and, in 1804, closed the series with *Jane Talbot*, first printed in England. They are composed in a more subdued tone, discarding those startling preternatural incidents, of which he had made such free use in his former fictions. In the preface to his first romance, "Wieland," he remarks, in allusion to the mystery, on which the story is made to depend, that "it is a sufficient vindication of the writer, if history furnishes one parallel fact." But the French critic, who tells us *le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable*, has, with more judgment, condemned this vicious recurrence to extravagant and improbable incident. Truth cannot always be pleaded in vindication of the author of a fiction, any more than of a libel. Brown seems to have subsequently come into the same opinion; for in a letter addressed to his brother James, after the publication of "Edgar Huntly," he observes; "Your remarks upon the gloominess and out-of-nature incidents

of 'Huntly,' if they be not just in their full extent, are doubtless such as most readers will make, which alone is a sufficient reason for dropping the doleful tone and assuming a cheerful one, or at least substituting moral causes and daily incidents n place of the prodigious or the singular. I shall not fall hereafter into that strain." The two last novels of our author, however, although purified from the more glaring defects of the preceding, were so inferior in their general power and originality of conception, that they never rose to the same level in public favor.

In the year 1801, Brown returned to his native city, Philadelphia, where he established his residence in the family of his brother. Here he continued, steadily pursuing his literary avocations, and in 1803, undertook the conduct of a periodical, entitled *The Literary Magazine and American Register.* A great change had taken place in his opinions on more than one important topic connected with human life and happiness, and, indeed, in his general tone of thinking, since abandoning his professional career. Brighter prospects no doubt suggested to him more cheerful considerations. Instead of a mere dreamer in the world of fancy, he had now become a practical man ; larger experience and deeper meditation had shown him the emptiness of his Utopian theories ; and though his sensibilities were as ardent, and as easily en-

listed as ever in the cause of humanity, his schemes of amelioration were built upon, not against the existing institutions of society. The enunciation of the principles, on which the periodical above alluded to was to be conducted, is so honorable every way to his heart and his under standing, that we cannot refrain from making a brief extract from it.

"In an age like this, when the foundations of religion and morality have been so boldly attacked, it seems necessary, in announcing a work of this nature, to be particularly explicit as to the path which the editor means to pursue. He, therefore, avows himself to be, without equivocation or reserve, the ardent friend and the willing champion of the Christian religion. Christian piety he reveres as the highest excellence of human beings; and the amplest reward he can seek for his labor is the consciousness of having in some degree, however inconsiderable, contributed to recommend the practice of religious duties As in the conduct of this work a supreme regard will be paid to the interests of religion and morality, he will scrupulously guard against all that dishonors and impairs that principle. Every thing that savors of indelicacy or licentiousness will be rigorously proscribed. His poetical pieces may be dull, but they shall at least be free from voluptuousness or sensuality; and his prose

whether seconded or not by genius and knowledge, shall scrupulously aim at the promotion of public and private virtue."

During his abode in New York, our author had formed an attachment to an amiable and accomplished young lady, Miss Elizabeth Linn, daughter of the excellent and highly gifted Presbyterian divine, Dr. William Linn, of that city. Their mutual attachment, in which the impulses of the heart were sanctioned by the understanding, was followed by their marriage in November, 1804, after which he never again removed his residence from Philadelphia.

With the additional responsibilities of his new station, he pursued his literary labors with increased diligence. He projected the plan of an *Annual Register*, the first work of the kind in the country, and in 1806 edited the first volume of the publication, which was undertaken at the risk of an eminent bookseller of Philadelphia, Mr. Conrad, who had engaged his editorial labors in the conduct of the former Magazine, begun in 1803. When it is considered, that both these periodicals were placed under the superintendence of one individual, and that he bestowed such indefatigable attention on them, that they were not only prepared, but a large portion actually executed by his own hands, we shall form no mean opinion of the extent and variety of his

stores of information, and his facility in applying them. Both works are replete with evidences of the taste and erudition of their editor, embracing a wide range of miscellaneous articles, essays, literary criticism, and scientific researches. The historical portion of "The Register," in particular, comprehending, in addition to the political annals of the principal states of Europe and of our own country, an elaborate inquiry into the origin and organization of our domestic institutions, displays a discrimination in the selection of incidents, and a good faith and candor in the mode of discussing them, that entitle it to great authority as a record of contemporary transactions. Eight volumes were published of the first mentioned periodical, and the latter was continued under his direction till the end of the fifth volume, 1809.

In addition to these regular, and, as they may be called, professional labors, he indulged his prolific pen in various speculations, both of a literary and political character, many of which appeared in the pages of the "Port Folio." Among other occasional productions we may notice a beautiful biographical sketch of his wife's brother, Dr J. B. Linn, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, whose lamented death occurred in the year succeeding Brown's marriage. We must not leave out of the account three elaborate and extended pamphlets, published between 1803 and

1809, on political topics of deep interest to the community at that time. The first of these, on the cession of Louisiana to the French, soon went into a second edition. They all excited general attention, at the time of their appearance, by the novelty of their arguments, the variety and copiousness of their information, the liberality of their views, the independence, so rare at that day, of foreign prejudices, the exemption, still rarer, from the bitterness of party spirit; and, lastly, the tone of loyal and heartfelt patriotism,—a patriotism without cant,—with which the author dwells on the expanding glory and prosperity of his country, in a strain of prophecy, that it is our boast has now become history.

Thus occupied, Brown's situation seemed now to afford him all the means for happiness attainable in this life. His own labors secured to him an honorable independence, and a high reputation, which, to a mind devoted to professional or other intellectual pursuits, is usually of far higher estimation than gain. Round his own fireside, he found ample scope for the exercise of his affectionate sensibilities; while the tranquil pleasures of domestic life proved the best possible relaxation for a mind wearied by severe intellectual effort. His grateful heart was deeply sensible to the extent of his blessings, and in more than one letter he indulges in a vein of reflection, which

shows, that his only solicitude was from the fear of their instability. His own health furnished too well-grounded cause for such apprehensions.

We have already noticed, that he set out in life with a feeble constitution. His sedentary habits and intense application had not, as it may well be believed, contributed to repair the defects of nature. He had for some time shown a disposition to pulmonary complaints, and had raised blood more than once, which he in vain endeavored to persuade himself did not proceed from the lungs. As the real character of the disease disclosed itself in a manner not to be mistaken, his anxious friends would have persuaded him to cross the water in the hope of reëstablishing his health by a seasonable change of climate. But Brown could not endure the thoughts of so long a separation from his beloved family, and he trusted to the effect of a temporary abstinence from business, and of one of those excursions into the country, by which he had so often recruited his health and spirits.

In the summer of 1809 he made a tour into New Jersey and New York. A letter addressed to one of his family from the banks of the Hudson, during this journey, exhibits in melancholy colors how large a portion of his life had been clouded by disease, which now, indeed, was too oppressive to admit of any other alleviation than

what he could find in the bosom of his own family.

"My dearest Mary, — Instead of wandering about, and viewing more nearly a place that affords very pleasing landscapes, here am I, hovering over the images of wife, children, and sisters I want to write to you and home, and though unable to procure paper enough to form a letter, I cannot help saying something, even on this scrap.

"I am mortified to think how incurious and inactive a mind has fallen to my lot. I left home with reluctance. If I had not brought a beloved part of my home along with me, I should probably have not left it at all. At a distance from home, my enjoyments, my affections are beside you. If swayed by mere inclination, I should not be out of your company a quarter of an hour, between my parting and returning hour; but I have some mercy on you and Susan, and a due conviction of my want of power to beguile your vacant hour with amusement, or improve it by instruction. Even if I were ever so well, and if my spirits did not continually hover on the brink of dejection, my talk could only make you yawn; as things are, my company can only tend to create a gap, indeed.

"When have I known that lightness and vivacity of mind which the divine flow of health,

even in calamity, produces in some men, and would produce in me, no doubt ; at least, when not soured by misfortune ? Never ; scarcely ever ; not longer than an half-hour at a time, since I have called myself man, and not a moment since I left you."

Finding these brief excursions productive of no salutary change in his health, he at length complied with the entreaties of his friends, and determined to try the effect of a voyage to Europe in the following spring. That spring he was doomed never to behold. About the middle of November, he was taken with a violent pain in his left side, for which he was bled. From that time forwards he was confined to his chamber. His malady was not attended with the exemption from actual pain, with which nature seems sometimes willing to compensate the sufferer for the length of its duration. His sufferings were incessant and acute ; and they were supported, not only without a murmur, but with an appearance of cheerfulness, to which the hearts of his friends could but ill respond. He met the approach of death in the true spirit of Christian philosophy. No other dread, but that of separation from those dear to him on earth, had power to disturb his tranquillity for a moment. But the temper of his mind in his last hours is best disclosed in a communication from that faithful partner, who con-

tributed, more than any other, to support him through them. "He always felt for others more than for himself; and the evidences of sorrow in those around him, which could not at all times be suppressed, appeared to affect him more than his own sufferings. Whenever he spoke of the probability of a fatal termination to his disease, it was in an indirect and covered manner, as 'you must do so and so when I am absent,' or 'when I am asleep.' He surrendered not up one faculty of his soul but with his last breath. He saw death in every step of his approach, and viewed him as a messenger that brought with him no terrors. He frequently expressed his resignation; but his resignation was not produced by apathy or pain; for while he bowed with submission to the Divine will, he felt with the keenest sensibility his separation from those who made this world but too dear to him. Towards the last he spoke of death without disguise, and appeared to wish to prepare his friends for the event, which he felt to be approaching. A few days previous to his change, as sitting up in the bed, he fixed his eyes on the sky, and desired not to be spoken to until he first spoke. In this position, and with a serene countenance, he continued for some minutes, and then said to his wife, 'When I desired you not to speak to me, I had the most transporting and sublime feelings I have ever experienced;

I wanted to enjoy them and know how long they would last;' concluding with requesting her to remember the circumstance."

A visible change took place in him on the morning of the 19th of February, 1810; and he caused his family to be assembled around his bed, when he took leave of each one of them in the most tender and impressive manner. He lingered however a few days longer, remaining in the full possession of his faculties, to the 22nd of the month, when he expired without a struggle. He had reached the thirty-ninth year of his age the month preceding his death. The family, which he left, consisted of a widow and four children.

There was nothing striking in Brown's personal appearance. His manners, however, were distinguished by a gentleness and unaffected simplicity, which rendered them extremely agreeable. He possessed colloquial powers, which do not always fall to the lot of the practised and ready writer. His rich and various acquisitions supplied an unfailing fund for the edification of his hearers. They did not lead him, however, to affect an air of superiority, or to assume too prominent a part in the dialogue, especially in large or mixed company, where he was rather disposed to be silent, reserving the display of his powers for the unrestrained intercourse of friendship. He was a

stranger, not only to base and malignant passions, but to the paltry jealousies which sometimes sour the intercourse of men of letters. On the contrary, he was ever prompt to do ample justice to the merits of others. His heart was warm with the feeling of universal benevolence. Too sanguine and romantic views had exposed him to some miscalculations and consequent disappointments in youth; from which, however, he was subsequently retrieved by the strength of his understanding, which, combining with what may be called his natural elevation of soul, enabled him to settle the soundest principles for the regulation of his opinions and conduct in after-life. His reading was careless and desultory, but his appetite was voracious; and the great amount of miscellaneous information, which he thus amassed, was all demanded to supply the outpourings of his mind in a thousand channels of entertainment and instruction. His unwearied application is attested by the large amount of his works, large even for the present day, when mind seems to have caught the accelerated movement, so generally given to the operations of machinery. The whole number of Brown's printed works, comprehending his editorial as well as original productions, to the former of which his own pen contributed a very disproportionate share, is not less than four-and-twenty printed volumes, not to men-

tion various pamphlets, anonymous contributions to divers periodicals, as well as more than one compilation of laborious research, which he left unfinished at his death.

Of this vast amount of matter produced within the brief compass of little more than ten years, that portion, on which his fame as an author must permanently rest, is his novels. We have already entered too minutely into the merits of these productions, to require any thing further than a few general observations. They may probably claim to be regarded as having first opened the way to the successful cultivation of romantic fiction in this country. Great doubts were long entertained of our capabilities for immediate success in this department. We had none of the buoyant, stirring associations of a romantic age, none of the chivalrous pageantry, the feudal and border story, or Robin-Hood adventure, none of the dim, shadowy superstitions and the traditional legends, which had gathered, like moss, round every stone, hill, and valley of the olden countries. Every thing here wore a spick-and-span new aspect, and lay in the broad, garish sunshine of every-day life. We had none of the picturesque varieties of situation or costume; every thing lay on the same dull, prosaic level; in short, we had none of the most obvious elements of poetry, at least so it appeared to the vulgar eye. It required the eye

of genius to detect the rich stores of romantic and poetic interest, that lay beneath the crust of society. Brown was aware of the capabilities of our country ; and the poverty of the results he was less inclined to impute to the soil, than to the cultivation of it. At least this would appear from some remarks dropped in his correspondence in 1794, several years before he broke ground in this field himself. "It used to be a favorite maxim with me, that the genius of a poet should be sacred to the glory of his country. How far this rule can be reduced to practice by an American bard, how far he can prudently observe it, and what success has crowned the efforts of those, who in their compositions have shown that they have not been unmindful of it, is perhaps not worth the inquiry.

"Does it not appear to you, that, to give poetry a popular currency and universal reputation, a particular cast of manners and state of civilization is necessary ? I have sometimes thought so, but perhaps it is an error, and the want of popular poems argues only the demerit of those who have already written, or some defect in their works, which unfits them for every taste or understanding."

The success of our author's experiment, which was entirely devoted to American subjects, fully established the soundness of his opinions, which

have been abundantly confirmed by the prolific pens of Irving, Cooper, Sedgwick, and other accomplished writers, who in their diversified sketches of national character and scenery, have shown the full capacity of our country for all the purposes of fiction. Brown does not direct himself, like them, to the illustration of social life and character. He is little occupied with the exterior forms of society. He works in the depths of the heart, dwelling less on human action than the sources of it. He has been said to have formed himself on Godwin. Indeed, he openly avowed his admiration of that eminent writer, and has certainly in some respects adopted his mode of operation; studying character with a philosophic rather than a poetic eye. But there is no servile imitation in all this. He has borrowed the same torch, indeed, to read the page of human nature, but the lesson he derives from it is totally different. His great object seems to be to exhibit the soul in scenes of extraordinary interest. For this purpose striking and perilous situations are devised, or circumstances of strong moral excitement, a troubled conscience, partial gleams of insanity, or bodings of imaginary evil which haunt the soul, and force it into all the agonies of terror. In the midst of the fearful strife, we are coolly invited to investigate its causes and all the various phenomena which attend it; every

contingency, probability, nay possibility, however remote, is discussed and nicely balanced. The heat of the reader is seen to evaporate in this cold-blooded dissection, in which our author seems to rival Butler's hero, who,

> "Profoundly skilled in analytic,
> Could distinguish and divide
> A hair 'twixt south and southwest side."

We are constantly struck with the strange contrast of over-passion and over-reasoning. But perhaps, after all, these defects could not be pruned away from Brown's composition without detriment to his peculiar excellences. *Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus.* If so, we may willingly pardon the one for the sake of the other.

We cannot close without adverting to our author's style. He bestowed great pains on the formation of it, but in our opinion without great success, at least in his novels. It has an elaborate, factitious air, contrasting singularly with the general simplicity of his taste, and the careless rapidity of his composition. We are aware, indeed, that works of imagination may bear a higher flush of color, a poetical varnish, in short, that must be refused to graver and more studied narrative. No writer has been so felicitous in reaching the exact point of good taste in this particular as Scott, who, on a ground-work of prose, may be said to have enabled his readers to

breathe an atmosphere of poetry. More than one author, on the other hand, as Florian in French, for example, and Lady Morgan in English, in their attempts to reach this middle region, are eternally fluttering on the wing of sentiment, equally removed from good prose and good poetry.

Brown, perhaps, willing to avoid this extreme, has fallen into the opposite one, forcing his style into unnatural vigor and condensation. Unusual and pedantic epithets, and elliptical forms of expression in perpetual violation of idiom, are resorted to, at the expense of simplicity and nature. He seems averse to telling simple things in a simple way. Thus, for example, we have such expressions as these, "I was *fraught with the persuasion* that my life was endangered." "The outer door was ajar. I shut it with trembling eagerness, and drew every bolt that *appended* to it." "His brain seemed to swell beyond its *continent*." "I waited till their slow and hoarser *inspirations* showed them to be both asleep. Just then, on changing my position, my head struck against some things which *depended* from the ceiling of the closet." "It was still dark, but my sleep was at an end, and by a common apparatus [tinderbox?] that lay beside my bed, I could instantly produce a light." "On recovering from *deliquium*, you found it where it had

been dropped." It is unnecessary to multiply examples, which we should not have adverted to at all, had not our opinions in this matter been at variance with those of more than one respectable critic. This sort of language is no doubt in very bad taste. It cannot be denied, however, that, although these defects are sufficiently general to give a coloring to the whole of his composition, yet his works afford many passages of undeniable eloquence and rhetorical beauty. It must be remembered, too, that his novels were his first productions, thrown off with careless profusion, and exhibiting many of the defects of an immature mind, which longer experience and practice might have corrected. Indeed his later writings are recommended by a more correct and natural phraseology, although it must be allowed that the graver topics to which they are devoted, if they did not authorize, would at least render less conspicuous any studied formality and artifice of expression.

These verbal blemishes, combined with defects already alluded to in the developement of his plots, but which all relate to the form rather than the *fond* of his subject, have made our author less extensively popular than his extraordinary powers would otherwise have entitled him to be. His peculiar merits, indeed, appeal to a higher order of criticism than is to be found in

ordinary and superficial readers. Like the productions of Coleridge, or Wordsworth, they seem to rely on deeper sensibilities than most men possess, and tax the reasoning powers more severely than is agreeable to readers who resort to works of fiction only as an epicurean indulgence. The number of their admirers is, therefore, necessarily more limited than that of writers of less talent, who have shown more tact in accommodating themselves to the tone of popular feeling — or prejudice.

But we are unwilling to part, with any thing like a tone of disparagement lingering on our lips, with the amiable author, to whom our rising literature is under such large and various obligations; who first opened a view into the boundless fields of fiction, which subsequent adventurers have successfully explored; who has furnished so much for our instruction in the several departments of history and criticism; and has rendered still more effectual service by kindling in the bosom of the youthful scholar the same generous love of letters which glowed in his own; whose writings, in fine, have uniformly inculcated the pure and elevated morality exemplified in his life. The only thing we can regret is, that a life so useful should have been so short; if, indeed, that can be considered short, which has done so much towards attaining life's great end.

A MEMOIR OF LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON

BY

CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK

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LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON

Lucretia Maria Davidson was born at Plattsburg, in the State of New York, on the 27th of September, 1808. Her father, Dr. Oliver Davidson, is a lover of science, and a man of intellectual tastes. Her mother, Margaret Davidson (born Miller), is of a most respectable family, and received the best education her times afforded, at the school of the celebrated Scottish lady, Isabella Graham, an institution in the city of New York, that had no rival in its day, and which derived advantages from the distinguished individual that presided over it, that can scarcely be counterbalanced by the multiplied masters and multiform studies of the present day. The family of Miss Davidson lived in seclusion. Their pleasures and excitements were intellectual. Her mother has suffered year after year from ill health and debility; and, being a person of imaginative character, and of most ardent and susceptible feelings, employed on domestic incidents, and concentrated in maternal tenderness, she naturally loved and cherished her

daughter's marvellous gifts, and added to the intensity of the fire with which her genius and her affections, mingling in one holy flame, burned till they consumed their mortal investments. We should not have ventured to say thus much of the mother, who still survives to weep, and to rejoice over her dead child more than many parents over their living ones, were it not to prove that Lucretia Davidson's character was not miraculous, but that this flower of Paradise was nurtured and trained by natural means and influences.

The physical delicacy of this fragile creature was apparent in infancy. When eighteen months old, she had a typhus fever, which threatened her life; but nature put forth its mysterious energy, and she became stronger and healthier than before her illness. No records were made of her early childhood, save that she was by turns very gay and very thoughtful, exhibiting thus early these common manifestations of extreme sensibility. Her first literary acquisition indicated her after course. She learned her letters at once. At the age of four she was sent to the Plattsburg Academy, where she learned to read and to form letters in sand, after the Lancasterian method. As soon as she could read, her books drew her away from the plays of childhood, and she was constantly found absorbed in the little volumes that her father lavished upon her Her mother, on some occasion

in haste to write a letter, looked in vain for a sheet of paper. A whole quire had strangely disappeared She expressed a natural vexation. Her little girl came forward confused, and said, "Mamma, I have used it." Her mother, knowing she had never been taught to write, was amazed, and asked her what possible use she could have for it. Lucretia burst into tears, and replied that she "did not like to tell." Her mother respected the childish mystery, and made no further inquiries.

The paper continued to vanish, and the child was often observed with pen and ink, still sedulously shunning observation. At last her mother, on seeing her make a blank book, asked what she was going to do with it. Lucretia blushed, and left the room without replying. This sharpened her mother's curiosity. She watched the child narrowly, and saw that she made quantities of these little books, and that she was disturbed by observation; and, if one of the family requested to see them, she would burst into tears, and run away to hide her secret treasure.

The mystery remained unexplained till she was six years old, when her mother, in exploring a dark closet, rarely opened, found, behind piles of linen, a parcel of papers, which proved to be Lucretia's manuscript books. At first the hieroglyphics seemed to baffle investigation. On one side of the leaf was an artfully-sketched picture;

on the other Roman letters, some placed upright, others horizontally, obliquely, or backwards, not formed into words, nor spaced in any mode. Both parents pored over them till they ascertained the letters were poetical explanations, in metre and rhyme, of the picture on the reverse. The little books were carefully put away as literary curiosities. Soon after Lucretia came running to her mother, painfully agitated, her face covered with her hands, and tears trickling down between her slender fingers. "Oh mamma! mamma!" she cried, sobbing, "how could you treat me so? You have not used me well! *My little books!* You have shown them to papa, — Anne, — Eliza, I know you have. Oh, what shall I do!" Her mother pleaded guilty, and tried to soothe the child by promising not to do so again. Lucretia's face brightened, a sunny smile played through her tears, as she replied, "Oh mamma, I am not afraid you will do so again, for I have burned them all." And so she had! This reserve proceeded from nothing cold or exclusive in her character; never was there a more loving or sympathetic creature. It would be difficult to say which was most rare, her modesty or the genius it sanctified.

She did not learn to write till she was between six and seven. Her passion for knowledge was then rapidly developing. She read with the closest attention, and was continually running to her

parents with questions and remarks that startled them. At a very early age her mother implanted the seeds of religion, the first that should be sown in the virgin soil of the heart. That the dews of heaven fell upon them, is evident from the breathings of piety throughout her poetry, and still more from its precious fruit in her life. Her mother remarks, that, "from her earliest years she evinced a fear of doing any thing displeasing in the sight of God; and if, in her gayest sallies, she caught a look of disapprobation from me, she would ask with the most artless simplicity, 'Oh mother, was that wicked?'"

There are, very early, in most children's lives, certain conventional limits to their humanity, only certain forms of animal life that are respected and cherished. A robin, a butterfly, or a kitten is a legitimate object of their love and caresses; but woe to the beetle, the caterpillar, or the *rat*, that is thrown upon their tender mercies. Lucretia Davidson made no such artificial discriminations. She seemed to have an instinctive kindness for every living thing. When she was about nine, one of her schoolfellows gave her a young rat, that had broken its leg in attempting to escape from a trap. She tore off a part of her pocket handkerchief, bound up the maimed leg, carried the animal home, and nursed it tenderly. The rat, in spite of the care of its little leech, died, and

was buried in the garden, and honored with "the meed of a melodious tear." This lament has not been preserved; but one she wrote soon after on the death of a maimed pet robin, is given here as the earliest record of her muse that has been preserved.

ON THE DEATH OF MY ROBIN.

"Underneath this turf doth lie
A little bird which ne'er could fly;
Twelve large angle-worms did fill
This little bird whom they did kill.
Puss! if you should chance to smell
My little bird from his dark cell,
Oh! do be merciful, my cat,
And not serve him as you did my rat"

Her application to her studies at school was intense. Her mother judiciously, but in vain, attempted a diversion in favor of that legitimate sedative to female genius, the needle. Lucretia performed her prescribed tasks with fidelity and with amazing celerity, and was again buried in her books.

When she was about twelve, she accompanied her father to the celebration of Washington's birth-night. The music and decorations excited her imagination; but it was not with her, as with most children, the mere pleasure of stimulated sensations. She had studied the character and history of the father of her country, and the *fête* stirred up her enthusiasm, and inspired that feeling

of actual existence and presence peculiar to minds of her temperament. To the imaginative there is an extension of life, far back into the dim past, and forward into the untried future, denied to those of common mould.

The day after the *fête*, her elder sister discovered her absorbed in writing. She had sketched an urn, and written two stanzas beneath it. She was persuaded, with some difficulty, to show them to her mother. She brought them blushing and trembling. Her mother was ill in bed; but she expressed her delight with such unequivocal animation, that the child's face changed from doubt to rapture, and she seized the paper, ran away, and immediately added the concluding stanzas. When they were finished, her mother pressed her to her bosom, wept with delight, and promised her leisure, and all the instruction she could give her. The sensitive child burst into tears. "And do you *wish* me to write, mamma?" she said, "and will papa approve? and will it be *right* that I should do so?" This delicate conscientiousness gives an imperishable charm to the stanzas, and to fix it in the memory of our readers we here quote them from her published poems.

"And does a hero's dust lie here?
Columbia! gaze and drop a tear!
His country's and the orphan's friend,
See thousands o'er his ashes bend!

"Among the heroes of the age,
He was the warrior and the sage!
He left a train of glory bright,
Which never will be hid in night!

"The toils of war and danger past,
He reaps a rich reward at last;
His pure soul mounts on cherub's wings,
And now with saints and angels sings.

"The brightest on the list of Fame,
In golden letters shines his name;
Her trump shall sound it through the world,
And the striped banner ne'er be furled!

"And every sex and every age,
From lisping boy to learned sage,
The widow and her orphan son,
Revere the name of Washington."

Lucretia did not escape the common trial of precocious genius. A literary friend, to whom Mrs. Davidson showed the stanzas, suspected the child had, perhaps unconsciously, repeated something she had gathered from the mass of her reading, and she betrayed her suspicions to Lucretia. She felt her rectitude impeached, and this, and not the wounded pride of the young author, made her weep till she was actually ill. As soon as she recovered her tranquillity, she offered a poetic and playful remonstrance,* which set the matter at rest, and put an end to all future question of the authenticity of her productions.

* See the Biographical Sketch prefixed to "Amir Kkan, and other Poems," p. ix.

Before she was twelve years old, she had read the English poets. "The English poets," says Southey, in his review of Miss Davidson's poems, "though a vague term, was a wholesome course for such a mind."* She had read beside much history, sacred and profane, novels, and other works of imagination. Dramatic works were particularly attractive to her. Her devotion to Shakspeare is expressed in an address to him written about this time, from which we extract the following stanza;

"Heaven, in compassion to man's erring heart,
Gave thee of virtue, then of vice a part,
Lest we in wonder here should bow before thee,
Break God's commandment, worship and adore thee."

Ordinary romances, and even those highly wrought fictions, that without any type in nature have such a mischievous charm for most imaginative young persons, she instinctively rejected. Her healthy appetite, keen as it was, was under the government of a pure and sound nature. Her mother, always aware of the worth of the gem committed to her keeping, amidst her sufferings from ill health and other causes, kept a watchful eye on her child, directed her pursuits, and sympathized in all her little school labors and trials. She perceived that Lucretia was growing pale and sickly over her studies, and she judiciously withdrew her, for a time, from school.

* See the London Quarterly Review, No. 82.

She was soon rewarded for this wise measure by hearing her child's bounding step as she approached her sick-room, and seeing the cheek bent over her pillow, blooming with returning health. How miserably mistaken are those, who fancy that all the child's lessons must be learned from the school-book, and in the school-room! This apt pupil of Nature had only changed her books and her master. Now she sat at the feet of the great teacher, Nature, and read and listened, and thought, as she wandered along the Saranac, or contemplated the varying aspects of Cumberland Bay. She would sit for hours and watch the progress of a thunder-storm, from the first gathering of the clouds to the farewell smile of the rainbow. We give a specimen of the impression of these studies in the following extract from her unpublished poems

TWILIGHT.

"How sweet the hour when daylight blends
With the pensive shadows on evening's breast,
And dear to the heart is the pleasure it lends,
For 't is like the departure of saints to their rest.

"Oh 't is sweet, Saranac, on thy loved banks to stray,
To watch the last day-beam dance light on thy wave,
To mark the white skiff as it skims o'er the bay,
Or heedlessly bounds o'er the warrior's grave.*

* Cumberland Bay was the scene of a battle during the last war.

"Oh 't is sweet to a heart unentangled and light,
When with hope's brilliant prospects the fancy is blest,
To pause 'mid its day-dreams so witchingly bright,
And mark the last sunbeams while sinking to rest."

The following, from her unpublished poems, is the result of the same pensive meditations.

THE EVENING SPIRIT.

'When the pale moon is shining bright,
And nought disturbs the gloom of night,
'T is then upon yon level green,
From which St. Clair's dark heights are seen,
The Evening Spirit glides along,
And chants her melancholy song;
Or leans upon a snowy cloud,
And its white skirts her figure shroud.
By zephyrs light she 's wafted far,
And contemplates the northern star,
Or gazes from her silvery throne,
On that pale queen, the silent moon.
Who is the Evening Spirit fair,
That hovers o'er thy walls, St. Clair?
Who is it that with footsteps light
Breathes the calm silence of the night?
Ask the light zephyr, who conveys
Her fairy figure o'er the waves.
Ask yon bright fleecy cloud of night,
Ask yon pale planet's silver light,
Why does the Evening Spirit fair
Sail o'er the walls of dark St. Clair?"

In her thirteenth year the clouds seemed heavily gathering over her morning. Her father had suf-

fered many losses and discouragements during the war. The result of his professional labors was scarcely adequate to the wants of his family. Her mother was so ill that she could no longer extend to her child the sympathy, help, and encouragement that she needed. Lucretia was oppressed with the apprehension of losing this fond parent, who for weeks and months seemed on the verge of the grave. There are among her unpublished poems, some touching lines to her mother, written, I believe, about this time, concluding thus;

"Hang not thy harp upon the willow;
That weeps o'er every passing wave;
This life is but a restless pillow,
There 's calm and peace beyond the grave."

But far more touchingly than by the most eloquent song, did she evince her filial affection. Dr. Davidson's well-selected library, which had been, at all times, the dearest solace of his daughter, had been broken up and dispersed at the invasion of Plattsburg, and Lucretia sighed over the empty shelves. Her father met, at a friend's house, an English gentleman, who, saying he had heard much of the little girl who promised to do great honor to American literature, expressed a strong desire to see some of her productions. With difficulty her father obtained her permission to send copies of a few of them to the stranger. He returned a polite note to the father, expressing

his gratification, and enclosed a twenty-dollar note for Lucretia. Her father gave it to her, telling her to regard it as the first fruit of her poetical merit. She took the bank note and examined it with eager simplicity, and exclaiming, "Oh papa! how many books it will buy!" then, casting her eyes to the bed where her suffering mother was lying, a shade of tenderness passed over her radiant face, and she added, "Oh no, no, no! I cannot spend it; take it, papa, I do not want it, take it and buy something for mamma!" How must those parents have blessed the darkness of that adversity, on which such light from heaven shone! To them it must have been given *to see* the gracious ministry of what the world calls poverty, in nurturing those virtues that were rapidly ripening for immortality.

Mrs. Davidson's health gradually amended, and with it returned her desire to give her daughter leisure, and every other means within her power to aid the developement of her extraordinary genius. For this some blamed, and others laughed at her. The taunts of vulgar minds reached Lucretia's ears. "Was she to be made a learned lady? a reverend? or fitted for the law?" This she might have borne; but, when she heard whispers that it was her filial duty to sacrifice her literary tastes, and to bear a part of the domestic burden that weighed too heavily on her mother, she made a

secret resolution, to devote herself exclusively to the tasks thus gratuitously prescribed. She put her books aside, and her mother observed her assiduously devoted to her needle, and to household labors. Her mind languished for its daily bread. She became pale and dejected; and her vigilant mother, after much pains, extracted the reason of her change of pursuits, and persuaded her to resume her books and pen. Her cheerfulness returned, and she was again the life and charm of her home. Her extreme sensibility and delicate health subjected her, at times, to depression of spirits; but she had nothing of the morbid dejection, the exclusiveness, and hostility to the world, that are the results of self-exaggeration, selfishness, and self-idolatry, and not the natural offspring of genius and true feeling, which, in their healthy state, are pure and living fountains, flowing out in abundant streams of love and kindness.*

Indulgent as Mrs. Davidson was, she was too wise to permit Lucretia to forego entirely the customary employments of her sex. When engaged with these, it seems she sometimes played truant with her Muse. Once she had promised to do a sewing-task, and had eagerly run off for her work-

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* Genius, like many other sovereigns, has been allowed the exercise of unreasonable prerogatives; but none, perhaps much more mischievous, than the right to confer on self-indulgence the gracious name of *sensibility.*

basket. She loitered, and, when she returned, she found her mother had done the work, and that there was a shade of just displeasure on her countenance. "Oh mamma!" she said, "I did *forget*, I am grieved. I did not mean to neglect you." "Where have you been, Lucretia?" "I have been *writing*," she replied, confused. "As I passed the window, I saw a solitary sweet-pea. I thought they were all gone; this was alone; I ran to smell it; but, before I could reach it, a gust of wind broke the stem. I turned away disappointed, and was coming back to you; but, as I passed the table, there stood the inkstand, and I forgot you." If our readers will turn to her printed poems,* and read "The Last Flower of the Garden," they will not wonder that her mother kissed her, and bade her never resist a similar impulse.

When in her "happy moments," as she termed them, the impulse to write was irresistible. She always wrote rapidly, and sometimes expressed a wish that she had two pairs of hands, to record as fast as she composed. She wrote her short pieces standing, often three or four in a day, in the midst of the family, blind and deaf to all around her, wrapt in her own visions. She herself describes these visitations of her Muse, in an address to her, beginning;

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* Amir Khan and Other Poems, p. 87

"Enchanted when thy voice I hear,
I drop each earthly care;
I feel as wafted from the world
To Fancy's realms of air"

When composing her long and complicated poems, like "Amir Khan," she required entire seclusion. If her pieces were seen in the process of production, the spell was dissolved; she could not finish them, and they were cast aside as rubbish.

When writing a poem of considerable length, she retired to her own apartment, closed the blinds, and, in warm weather, placed her Æolian harp in the window. Her mother has described her, on one of these occasions, when an artist would have painted her as a young genius communing with her Muse. We quote her mother's graphic description: "I entered her room. She was sitting with scarcely light enough to discern the characters she was tracing. Her harp was in the window, touched by a breeze just sufficient to rouse the spirit of harmony. Her comb had fallen on the floor, and her long dark ringlets hung in rich profusion over her neck and shoulders, her cheek glowed with animation, her lips were half unclosed, her full, dark eye was radiant with the light of genius, and beaming with sensibility, her head rested on her left hand, while she held her pen in her right. She looked like the inhabitant of another sphere. She was so wholly absorbed,

that she did not observe my intrusion. I looked over her shoulder, and read the following lines ;

'What heavenly music strikes my ravished ear,
So soft, so melancholy, and so clear?
And do the tuneful Nine then touch the lyre,
To fill each bosom with poetic fire?
Or does some angel strike the sounding strings,
Who caught from echo the wild note he sings?
But ah! another strain, how sweet! how wild.
Now rushing low, 't is soothing, soft, and mild.'

"The noise I made in leaving the room roused her, and she soon after brought me her 'Lines to an Æolian harp.'"

During the winter of 1822 she wrote a poetical romance, entitled "Rodri." She burned this, save a few fragments found after her death. These indicate a well-contrived story, and are marked by the marvellous ease and grace that characterized her versification. During this winter she wrote also a tragedy, "The Reward of Ambition," the only production she ever read aloud to her family. The following summer, her health again failing, she was withdrawn from school, and sent on a visit to some friends in Canada. A letter, too long to be inserted here entire, gives a very interesting account of the impression produced on this little thoughtful and feeling recluse by new objects and new aspects of society. "We visited," says the writer, "the British fortifications at Isle-aux-Noix.

The broad ditch, the lofty ramparts, the draw-bridge, the covered gate-way, the wide-mouthed cannon, the arsenal, and all the imposing parapher-nalia of a military fortress, seemed connected in her mind with powerful associations of what she had read, but never viewed before. Instead of shrinking from objects associated with carnage and death, like many who possess not half her sensibil-ity, she appeared for the moment to be attended by the god of war, and drank the spirit of battles and sieges, with the bright vision before her eyes of conquering heroes and wreaths of victory."

It is curious to see thus early the effect of story and song in overcoming the instincts of nature; to see this tender, gentle creature contemplating the engines of war, not with natural dread, as instru-ments of torture and death, but rather as the forges by which triumphal cars and wreaths of victory were to be wrought.

A similar manifestation of the effect of tradition and association on her poetic imagination is de-scribed in the following passages from the same letter. "She found much less in the Protestant than in the Catholic churches to awaken those romantic and poetic associations, created by the record of events in the history of antiquity and traditional story, and much less to accord with the fictions of her high-wrought imagination. In view-ing the buildings of the city, or the paintings in the

churches, the same uniformity of taste was observable. The modern, however beautiful in design or execution, had little power to fix her attention; while the grand, the ancient, the romantic, seized upon her imagination with irresistible power. The sanctity of time seemed, to her mind, to give a sublimity to the simplest objects; and whatever was connected with great events in history, or with the lapse of ages long gone by, riveted and absorbed every faculty of her mind. During our visit to the nunneries she said but little, and seemed abstracted in thought, as if, as she herself so beautifully expresses it, to

> 'Roll back the tide of time, and raise
> The faded forms of other days.'

"She had an opportunity of viewing an elegant collection of paintings. She seemed in ecstasies all the evening, and every feature beamed with joy."

The writer, after proceeding to give an account of her surprising success in attempts at pencil-sketches from nature, expresses his delight and amazement at the attainments of this girl of fourteen years in general literature, and at the independence and originality of mind that resisted the subduing, and, if I may be allowed the expression, the subordinating effect of this early intimacy with captivating models. A marvellous resistance, if we take into the account "that timid, retiring

modesty," which, as the writer of the letter says "marked her even to a painful excess."

Lucretia returned to her mother with renovated health, and her mind bright with new impressions and joyous emotions. Religion is the natural, and only sustaining element of such a character. Where, but at the ever fresh, sweet, and life-giving fountains of the Bible, could such a spirit have drunk, and not again thirsted? During the winter of 1823, she applied herself more closely than ever to her studies. She read the Holy Scriptures with fixed attention. She almost committed to memory the Psalms of David, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the Book of Job, guided in her selection by her poetic taste. Byron somewhere pronounces the Book of Job the sublimest poetry on record. During the winter, Miss Davidson wrote "A Hymn on Creation," the "Exit from Egyptian Bondage," and versified many chapters of the Bible. She read the New Testament, and particularly those parts of it that contain the most affecting passages in the history of our Savior, with the deepest emotion.

In her intellectual pursuits and attainments only was she premature. She retained unimpaired the innocence, simplicity, and modesty of a child We have had descriptions of the extreme loveliness of her face, and gracefulness of her person, from less doubtful authority than a fond mother.

Our country towns are not regulated by the conventional systems of the cities, where a youthful beauty is warily confined to the nursery and the school, till the prescribed age for the *coming out*, the *coup-de-théatre* of every young city-woman's life, arrives. In the country, as soon as a girl can contribute to the pleasures of society, she is invited into it. During the winter of 1823, Plattsburg was gay, and Miss Davidson was eagerly sought to embellish the village dances. She had been at a dancing-school, and, like most young persons, enjoyed excessively this natural exercise; for that may be called natural which exists among all nations, barbarous and civilized. Mrs. Davidson has given a history of her daughter's *first ball*, which all young ladies at least will thank us for transcribing almost verbatim, as it places her more within the circle of their sympathies. Her mother had consented to her attending one or two public assemblies, in the hope they might diminish her extreme timidity, painful both to Lucretia and to her friends.

The day arrived; Mrs. Davidson was consulting with her eldest daughter upon the all-important matter of the dresses for the evening. Lucretia sat by, reading, without raising her eyes from the book, one of the Waverley novels. "Mamma, what shall Luly wear?" asked her elder sister, calling her by the pretty diminutive by which they

usually addressed her at home. "Come, Lucretia, what color do you wear to-night?" "Where?" "Where! why, to the assembly to be sure." "The assembly! Is it to-night? So it is!" and she tossed away the book and danced about the room, half wild with delight; her sister at length called her to order, and the momentous question respecting the dress was definitively settled. She then resumed her reading, and, giving no farther thought to the ball, she was again absorbed in her book.

This did not result from carelessness of appearance or indifference to dress. On the contrary, she was rather remarkable for that nice taste, which belongs to an eye for proportion and coloring; and any little embellishment or ornament she wore, was well chosen, and well placed. But she had that right estimate of the relative value of objects, which belongs to a superior mind. When the evening approached, the star of the ball again shone forth, she threw aside her book, and began the offices of the toilet with girlish interest, and it might be with some heart-beatings at the probable effect of the lovely face her mirror reflected. Her sister was to arrange her hair, and Lucretia put on her dressing-gown to await her convenience; but, when the time came, she was missing. "We called her in vain," says Mrs. Davidson; "at last, opening the parlor-door, I indistinctly saw, for it was twilight, some person sitting behind the great

close stove. I approached nearer, and found Lucretia writing poetry! moralizing 'on what the world calls pleasure'! I was almost dumb with amazement. She was eager to go, delighted with the prospect of pleasure before her; yet she acted as if the time were too precious to spend in the necessary preparations, and she sat still and finished the last stanza, while I stood by, mute with astonishment at this strange bearing in a girl of fourteen, preparing to attend her first ball, an event she had anticipated with so many mingled emotions." "She returned from the assembly," continues her mother, "wild with delight. 'Oh mamma,' said she, 'I wish you had been there! When I first entered, the glare of light dazzled my eyes, my head whizzed, and I felt as if I were treading on air; all was so gay, so brilliant! But I grew tired at last, and was glad to hear sister say it was time to go home.'"

The next day the ball was dismissed from her mind, and she returned to her studies with her customary ardor. During the winter she read Josephus, Charles the Fifth, Charles the Twelfth, read over Shakspeare, and various other works in prose and poetry. She particularly liked Addison, and read, almost every day, a portion of the Spectator. Her ardent love of literature seldom interfered with her social dispositions, never with her domestic affections. She was the life and joy of the home circle.

Miss Davidson's tranquillity was again interrupted by those misjudging persons, who, mistaking a woman's *first* duty for her *whole* duty, were much disturbed by this little girl's devotion to literature. Her conscience, stimulated by her affection, easily took the alarm, when they represented her mother as sinking beneath her burdens; and she again secretly resolved to abandon her beloved studies, to throw away her pen, and to devote herself exclusively to domestic occupations. She was now older, and more determined and rigorous in the execution of her resolution. But to carry it into effect, as those will easily comprehend who know the details of a country family in narrow circumstances, required strength of body as well as strength of mind. Great demands were made on her feelings about this time by two extraordinary domestic events; the marriage and removal of her elder sister, her beloved friend and companion; and the birth of another, the little Margaret, so often the fond subject of her poetry. New, and doubtless sanative, emotions were called forth by this last event. The following lines from her published poems were written about this time.

ON THE BIRTH OF A SISTER.

"Sweet babe! I cannot hope that thou 'lt be freed
From woes, to all since earliest time decreed;
But mayst thou be with resignation blessed,
To bear each evil, howsoe'er distressed.

"May Hope her anchor lend amid the storm,
And o'er the tempest rear her angel form;
May sweet Benevolence, whose words are peace,
To the rude whirlwind softly whisper 'Cease!'

"And may Religion, Heaven's own darling child,
Teach thee at human cares and griefs to smile;
Teach thee to look beyond this world of woe,
To Heaven's high fount, whence mercies ever flow.

"And when this vale of years is safely passed,
When death's dark curtain shuts the scene at last,
May thy freed spirit leave this earthly sod,
And fly to seek the bosom of thy God."

The following lines, never before published, and, as we think, marked by more originality and beauty, were written soon after, and, as those above, with her infant sister on her lap. What a subject for a painter would this beautiful impersonation of genius and love have presented!

THE SMILE OF INNOCENCE.

[Written at the age of fifteen.]

"There is a smile of bitter scorn,
Which curls the lip, which lights the eye;
There is a smile in beauty's morn
Just rising o'er the midnight sky.

"There is a smile of youthful joy,
When hope's bright star 's the transient guest;
There is a smile of placid age,
Like sunset on the billow's breast

"There is a smile, the maniac's smile,
Which lights the void which reason leaves,
And, like the sunshine through a cloud,
Throws shadows o'er the song she weaves.

"There is a smile of love, of hope,
Which shines a meteor through life's gloom
And there 's a smile, Religion's smile,
Which lights the weary to the tomb.

"There is a smile, an angel smile,
That sainted souls behind them leave ;
There is a smile, which shines through toil,
And warms the bosom, though in grief.

"And there 's a smile on nature's face,
When evening spreads her shades around ;
It is a smile which angels might
Upon their brightest lists enrol.

"It is the smile of innocence,
Of sleeping infancy's light dream;
Like lightning on a summer's eve,
It sheds a soft, a pensive gleam.

"It dances round the dimpled cheek,
And tells of happiness within ;
It smiles what it can never speak,
A human heart devoid of sin."

The three last most beautiful stanzas must have been inspired by the sleeping infant on her lap, and they seem to have reflected her soul's image, as we have seen the little inland lake catch and give back the marvellous beauty of the sunset clouds.

At this time, in pursuance of her resolution to devote herself to domestic duties, gall the harness as it might, she wrote no poetry except with her sister in her arms. Her labors were augmented by accidental circumstances. Her elder sister had removed to Canada; her mother, who was very ill, lost her monthly nurse; the infant, too, was ill. Lucretia for a while sustained her multiplied and varied cares with firmness and efficiency. The belief, that she was doing her duty, gave her strength almost preternatural. I shall quote her mother's words, for I should fear to enfeeble, by any version of my own, the beautiful example of this conscientious little being.

"Lucretia astonished us all. She took her station in my sick-room, and devoted herself wholly to the mother and child; and, when my recovery became doubtful, instead of resigning herself to grief, her exertions were redoubled, not only for the comfort of the sick, but she was an angel of consolation to her afflicted father. We were astonished at the exertions she made, and the fatigue she endured; for, with nerves so weak, a constitution so delicate, and a sensibility so exquisite, we trembled lest she should sink with anxiety and fatigue. Until it ceased to be necessary, she performed not only the duty of a nurse, but acted as superintendent of the household."

When her mother became coɪ valescent, Lu-

cretia continued her exclusive devotion to household affairs. She did not so much yield to her ruling passion as to look into a book, or take up a pen, as was to be expected from the intimate union of soul and body. When her mind was starved, it became dejected, and her body weak, and, in spite of her filial efforts, her mother detected tears on her cheeks, was alarmed by her excessive paleness, and expressed her apprehensions that she was ill. "No, mamma," she replied, "not ill, only out of spirits." Her mother then said she had observed, that of late she neither wrote nor read. She burst into tears. "Oh mamma, don't name it!" she said; "I have resigned all these things." A full explanation followed, and the generous mother succeeded in convincing her child, that she had been misguided in the course she had adopted, that the strongest wish of her heart was to advance her in her literary career, and that for this she would make every exertion and sacrifice; at the same time she very judiciously advised her to intersperse her literary pursuits with those domestic occupations so essential to prepare every woman n our land for a housewife, her probable destiny.

This conversation had a most happy effect. The stream flowed again in its natural channels, and Lucretia became cheerful, read, and wrote, and practised drawing. She had a decided taste for drawing, and excelled in it. She sung over her

work, and in every way manifested the healthy condition, that results from a wise obedience to the laws of nature.

We trust there are thousands of young ladies in our land, who, at the call of filial duty, would cheerfully perform domestic labor; but, if there are any, who would make a strong love for more elevated and refined pursuits an excuse for neglecting these coarser duties, we would commend them to the example of this conscientious child. She, if any could, might have pleaded her genius, or her delicate health, or her mother's most tender indulgence, for a failure, that, in her, would have hardly seemed to us a fault.

During this summer she went to Canada with her mother, where she revelled in an unexplored library, and enjoyed most heartily the social pleasures at her sister's. They had a family concert of music every evening. Mrs. Townsend, her sister, accompanied the instruments with her fine voice. Lucretia was often moved by the music, and particularly by her favorite song, Moore's "Farewell to my Harp." This she would have sung to her at twilight, when it would excite a shivering through her whole frame. On one occasion she became cold and pale, and was near fainting, and afterwards poured her excited feelings forth in the following address;

TO MY SISTER

"When evening spreads her shades around
And darkness fills the arch of Heaven;
When not a murmur, nor a sound
To fancy's sportive ear is given;

'When the broad orb of Heaven is bright
And looks around with golden eye;
When nature, softened by her light,
Seems calmly, solemnly to lie;

'Then, when our thoughts are raised above
This world, and all this world can give;
Oh sister, sing the song I love,
And tears of gratitude receive.

'The song which thrills my bosom's core,
And hovering, trembles, half afraid,
Oh sister, sing the song once more,
Which ne'er for mortal ear was made.

"'T were almost sacrilege to sing
Those notes amid the glare of day;
Notes borne by angel's purest wing,
And wafted by their breath away.

"When sleeping in my grass-grown bed,
Should'st thou *still* linger here above,
Wilt thou not kneel beside my head,
And, sister, sing the song I love?"

We insert here a striking circumstance that occurred during a visit she made to her sister the following year. She was at that time employed

in writing her longest published poem, "Amir Khan." Immediately after breakfast she went out to walk, and, not returning to dinner, nor even when the evening approached, Mr. Townsend set forth in search of her. He met her, and, as her eye encountered his, she smiled and blushed, as if she felt conscious of having been a little ridiculous. She said she had called on a friend, and, having found her absent, had gone to her library, where she had been examining some volumes of an Encyclopædia, to aid her, we believe, in the Oriental story she was employed upon. She forgot her dinner and her tea, and had remained reading, standing, and with her hat on, till the disappearance of daylight brought her to her senses.

In the interval between her visits, she wrote several letters to her friends, which are chiefly interesting from the indications they afford of her social and affectionate spirit. We subjoin a few extracts. She had returned to Plattsburg amid the bustle of a Fourth of July celebration. "We found," she says, "our brother Yankees had turned out well to celebrate the Fourth. The wharf from the hill to the very edge of the water, even the rafts and sloops, were black with the crowd. If some very good genius, who presided over my destiny at that time, had not spread its protecting pinions round me, like every thing else in my possession, I should have lost even my

precious self. What a truly lamentable accident it would have been just at that moment! We took a carriage, and were extricating ourselves from the crowd, when Mr. ——, who had pressed himself through, came to shake hands, and bid good bye. He is now on his way to ——. Well! here is health, happiness, and 'a bushel of love' to all *married* people! Is it possible, you ask, that Sister Lue could ever have permitted such a toast to pass her lips? We arrived safely at our good old house, and found every thing as we had left it. The chimney swallows had taken up their residence in the chimney, and rattled the soot from their sable habitations over the hearth and carpet. It looked like desolation indeed. The grass is high in the door-yard; the wild-roses, double-roses, and sweet-briar are in full bloom, and, take it all in all, the spot looks much as the garden of Eden did after the expulsion of Adam and Eve.

"We had just done tea when M—— came in, and sat an hour or two. What, in the name of wonder, could he have found to talk about all that time? Something, dear sister, you would not have thought of; something of so little consequence, that the time he spent glided swiftly, almost unnoticed. I had him all to myself, *tête-à-tête*.

"I had almost forgotten to tell you I had yesterday a present of a most beautiful bouquet. I

wore it to church in the afternoon; but it has withered and faded,

> 'Withered like the world's treasures,
> Faded like the world's pleasures.'"

From the sort of mystical, girl-like allusions in the above extracts, to persons whose initials only are given, to bouquets and *tête-à-têtes*, we infer that she thus early had declared lovers. Even at this age, for she was not yet sixteen, her mother says she had resolved never to marry. "Her reasons," continues her mother, "for this decision, were, that her peculiar habits, her entire devotion to books and scribbling (as she called it), unfitted her for the care of a family. She could not do justice to husband or children while her whole soul was absorbed in literary pursuits; she was not willing to resign them for any man, therefore she had formed the resolution to lead a single life;" a resolution that would have lasted probably till she had passed under the dominion of a stronger passion than her love for the Muses. With affections like hers, and a most lovely person and attractive manners, her resolution would scarcely have enabled her to escape the common destiny of her sex.

The following is an extract from a letter written after participating in several gay parties;

"Indeed my dear father, I have turned round

like a top for the last two or three weeks, and am glad to seat myself once more in my favorite corner. How, think you, should I stand it to be whirled in the giddy round of dissipation? I come home from the blaze of light, from the laugh of mirth, the smile of complaisance and seeming happiness, and the vision passes from my mind like the brilliant, but transitory hues of the rainbow; and I think with regret on the many, very many happy hours I have passed with you and Anne. Oh, I do want to see you, indeed I do. You think me wild, thoughtless, and perhaps unfeeling; but I assure you I can be sober, I *sometimes* think, and I *can* and *do* feel. Why have you not written? Not one word in almost three weeks! Where are your promises of punctual correspondence? Mamma feels almost distracted. 'They have forgotten me!' she said to-day when the boat arrived and brought no letter, and burst into tears. Oh, do write."

"Dear brother and sister, I must write; but, dear Anne, I am now doomed to dim your eye and cloud your brow, for I know, that what I have to communicate will surprise and distress you. Our dear, dear cousin John is dead! Oh, I need not tell you how much, how deeply he is lamented. You knew him, and, like every one else who did, you loved him. Poor Eliza! how my heart aches for her! her father, her mother, her brother, all

gone, almost the last, the dearest tie is broken which bound her to life. What a vacancy must there be in her heart. How fatal would it prove to almost every hope in life, were we allowed even a momentary glimpse of futurity ! for often has the enjoyments of life consist in the anticipation of pleasures, which may never be ours."

Soon after this, Lucretia witnessed the death of a beloved young friend. It was the first death she had seen, and it had its natural effect on a reflecting and sensitive mind. Her thoughts wandered through eternity by the light of religion, the only light that penetrates beyond the death-bed. She wrote many religious pieces ; but, as I hope another volume of her poems will be given to the public, I have merely selected the following.

"Oh that the eagle's wing were mine,
I 'd soar above the dreary earth ;
I 'd spread my wings, and rise to join
The immortal fountain of my birth.

"For what is joy ? How soon it fades,
The childish vision of an hour !
Though warm and brilliant are its shades,
'T is but a frail and fading flower.

"And what is hope ? It is a light
Which leads us on, deluding ever,
Till lost amid the shades of night
We sink, and then it flies for ever.

'And what is love? It is a dream,
A brilliant fable framed by youth;
A bubble dancing on life's stream,
And sinking 'neath the eye of truth.

"And what are honor, glory, fame,
But death's dark watch-words to the grave?
The victim dies, and lo! his name
Is stamped in life's red-rolling wave.

"And what are all the joys of life,
But vanity, and toil, and woe?
What but a bitter cup of grief,
With dregs of sin and death below?

"This world is but the first dark gate
Unfolded to the wakening soul;
But Death unerring, led by Fate,
Shall Heaven's bright portals backward roll.

"Then shall this unchained spirit fly
On, to the God who gave it life;
Rejoicing, as it soars on high,
Released from danger, doubt, and strife

"There will it pour its anthems forth,
Bending before its Maker's throne,
The great I AM, who gave it birth,
The Almighty God, the dread Unknown."

During this winter her application to her books was so unremitting, that her parents again became alarmed for her health, and persuaded her occasionally to join in the amusements of Plattsburg. She came home one night at twelve o'clock from

a ball; and, after giving a most lively account of all she had seen and heard to her mother, who, as usual, had been sitting up for her, she quietly seated herself at the table, and wrote her "Reflections after leaving a Ball-room." Her spirit, though it glided with kind sympathies into the common pleasures of youth, never seemed to relax its tie to the spiritual world.

During the summer of 1824, Captain Partridge visited Plattsburg with his soldier-scholars. Military display had its usual exciting effect on Miss Davidson's imagination, and she addressed "To the Vermont Cadets" the following spirited stanzas, which might have come from the martial Clorinda.

"Pass on! for the bright torch of glory is beaming;
Go, wreathe round your brows the green laurels of fame;
Around you a halo is brilliantly streaming,
And history lingers to write down each name.

"Yes; ye are the pillars of Liberty's throne;
When around you the banner of glory shall wave,
America proudly shall claim you her own;
And Freedom and Honor shall pause o'er each grave.

"A watch-fire of glory, a beacon of light,
Shall guide you to honor, shall point you to fame;
The heart that shrinks back, be it buried in night,
And withered with dim tears of sorrow and shame.

"Though death should await you, 't were glorious to die
With the glow of pure honor still warm on the brow;
With a light sparkling brightly around the dim eye,
Like the smile of a spirit still lingering below.

"Pass on! and when War in his strength shall arise,
Rush on to the conflict, and conquer or die;
Let the clash of your arms proudly roll to the skies
Be blest, if victorious, — and cursed, if you fly!"

It was about this time that she finished "Amir Khan," and began a tale of some length, which she entitled "The Recluse of the Saranac." Amir Khan has long been before the public, but we think it has suffered from a general and very natural distrust of precocious genius. The versification is graceful, the story beautifully developed, and the Orientalism well sustained. We think it would not have done discredit to our best popular poets in the meridian of their fame. As the production of a secluded girl of fifteen, it seems *prodigious*. On her mother accidentally discovering and reading a part of her romance, Lucretia manifested her usual shrinkings, and with many tears exacted a promise that she would not again look at it till it was finished. She never again saw it till after her daughter's death. Lucretia had a most whimsical fancy for pasting narrow slips of paper together, and writing on both sides; and once playfully boasting to her mother of having written some *yards* of poetry, she produced

a roll, and, forbidding her approach, she measured off twenty yards!

She continued her favorite employments, but now with a secret disquietude that did not escape Mrs. Davidson's vigilant eye. She claimed her child's unqualified confidence, and Lucretia, laying her head on her mother's bosom, and weeping bitterly, confessed her irrepressible longings for more effective means and helps to pursue her studies. "Dear mamma," she said, "had I but half the advantages which I see others slighting, I should be the happiest of the happy. I am now sixteen years old, and what do I know? Nothing! nothing, indeed, compared with what I have yet to learn. The time is rapidly passing, allotted to the improvement of youth, and how dark are my prospects in regard to the favorite wish of my heart!" Her mother, instead of remonstrating, wept with her, and her sympathy was more efficacious than the most elaborate reasoning upon the futility and extravagance of her child's desires. "She became more cheerful," says her mother, "though it was still apparent that her heart was ill at ease."

She often expressed a wish to spend one fortnight alone, even to the exclusion of her little pet sister; and Mrs. Davidson, eager to afford her every gratification in her power, had a room prepared for her recess. Her dinner was sent up to

her. She declined coming down to tea, and her mother, on going to her apartment, found her writing, her plate untouched. Some secret joy it was natural the mother should feel at this devotion to intellectual pleasure; but her good sense, or her maternal anxiety, got the better of it, and she persuaded Lucretia to consent to the interruption of a daily walk. It was during one of these walks, that she was first seen by the gentleman who was destined to govern the brief space of life that remained to her. His benevolent mind had been interested by the reputation of her genius and loveliness, and no wonder that the beautiful form in which it was enshrined should have called this interest into sudden and effective action. Miss Davidson was just sixteen. Her complexion was the most beautiful brunette, clear and brilliant, of that warm tint that seems to belong to lands of the sun rather than to our chilled regions. Indeed, her whole organization, mental as well as physical, her deep and quick sensibility, her early developement, were characteristics of a warmer clime than ours. Her stature was low, her form slight and symmetrical, her hair profuse, dark, and curling, her mouth and nose regular, and as beautiful as if they had been chiselled by an inspired artist; and through this fitting medium beamed her angelic spirit.

The gentleman, to whom we have alluded, at

once determined to give to this rich gem whatever polishing could be given by adventitious circumstances. He went to her father's house, offered to take her under his protection, and to give her every facility for education that could be obtained in this country. Some conversation ensued, as to different institutions for education, and Mrs. Willard's celebrated school at Troy was decided on. "You do not know, Sir," says her mother, in a letter to Lucretia's patron, written long after, "the gratitude, the depth of feeling, which your disinterested conduct excited in our lamented child. She had left the room when you went away; I followed her. She had thrown herself into a chair. Her face was as pale as death; I took her hands in mine; they were as cold as marble. I spoke, she made no reply, and I discovered she had fainted! After the application of suitable remedies, she began to recover," continues her mother, "and burst into tears, and wept long and violently. When she was sufficiently composed, I asked her if she was willing to accept your generous offer. 'Oh yes, mamma! oh yes! but my feelings overpower me.'"

On the same evening she wrote the following letter to her brother and sister.

"What think you? 'Ere another moon shall fill round as my shield,' I shall be at Mrs. Willard's Seminary. A kind and generous friend has invited, yes, urged me, to accept an offer so

every way advantageous to myself; and his benevolent offer has been accepted. In a fortnight I shall probably have left Plattsburg, not to return at least until the expiration of six months. Oh! I am so happy! so delighted! I shall scarcely eat, drink, or sleep for a month to come. You and Anne must both write to me often, and you must not laugh when you think of poor Luly in the far-famed city of Troy, dropping handkerchiefs, keys, gloves, &c., in short, something of every thing I have. It is well if you can read what I have written, for papa and mamma are talking, and my head whirls like a top. Oh! how my poor head aches! Such a surprise as I have had!"

On the 24th of November, 1824, she left home, health on her cheek and in her bosom, and flushed with the most ardent expectations of getting rapidly forward in the career her desires were fixed upon. But even at this moment her fond devotion to her mother was beautifully expressed in some stanzas, which she left where they would meet her eye as soon as the parting tears were wiped away. These stanzas are already published, and I shall only quote two from them, striking for their tenderness and truth.

"To thee my lay is due, the simple song
  Which nature gave me at life's opening day,
To thee these rude, these untaught strains belong,
  Whose heart, indulgent, will not spurn my lay.

Oh say, amid this wilderness of life,
What bosom would have throbbed like thine for me?
Who would have smiled responsive? Who in grief
Would e'er have felt, and feeling grieved like thee?"

The following extracts from her letters, which were always filled with yearnings for home, will show that her affections were the strong-hold of her nature.

"*Troy Seminary, December 6th*, 1824. Here I am at last; and what a naughty girl I was, when I was at Aunt Schuyler's, that I did not write you every thing! But to tell the truth, I was topsy turvy, and so I am now; but, in despite of calls from the young ladies, and of a hundred new faces, and new names which are constantly ringing in my ears, I have set myself down, and will not rise until I have written an account of every thing to my dear mother. I am contented; yet, notwithstanding, I have once or twice turned a wishful glance towards my dear-loved home. Amidst all the parade of wealth, in the splendid apartments of luxury, I can assure you, my dearest mother, that I had rather be with you *in our own lowly home*, than in the midst of all this ceremony."

"Oh, mamma, I like Mrs. Willard. 'And so this is my girl, Mrs. Schuyler?' said she, and took me affectionately by the hand. Oh, I want to see you so much! But I must not think of it now. I must learn as fast as I can, and think only of my

studies. Dear, dear little Margaret! kiss her and the little boys for me. How is dear father getting on in this rattling world?"

The letters that followed were tinged with melancholy from her "bosom's depth," and her mother has withheld them. In a subsequent one she says, "I have written two long letters; but I wrote when I was ill, and they savor too much of sadness. I feel a little better now, and have again commenced my studies. Mr. ——* called here to-day. Oh, he is very good! He stayed some time, and brought a great many books; but I fear I shall have little time to read aught but what appertains to my studies. I am consulting Kames's 'Elements of Criticism,' studying French, attending to Geological lectures, composition, reading, paying some little attention to painting, and learning to dance."

A subsequent letter indicated great unhappiness and debility, and awakened her mother's apprehensions. The next was written more cheerfully. "As I fly to you," she says, "for consolation in all my sorrows, so I turn to you, my dear mother, to participate all my joys. The clouds that envel-

* This hiatus should be filled with the name of her benefactor; but, as his patronage was marked with the delicacy that characterizes true generosity, I cannot, without his expressed permission, publish his name. The world's praise could be little to him, who enjoyed the gratitude of this young earthly angel.

oped my mind have dispersed, and I turn to you with a far lighter heart than when I last wrote. The ever kind Mr. —— called yesterday." She then describes the paternal interest her benefactor took in her health and happiness, expresses a trembling apprehension lest he should be disappointed in the amount of her improvement, and laments the loss of time from her frequent indispositions. "How, my dear mother," she says, "shall I express my gratitude to my kind, my excellent friend? What is felt as deeply as I feel this obligation, *cannot* be expressed; but I can feel, and *do* feel." It must be remembered that these were not formal and obligatory letters to her benefactor, but the spontaneous overflowing of her heart in her private correspondence with her mother.

We now come to a topic, to which we would ask the particular attention of our readers. Owing to many causes, but chiefly, we believe, to the demand for operatives in every department of society in our country, the work of *school* education is crowded into a very few years. The studies, instead of being selected, spread through the whole circle of the sciences. The school period is the period of the young animal's physical growth and developement; the period when the demands of the physical nature are strongest, and the mental weakest. Then our young men

are immured in colleges, law schools, divinity schools, &c., and our young ladies in boarding-schools, where, even in the best regulated, the provisions for exercise in the open air are very insufficient. In the city schools, we are aware, that the difficulties to be overcome to achieve this great object are nearly insuperable, we believe quite so; and, if they are so, should not these establishments be placed in the country? Are not health and physical vigor the basis of mental health and vigor, of usefulness and happiness? What a proportion of the miseries of the more favored classes of our females result from their *invalidism!* What feebleness of purpose, weakness of execution, dejection, fretfulness, mental and moral imbecility!

The case would not be so bad, if the misery ended with one generation, with the mother, cut off in the midst of her days, or dragging on, to threescore and ten, her unenjoyed and profitless existence. But that it is not so, there are hosts of living witnesses in the sickly, pale, drooping children of our nurseries. There are multitudes who tell us, that our climate will not permit a delicate female to exercise in the open air. If the climate is bad, so much the more important is it to acquire strength to resist it. Besides, if out-of-doors exercise is not at all times attractive, we know it is not impossible. We *know* delicately

bred females, who, during some of our hardest winters, have not for more than a day or two lost their exercise abroad. When, in addition to the privation of pleasurable exercise, (for the walk in funeral procession, attended by martinets, and skewered by city decorums, can scarcely be called *pleasurable*,) the school girl is confined to her tasks from eight to ten hours in rooms sometimes too cold, sometimes too hot, where her fellow sufferers are *en masse*, can we wonder at the result?

How far this evil may have operated in shortening the life of Lucretia Davidson, we cannot say; but we cannot but think, that her devoted and watchful friend erred in sending a creature so delicate in her construction to any boarding-school, even the best-conducted institution. We certainly do not mean to express or imply any censure of the "Troy Seminary." We have no personal knowledge of it; but we believe no similar institution has more the confidence of the community; and, as it has been now many years established and tried, it is fair to believe it deserves it.

An arrangement of these boarding-schools, that bore very hard upon Miss Davidson, was the public examination.* These examinations are

* I did not intend remarking upon the influence these examinations have on the scholar's progress; but I cannot forbear quoting the following pertinent passage from President Hopkins's Inaugural Address. "There are

appalling to a sensitive mind. Could they be proved to be of manifest advantage to the scholarship of the young ladies, we should doubt their utility on the whole. But, even where they are conducted with perfect fairness, are they a test of scholarship? Do not the bold outface, and the indolent evade them? The studious are stimulated, and the sensitive and shrinking, if stimulated, are appalled and disconcerted by them; so that the condiment affects those only, whose appetites are already too keen.

But the experience of Miss Davidson is more persuasive than any reasoning of ours, and we shall give it in her own language, in occasional extracts from her letters to her mother.

"We now begin to dread the examination. Oh, horrible! seven weeks, and I shall be posted up before all Troy, all the students from Schenectady, and perhaps five hundred others. What shall I do?"

"I have just received a note from Mr. ——, in which he speaks of your having written to him of my illness. I was indeed ill, and very ill for

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not wanting schools in this country, in which the real interests and progress of the pupils are sacrificed to their appearance at examination. But the vanity of parents must be flattered, and the memory is overburdened, and studies are forced on prematurely, and a system of infant-school instruction is carried forward into maturer life."

several days, and in my deepest dejection wrote to you; but do not, my dearest mother, be alarmed about me. My appetite is not perfectly good, but quite as well as when I was at home. Mr. ——'s letter was accompanied by a French Testament. The letter was just such a one as was calculated to soothe my feelings, and set me completely at rest, and I begin to think he is truly my 'guardian angel.' He expressed a wish that my stay here should be prolonged. What think you, mother? I should be delighted by such an arrangement. This place really seems quite like a home to me, though not *my own dear home.* I like Mrs. Willard, I love the girls, and I have the vanity to think I am not actually disagreeable to them."

We come now to another expression (partly serious, and partly bantering, for she seems to have uniformly respected her instructress) of her terrors of "examination."

"We are all engaged, heart and hand, preparing for this awful examination. Oh, how I dread it! But there is no retreat. I must stand firm to my post, or experience all the anger, vengeance, and punishment, which will, in case of delinquency or flight, be exercised with the most unforgiving acrimony. We are in such cases excommunicated, henceforth and for ever, under the awful ban of holy Seminary; and the evil eye of false report

is upon us. Oh mamma, I do though, jesting apart, dread this examination; but nothing short of real and absolute sickness can excuse a scholar in the eyes of Mrs. Willard. Even that will not do it to the Trojan world around us; for, if a young lady is ill at examination, they say with a sneer, 'Oh, she is ill of an examination fever!' Thus you see, mamma, we have no mercy either from friends or foes. We must '*do or die*.' Tell Morris he must write to me. Kiss dear, dear little Margaret for me, and don't let her forget *poor sister Luly*, and tell all who inquire for me that I am well, but in awful dread of a great examination."

The following extract is from a letter to her friends, who had written under the impression, that all letters received by the young ladies were, of course, read by some one of the officers of the institution.

"Lo! just as I was descending from the third story, (for you must know I hold my head high,) your letter was put into my hands. Poor little wanderer! I really felt a sisterly compassion for the poor little folded paper. I kissed it for the sake of those who sent it forth into the wide world, and put it into my bosom. But oh, when I read it! Now, Anne, I will tell you the truth; it was cold, perhaps it was written on one of your cold Canada days, or perchance it lost a little heat on

the way. It did not seem to come from the very heart of hearts; it looked as though it were written 'to a young lady at the Troy Seminary,' not to your dear, dear, *dear sister Luly*. Mr. —— has thus far been a father to me, and I thank him; but I will not mock my feelings by attempting to say how much I thank him. I can never do them justice. What inducement can he have to do what he is now doing? I know of none. Personal merit on my part is out of the question. His heart is naturally benevolent; he wishes to do good; he saw me, and by some unaccountable means I am where I am. The *Father* of those, who are in adversity struggling against despair, undoubtedly should receive my heart-felt thanks and praises as the original, the moving cause of all these blessings; and I hope they are as mercifully received as they are sincerely given."

"My dear mother! oh how I wish I could lay my head upon your bosom! I hope you do not keep my letters, for I certainly have burned all yours,* and I stood like a little fool and wept over their ashes, and, when I saw the last one gone, I felt as though I had parted with my last friend." Then, after expressing an earnest wish that her mother would destroy her letters, she says, "They have no connexion. When I

* This was in consequence of a positive command from her mother.

write, every thing comes crowding upon me at once; my pen moves too slow for my brain and my heart, and I feel vexed at myself, and tumble in every thing together, and a choice medley you have of it."

"I attended Mr. Ball's public [assembly] last night, and had a delightful evening; but now for something of more importance, *Ex-am-i-na-tion!* I had just begun to be engaged, heart and hand, preparing for it, when, by some means, I took a violent cold. I was unable to raise my voice above a whisper, and coughed incessantly. On the second day Mrs. Willard sent for Dr. Robbins; he said I must be bled, and take an emetic; this was sad; but, oh mamma, I could not speak nor breathe without pain." There are farther details of pains, remedies, and consequent exhaustion; and yet this fragile and precious creature was permitted by her physician and friends, kind and watchful friends too, to proceed in her suicidal preparations for examination! There was nothing uncommon in this injudiciousness. Such violations of the laws of our physical nature are every day committed by persons, in other respects, the wisest and the best, and our poor little martyr may not have suffered in vain, if her experience awakens attention to the subject.

In the letter, from which we have quoted above, and which is filled with expressions of love for the

dear ones at home, she thus continues; "Tell Morris I will answer his letter in full next quarter; but now I fear I am doing wrong, for I am yet quite feeble, and when I get stronger I shall be very avaricious of my time, in order to prepare for the coming week. We must study morning, noon, and night. *I shall rise between two and four now every morning, till the dreaded day is past.* I rose the other night at twelve, but was ordered back to bed again. You see, mamma, I shall have a chance to become an early riser here." "Had I not written you that I was coming home, I think I should not have seen you this winter. All my friends think I had better remain here, as the journey will be long and cold; but oh! there is that at the journey's end, which would tempt me through the wilds of Siberia, — father, mother, brothers, sister, *home*. Yes, I shall come."

We insert some stanzas, written about this time, not so much for their poetical merit, as for the playful spirit that beams through them, and which seems like sunbeams smiling on a cataract.

A WEEK BEFORE EXAMINATION.

"One has a headache, one a cold,
One has her neck in flannel rolled;
Ask the complaint, and you are told,
'Next week 's examination.'

"One frets and scolds, and laughs and cries,
Another hopes, despairs, and sighs;
Ask but the cause, and each replies,
'Next week 's examination.'

"One bans her books, then grasps them tight,
And studies morning, noon, and night,
As though she took some strange delight
In these examinations.

"The books are marked, defaced, and thumbed,
The brains with midnight tasks benumbed,
Still all in that account is summed,
'Next week's examination!'"

In a letter of February 10th, she says, "The dreaded work of examination is now going on, my dear mother. To-morrow evening, which will be the last, and is always the most crowded, is the time fixed upon for my *entrée* upon the field of action. Oh! I hope I shall not disgrace myself. It is a rule here to reserve the best classes till the last; so I suppose I may take it as a compliment that we are delayed."

"*February 12th.* The examination is over. E—— E—— did herself and her native village honor; but as for your poor Luly, she acquitted herself, I trust, decently. Oh! mamma, I was so frightened! but, although my face glowed and my voice trembled, I did make out to get through, for I knew my lessons. The room was crowded almost to suffocation. All was still, the fall of a pin could have been heard, and I tremble when I think of it even now." No one can read these melancholy records without emotion.

Her visit home during the vacation was given up, in compliance with the advice of her guardian

"I wept a good long hour or so," she says, with her characteristic gentle acquiescence, "and then made up my mind to be content."

In her next letter she relates an incident very striking in her uneventful life. It occurred in returning to Troy, after her vacation, passed happily with her friends in the vicinity. "Uncle went to the ferry with me," she says, "where we met Mr. Paris. Uncle placed me under his care and, snugly seated by his side, I expected a very pleasant ride, with a very pleasant gentleman. All was pleasant, except that we expected every instant that all the ice in the Hudson would come drifting against us, and shut in scow, stage, and all, or sink us to the bottom, which, in either case, you know, mother, would not have been quite so agreeable. We had just pushed from the shore, I watching the ice with anxious eyes, when, lo! the two leaders made a tremendous plunge, and tumbled headlong into the river. I felt the carriage following fast after; the other two horses pulled back with all their power, but the leaders were dragging them down, dashing and plunging, and flouncing in the water. 'Mr. Paris, in mercy let us get out!' said I. But, as he did not see the horses, he felt no alarm. The moment I informed him they were overboard, he opened the door and cried, 'Get out and save yourself, if possible; I am old and stiff, but I will follow in an instant

'Out with the lady! let the lady out!' shouted several voices at once; 'the other horses are about to plunge, and then all will be over.' I made a lighter spring than many a lady does in a cotillon, and jumped upon a cake of ice. Mr. Paris followed, and we stood, (I trembling like a leaf,) expecting every instant that the next plunge of the drowning horses would detach the piece of ice upon which we were standing, and send us adrift; but, thank Heaven, after working for ten or fifteen minutes, by dint of ropes and cutting them away from the other horses, they dragged the poor creatures out more dead than alive.

"Mother, don't you think I displayed some courage? I jumped into the stage again, and shut the door, while Mr. Paris remained outside, watching the movement of affairs. We at length reached here, and I am alive, as you see, to tell the story of my woes."

In her next letter she details a conversation with Mrs. Willard, full of kind commendation and good counsel. "Mamma," she concludes, "you would be justified in thinking me a perfect lump of vanity and egotism; but I have always related to you every thought, every action, of my life. I have had no concealments from you, and I have stated these matters to you because they fill me with surprise. Who would think the accomplished Mrs. Willard would admire my poor daubing, or

my poor any thing else! Oh, dear mamma, I am so happy now! so contented! Every unusual movement startles me, I am constantly afraid of something to mar it." *

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* This letter manifests strikingly, what all her letters indicate, her entire unconsciousness of superiority, her freedom from vanity, or any approach even to self-complacency. I insert here some extracts from a very interesting letter from Mrs. Willard, with which I was favored too late to incorporate it in the narrative.

"Though you have doubtless more exact descriptions of Miss Davidson, than I shall be able, after the lapse of so many years, to afford, yet I will give you truly my impressions concerning her. They may be of some value, as they are formed with the advantage of extensive comparison with those of her own age, known under similar circumstances.

"Miss Davidson was scarcely of a middling height, delicately formed, with regular features, a fine roseate bloom, bright, round black eyes, and dark brown hair, which flowed in fine curls about her face. She had all the elements of personal beauty; yet she was so excessively shy, that many a girl, less perfectly endowed in that respect, would be sooner noticed by a stranger. Her fine eyes, especially in the presence of those with whom she was not familiar, would be bent downwards; and there was a certain shrinking of her person, as if she would fain make herself so little as not to be seen.

"From the same excessive timidity she would, under the same circumstances, shrink her mind as well as her person; not conversing fluently, or bringing out in speech those flashes of fancy, and that delicacy of sentiment, which marked her written compositions. Hence her

The next extract is from a letter, the emanation of her affectionate spirit, to a favorite brother seven years old.

"Dear L——, I am obliged to you for your two very interesting epistles, and much doubt whether I could spell more ingeniously myself. Really, I have some idea of sending them to the printer's, to be struck off in imitation of a Chinese puzzle. Your questions about the stars I have been cogitating upon for some time past, and am of the

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teachers did not find her recitations brilliant, although well satisfied that she understood her author. There was also a degree of irregularity in her performances, her mind operating at different times with different de grees of force. I recollect that she was a fine scholar in Kames's 'Elements of Criticism.' She was studying that work at the same time with Paley's 'Moral Philosophy.' Her companions found Paley a much easier author to understand. This surprised Miss Davidson, who found Kames much less difficult, because, she said, the work was more connected. It was in truth more connected with her internal sensibilities. The 'ideal presence' of Kames was more congenial to her, than the 'general consequences' of Paley. She loved better to dwell in the high regions of imagination and taste, than in the lower but more extensive world of common things.

"However it might be with her recitations, she soon became distinguished in school by her compositions. My sister, Mrs. Lincoln (now Mrs. Phelps), superintended the class in that branch of which Miss Davidson was a member. I well remember the high satisfaction with

opinion, that, if there are beings inhabiting those heavenly regions, they must be content to feed, cameleon-like, upon air; for, even were we disposed to spare them a portion of our earth sufficient to plant a garden, I doubt whether the attraction of gravitation would not be too strong for resistance, and the unwilling clod return to its pale brethren of the valley, 'to rest in ease inglorious.' So far from burning your precious letters, my dear little brother, I carefully preserve them in a little pocket-book, and when I feel lonely and desolate, and

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which she came to show me one of her first school productions, the subject of which was 'The Discovery of America.' But in nothing, not even in poetry, of which some of her finest pieces were written here, did she evince the superiority of her genius, more than in drawing and painting; and I am convinced that she wanted nothing but practice, with some good instruction, to have painted in a style as elegant, and as peculiarly her own, as were her finest literary productions. In several respects she would improve upon the copies given her. She not only seemed to seize the artist's idea, and to know exactly what effect he wished to produce; but she brought out from her own imagination more picturesque forms, and sometimes fine touches which were quite original. I speak of Miss Davidson's painting, not in comparison with those of the practised artist, but with those of other school-girls, and of the many who have been under my instruction.

"I do not now recollect one, of whose native genius I had so high an opinion; although we have had many who, in consequence of much more practice and instruc

think of my dear home, I turn them over and over again. Do write often, my sweet little correspondent, and believe me," &c. &c.

Her next letter to her mother, written in March, was in a melancholy strain; but, as if to avert her parent's consequent anxieties, she concludes,

"I hope you will feel no concern for my health or happiness; for, save the thought of my dear mother and her lonely life, and the idea that my dear father is vainly spending his time and talents in fruitless exertions for his helpless family, save

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tion, have made better performances. The native uneducated poet brings forth the inspirations of his genius in words. These he uses from his infancy, and, though his stock may be comparatively small, yet of this stock he may perfectly apprehend the meaning and use. Not so with the uninstructed genius in painting. However delightful and original the forms with which his imagination may be stored, he must *learn* the medium of lines and shades and colors, before he can develope them to others. Miss Davidson, I am persuaded, had but to do this, to become eminent in painting.

"Lucretia's moral nature was exquisitely touched with all the finer sensibilities. She loved with the utmost tenderness those who loved her, and were kind to her; and she loved those who were good, and the more, if they were unfortunate. Hence a fund of genuine affection arose for her, in the hearts of her companions, and among *them* her conversation was entertaining, and often witty. To amuse them she sometimes wrote, as well as talked. Her 'Examination' poem was thus produced, which was, at the time, much quoted and copied among the young ladies."

these thoughts (and I assure you, mamma, they come not seldom), I am happy. Do, my dear mother, try to be cheerful, and have good courage."

"I have been to the Rensselaer school, to attend the philosophical lectures. They are delivered by the celebrated Mr. Eaton, who has several students, young gentlemen. I hope they will not lose their hearts among twenty or thirty pretty girls. For my part, I kept my eyes fixed as fast as might be upon the good old lecturer, as I am of the opinion, that he is the best possible safeguard, with his philosophy and his apparatus; for you know philosophy and love are sworn enemies!"

Miss Davidson returned to Plattsburg during the spring vacation. Her mother, when the first rapture of reunion was over, the first joy at finding her child unchanged in the modesty and naturalness of her deportment, and fervor of her affections, became alarmed at the indications of disease, in the extreme fragility of her person, and the deep and fluctuating color of her cheek. Lucretia insisted, and, deceived by that ever-deceiving disease, believed she was well. She was gay and full of hope, and could hardly be persuaded to submit to her father's medical prescriptions. During her stay at home she wrote a great deal. Like the bird, which is to pass away with the summer, she seems to have been ever on the

wing, pouring forth the spontaneous melodies of her soul. The following are a few stanzas from a piece "On Spring."

"I have seen the fair Spring, I have heard her sweet
song,
As she passed in her lightness and freshness along;
The blue wave rolled deeper, the moss-crest looked
bright,
As she breathed o'er the regions of darkness and night.

"I have seen the rose bloom on the youthful cheek,
And the dew of delight 'neath the bright lash break;
The bounding footstep, scarce pressing the earth,
And the lip which speaks of a soul of mirth.

"I have seen the Winter with brow of care,
With his soulless eye and his snow-white hair;
And whate'er his footsteps had touched was cold,
As the lifeless stone which the sculptors mould.

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"As I knelt by the sepulchre, dreary and lone,
Lay the beautiful form in its temple of stone;
I looked for its coming, — the warm wind passed by, —
I looked for its coming on earth and on high.

"The young leaves gleamed brightly around the cold
spot;
I looked for the spirit, yet still it came not.
Shall the flower of the valley burst forth to the light,
And man in his beauty lie buried in night?

"A voice on the waters, a voice in the sky,
A voice from beneath, and a voice from on high,
Proclaims that he shall not; that Spring, in her light,
Shall waken the spirit from darkness and night."

These were singular speculations for a beautiful girl of sixteen. Were there not spirits ministering to her from that world to which she was hastening?

The physician, called in to consult with her father, was of opinion that a change of air and scene would probably restore her, and it was decided that she should *return to school!* Miss Gilbert's boarding-school at Albany was selected for the next six months. There are few more of her productions of any sort, and they seem to us to have the sweetness of the last roses of summer. The following playful passages are from her last letter at home to her sister in Canada.

"The boat will be here in an hour or two, and I am all ready to start. Oh, I am half sick. I have taken several doses of something quite delectable for a visiting-treat. Now," she concludes her letter, "by your affection for me, by your pity for the wanderer, by your remembrance of the absent, by your love for each other, and by all that is sacred to an absent friend, I charge you, write to me, and write often. As ye hope to prosper, as ye hope your boy to prosper (and grow fat!), as ye hope for my gratitude and affection now and hereafter, I charge you, write. If ye sinfully neglect this last and solemn injunction of a parting friend, my injured spirit will visit you in your transgressions. It shall pierce you with goose-quills, and hurl down upon your recreant heads the brim-

ming contents of the neglected inkstand. This is my threat, and this my vengeance. But if, on the contrary, ye shall see fit to honor me with numerous epistles, which shall be duly answered know ye, that I will live and love you, and not only you, but your boy. You now see that upon your bearing depends the fate of your little boy, 'to be beloved, or not to be beloved!' They have come! Farewell, a long farewell!"

She proceeded to Albany, and in a letter dated May 12th, 1825, she seems delighted with her reception, accommodations, and prospects at Miss Gilbert's school. She has yet no anxieties about her health, and enters on her career of study with her customary ardor. With the most delicate health and constant occupation, she found time always to write long letters to her mother, and the little children at home, filled with fond expressions. What an example and rebuke to the idle school-girl, who finds no time for these minor duties! But her studies, to which she applied herself beyond her strength, from the conscientious fear of not fulfilling the expectations of her friends, were exhausting the sources of life. Her letters teem with expressions of gratitude to her benefactor, to Miss Gilbert, and to all the friends around her. She complains of debility and want of appetite, but imputes all her ailings to not hearing regularly from home. The mails, of course, were

at fault, for her mother's devotion never intermitted. The following expressions will show that her sensibility, naturally acute, was rendered intense by physical disease and suffering.

"Oh, my dear mother, cannot you send your *Luly* one little line. Not one word in two weeks! I have done nothing but weep all day long. I feel so wretchedly! I am afraid you are ill."

"I am very wretched, indeed I am. My dear mother, am I never to hear from you again? I am *homesick*. I know I am foolish; but I cannot help it. To tell the truth, I am half sick. I am so weak, so languid, I cannot eat. I am nervous, I know I am; I weep the most of the time. I have blotted the paper so, that I cannot write. I cannot study much longer, if I do not hear from you."

Letters from home renovated her for a few days, and, at Mr. ——'s request, she went to the theatre, and gave herself up, with all the freshness of youthful feeling, to the spells of the drama, and raved about Hamlet and Ophelia like any other school-girl.

But her next letter recurs to her malady, and, for the first time, she expresses a fear that her disease is beyond the reach of common remedies. Her mother was alarmed, and would have gone immediately to her, but she was herself confined to her room by illness. Her father's cooler judg-

ment inferred from their receiving no letters from Lucretia's friends, that there was nothing serious in her disease.

The next letter removed every doubt. It was scarcely legible; still she assures her mother she is better, and begs she will not risk the consequences of a long journey. But neither health nor life weighed now with the mother against seeing her child. She set off, and, by appointment, joined Mr. —— at Whitehall. They proceeded thence to Albany, where, after the first emotions of meeting were over, Lucretia said, "Oh mamma, I thought I should never have seen you again! But, now I have you here, and can lay my aching head upon your bosom, I shall soon be better."

For a few days the balm seemed effectual; she was better, and the physicians believed she would recover; but her mother was no longer to be persuaded from her conviction of the fatal nature of the disease, and arrangements were immediately made to convey her to Plattsburg. The journey was effected, notwithstanding it was during the heats of July, with less physical suffering than was apprehended. She shrunk painfully from the gaze her beauty inevitably attracted, heightened as it was by that disease which seems to delight to deck the victim for its triumph. "Her joy upon finding herself at home," says her mother, "operated, for a time, like magic." The sweet,

health-giving influence of domestic love, the home atmosphere, seemed to suspend the progress of her disease, and again her father, brothers, and friends were deluded; all, but the mother and the sufferer. She looked, with prophetic eye, calmly to the end. There was nothing to disturb her. That kingdom that cometh 'without observation' was within her, and she was only about to change its external circumstances, about to put off the harness of life in which she had been so patient and obedient. To the last she manifested her love of books. A trunk filled with them, given to her by her benefactor, had not been unpacked. She requested her mother to open it at her bed-side, and, as each book was given to her, she turned over the leaves, kissed it, and desired to have it placed on a table at the foot of her bed. There they remained to the last, her eye often fondly resting on them.

She expressed a strong desire to see Mr. —— once more, and a fear that, though he had been summoned, he might not arrive in time. He came, however, to receive the last expressions of her gratitude, and to hear the last word pronounced by her lips, his own name.

The "Fear of Madness" was written by her while confined to her bed, and was the last piece she ever wrote. As it constitutes a part of the

history of her disease, it is, though already published, inserted here.

"THERE is a something which I dread;
It is a dark, and fearful thing;
It steals along with withering tread,
Or sweeps on wild destruction's wing.

"That thought comes o'er me in the hour
Of grief, of sickness, or of sadness;
'T is not the dread of death; 't is more, —
It is the dread of madness.

"Oh! may these throbbing pulses pause,
Forgetful of their feverish course;
May this hot brain, which, burning, glows
With all a fiery whirlpool's force,

"Be cold, and motionless, and still,
A tenant of its lowly bed;
But let not dark delirium steal" —
[*Unfinished.*]

That the records of the last scenes of Lucretia Davidson's life are scanty, is not surprising. The materials for this memoir, it must be remembered, were furnished by her mother. A victim stretched on the rack cannot keep records. She says, in general terms, "Lucretia frequently spoke to me of her approaching dissolution, with perfect calmness, and as an event that must soon take place. In a conversation with Mr. Townsend, held at intervals, as her strength would permit, she expressed the same sentiments she expressed to

me before she grew so weak. She declared her firm faith in the Christian religion, her dependence on the divine promises, which she said had consoled and sustained her during her illness. She said her hopes of salvation were grounded on the merits of her Savior, and that death, which had once looked so dreadful to her, was now divested of all its terrors."

Welcome, indeed, should that messenger have been, that opened the gates of knowledge, and blissful immortality, to such a spirit!

During Miss Davidson's residence in Albany, which was less than three months, she wrote several miscellaneous pieces, and began a long poem, divided into cantos, and entitled "Maritorne, or the Pirate of Mexico." This she deemed better than any thing she had previously produced. The amount of her compositions, considering the shortness and multifarious occupations of a life of less than seventeen years, is surprising.* We copy the subjoined paragraph from the biographical sketch prefixed to "Amir Khan." "Her poetical writings, which have been collected, amount in all to two hundred and seventy-eight pieces, of various lengths. When it is considered that there are among these at least five regular poems of several cantos each, some esti-

* She died on the 27th of August, 1825, just a month before her seventeenth birth-day.

mate may be formed of her poetical labors Besides these were twenty-four school exercises, three unfinished romances, a complete tragedy, written at thirteen years of age, and about forty letters, in a few months, to her mother alone." This statement does not comprise the large proportion (at least one third of the whole) which she destroyed.

The genius of Lucretia Davidson has had the meed of far more authoritative praise than ours. The following tribute is from the London "Quarterly Review"; a source whence praise of American productions is as rare as springs in the desert. The notice is by Mr. Southey, and is written with the earnest feeling, that characterizes that author, as generous as he is discriminating. "In these poems" [Amir Khan, &c.] "there is enough of originality, enough of aspiration, enough of conscious energy, enough of growing power, to warrant any expectations, however sanguine, which the patron, and the friends, and parents of the deceased could have formed."

But, prodigious as the genius of this young creature was, still marvellous after all the abatements that may be made for precociousness and morbid developement, there is something yet more captivating in her moral loveliness. Her modesty was not the infusion of another mind, not the result of cultivation, not the effect of good taste,

nor was it a veil, cautiously assumed and gracefully worn; but an innate quality, that made her shrink from incense, even though the censer were sanctified by love. Her mind was like the exquisite mirror, that cannot be stained by human breath.

Few may have been gifted with her genius, but all can imitate her virtues. There is a universality in the holy sense of duty, that regulated her life. Few young ladies will be called on to renounce the Muses for domestic service; but many may imitate Lucretia Davidson's meek self-sacrifice, by relinquishing some favorite pursuit, some darling object, for the sake of an humble and unpraised duty; and, if few can attain her excellence, all may imitate her in her gentleness, humility, industry, and fidelity to her domestic affections. We may apply to her the beautiful lines, in which she describes one of those

"forms, that, wove in fancy's loom,
Float in light visions round the poet's head."

"She was a being formed to love and bless,
With lavish nature's richest loveliness;
Such I have often seen in Fancy's eye,
Beings too bright for dull mortality.
I 've seen them in the visions of the night,
I 've faintly seen them when enough of light
And dim distinctness gave them to my gaze
As forms of other worlds, or brighter days."

This memoir may be fitly concluded by the following "Tribute to the Memory of my Sister,"

by Margaret Davidson, who was but two years old at the time of Lucretia's death, and whom she so often mentions with peculiar fondness. The lines were written at the age of *eleven.* May we be allowed to say, that the mantle of the elder sister has fallen on the younger, and that she seems to be a second impersonation of her spirit?

"Though thy freshness and beauty are laid in the tomb,
Like the floweret which drops in its verdure and bloom;
Though the halls of thy childhood now mourn thee in
vain,
And thy strains shall ne'er waken their echoes again,
Still o'er the fond memory they silently glide,
Still, still thou art ours, and America's pride.
Sing on, thou pure seraph, with harmony crowned,
And pour the full tide of thy music along,
O'er the broad arch of Heaven the sweet note shall resound,
And a bright choir of angels shall echo the song.
The pure elevation which beamed from thine eye,
As it turned to its home in yon fair azure sky,
Told of something unearthly; it shone with the light
Of pure inspiration and holy delight.
Round the rose that is withered a fragrance remains,
O'er beauty in ruins the mind proudly reigns.
Thy lyre has resounded o'er ocean's broad wave,
And the tear of deep anguish been shed o'er thy grave
But thy spirit has mounted to mansions on high,
To the throne of its God, where it never can die."

LIFE

OF

SEBASTIAN CABOT

BY

CHARLES HAYWARD, Jr.

SEBASTIAN CABOT.

CHAPTER I.

Cabot's Birth and Youth. — Henry the Seventh grants a Patent for the Discovery of a Northwest Passage. — Discovery of the American Continent. — Cabot penetrates Hudson's Bay. — Failure of Provisions and Objections of his Crew. —Returns to England. — Second Patent. — Death of John Cabot. — Second Voyage to America. — Attempts to colonize Labrador. — Fails to discover a Northwest Passage. — Dissatisfaction of Colonists. — His Return to England. — Injustice of Henry the Seventh. — Cabot quits his Service.

It has been the lot of the individual, whose adventures form the subject of the following narrative. to receive little gratitude for important services. Many know little more of him, than that he was a voyager of olden times. Of his peculiar firmness, enterprise, and perseverance, while multitudes have heralded the praises of less worthy

men, very few have chosen to speak. England herself was not profuse of her favors to him while living, nor until lately has she seemed disposed to render justice to his memory. The inquirer is surprised to see how scanty are the written testimonials to his official excellence and private modesty and worth.

SEBASTIAN CABOT was born at Bristol, in England, about the year 1477,* and was the son of John Cabot, the eminent Venetian navigator. From his father's occasional residence abroad, has probably arisen the idea that Sebastian Cabot was an Italian; an error which has crept into several biographical compilations, but which his own testimony explicitly refutes. "Sebastian Cabote tould me," says Richard Eden, "that he was borne in Bristowe, and that at four yeare ould he was carried with his father to Venice, and so returned agayne into England with his father, after certain years, whereby he was thought to have been borne in Venice." † Of Cabot's early years a meagre account has been transmitted. After his removal to Venice, at four years of age, he probably received from his father, who is described as a man of considerable ability in mathematics and other sciences, a thorough and

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* Campbell's *Lives of the Admirals*, Vol. I. p. 404.

† Decades of the New World, p. 255. Ed. of 1555

judicious education; and, besides being instructed with his two brothers in arithmetic, geography, and cosmography, he acquired while young, much skill in practical navigation.

We do not exactly know the year of his return to England. It was, however, while he was yet a boy; for we find him there entering with youthful enthusiasm into the theories and golden speculations, which the discoveries of Columbus excited throughout Europe. He was just arrived at manhood, when that intrepid navigator imparted new life to the old world by his voyages to the western hemisphere. All Europe was awakened, and the family of the Cabots was among the warmest in insisting on further maritime adventure. There was a romance in the idea of discovering unknown realms; the world was to be enlarged; every kingdom of nature was to be more productive. Fancy wove around the success of Columbus numerous attractions for the inexperienced and adventurous, and an enthusiasm, of which we can hardly conceive, pervaded all classes. Cabot, after alluding to the feelings of his countrymen, adds, "By this fame and report, there increased in my heart a great flame of desire to attempt some notable thing." No wonder that the future adventurer, ambitious, intelligent, scarcely arrived at manhood, and educated by an experienced navigator, should be

enthusiastic in the cause. Before long the young seaman saw his wishes gratified.

King Henry the Seventh, having failed to se cure the services of Columbus, granted a patent, under date of March 5th, 1496, to John Cabot and his three sons, Lewis, Sebastian, and Sancius authorizing them, their heirs or deputies, "to sail to all parts, countries, and seas of the East, of the West, and of the North, under our banners and ensigns, with five ships, of what burden or quantity soever they may be, and as many mariners or men as they will have with them in the said ships, upon their own proper costs and charges, to seek out, discover, and find whatsoever isles, countries, regions, or provinces of the heathen and infidels, whatsoever they may be, and in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknown to all Christians."* In accordance with this patent, immediate preparations were made to discover the Northwest passage to India; the first important enterprise in which Sebastian took part.

It has been a much controverted question, whether John Cabot was not himself the principal in, and consequently entitled to the credit of, this expedition. For many years it was supposed that he was; although some writers warmly contended,

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* Hakluyt's *Voyages and Discoveries*, Vol. III. p. 6.

and one has lately proved,* that the voyage was chiefly forwarded by his son Sebastian. The problem is not a difficult one. Henry the Seventh was notoriously thrifty; he had granted a liberal patent, and he naturally secured his stipulated share, namely, one fifth of the profits, by imposing liabilities on the wealthy Venetian merchant. Sebastian was little more than seventeen years of age, and the King chose that the patent should be dignified by the name of an elder man. Moreover the father "followed the trade of marchandises," and would gladly facilitate by a short cut, as was their expectation, the commerce of the East.

The resources of John Cabot, the royal donations, and the pride and ambition of all parties, assisted the project, until, in the spring of 1497, every obstacle having been removed, the expedition sailed from Bristol under the guidance of its youthful commander. The father accompanied his son, but only, it is probable, to give occasional advice, and to superintend the mercantile proceedings. Even at the early date of this voyage, a trade was established between Iceland and Bristol; not only, therefore, for the sake of trade, but to recruit the spirit of the crews, which an untried and hazardous voyage might otherwise depress,

* Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, p. 49.

they laid their course toward Iceland. Minute accounts of this enterprise are not in existence; but sufficient remains to show the firmness and intelligence, which marked then and afterwards the character of Cabot.

After a considerable delay at Iceland, the party, partaking in some degree of their young leader's enthusiasm, began their voyage through the western seas. "They sailed happily," we are told, "confident of finding the long-desired Northwest passage to India, till the 24th of June, 1497," when an unexpected wonder was revealed.* About five o'clock in the morning, the observers from the leading ships were surprised at the discovery of land, which, on a nearer approach, was found considerably extended. Cabot's simple account of this momentous discovery is amusing. He hoped to make his way immediately to India, "but, after certayne dayes," said he, "I found that the land ranne towards the north, which was to mee a great displeasure." However great a displeasure to the young navigator, he had discovered the American continent. The land seen was the coast, together with an island off the coast, of Labrador; the latter received the name of St. John's Island, from the day on which it was discovered, and is described as "full of white bears,

* Hakluyt, Vol. III. p. 6.

and stagges far greater than the English."* Columbus had discovered and taken possession of islands in the New World, but it was reserved for Cabot to obtain the first sight of the continent We here perceive the straight-forward energy of the young navigator; he did not forget, as many would have done, the object of his voyage. Although his men were attracted by the unexpected continent, he remembered his obligation to open the India passage, and, there is reason to think, penetrated farther north than to the sixty-seventh degree, in the accomplishment, as he hoped, of his design.

The bay, since called Hudson's Bay, appeared to Cabot to be the passage he was seeking. With something like triumph he left his course on the ocean; the extensive sheet of water before him confirmed his opinion, and for several days he went forward confident of success. As he was urging on with no less enthusiasm than when he left Bristol, discontent was manifested on the part of his crew. He reasoned with them, encouraged, and commanded; but they wanted his youthful confidence; their voyage had been long and dangerous; their provisions were nearly exhausted; they were going they knew not whither; and they insisted on returning to England. He

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* Lives of the Admirals, Vol. I. p. 338.

had sufficient self-command and policy not to contend with these repining mariners; he mildly promised to comply with their demands. Retracing his steps with philosophical coolness, and relinquishing his project, he soon regained the Atlantic. After coasting to the southward, he left the continent he had discovered, and returned to his native country.

If Sebastian Cabot had been a vain man, he might have boasted, on his return, of what he had succeeded in accomplishing. Such, however, does not seem to have been his character, and we find him making immediate exertions for a second expedition. His arguments in favor of the first voyage had been laughed at; he was accused of being visionary; when age should teach him wisdom, the cautious said, he would be content to stay at home. His fortunes now wore a different aspect; in his search for the India passage, he had set eyes on the New World; his plans, after all, were not quite so visionary, and the most incredulous allowed that one so enterprising and fortunate should make another attempt.

A second patent, bearing date February 3d, 1498, was granted by Henry the Seventh. It stood in the name of John Cabot and his deputies, Sebastian being still a young man, and it allowed them "six English shippes, so that and if the said shippes be of the bourdeyn of two hundred tonnes

or under, with their apparail requisite and necessarie for the safe conduct of the said shippes."* They were further instructed to pursue their original discoveries. These second letters show less of the thrifty spirit which Henry before displayed. The result of the former voyage had warmed the King into something like liberality.

Shortly after the date of this patent, John Cabot died, and Sebastian determined to prosecute alone the voyage, of which he had ever, in reality, the direction. Aside from his adventurous spirit, the heavy expenses of the first voyage had been requited only by his claims in the new country. Neither was he ready to relinquish what he had so hardly won, now that public favor was on his side. What the royal interest was in this second expedition, it is impossible to state; it extended, however, to one or two ships, and a considerable amount of funds. "Divers merchants of London also adventured small stocks," induced, as mankind are in every age and country, by the novelty of the project. Trusting that the India passage would still be ascertained, or that the new country might be a profitable market, mercantile adventurers exerted themselves to freight several small vessels, which, as part of Cabot's fleet, sailed from Bristol in 1498.

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*This interesting document has lately been discovered by the indefatigable author of the "Memoir of Sebastian Cabot," by whom it was first given to the world

But for the grossest neglect, we might have learned the particulars of these memorable voyages from Cabot himself. A series of his papers, with suitable maps, descriptive of these adventures, was left nearly ready for publication. Carelessness, however, suffered them to be mislaid, and now time has hidden them for ever. How delightful as well as remarkable was the modesty, which made no boast of such achievements; committing merit to the keeping of a few hasty manuscripts, and the gratitude of posterity; that gratitude, which has suffered such a man to be forgotten, because he fo bore to proclaim his own praises.

The particulars of Cabot's second expedition to the American continent are very scanty. His patience and daring do not seem to have met with success. Besides searching for the desirable route to the East, his object was doubtless to colonize the new region, for which purpose he took with him three hundred men. Before long he once more saw with delight the shores of the New World. With characteristic promptitude he effected a landing on the coast of Labrador, and instructed a portion of his men to examine the country, with a view to colonization, while he sailed farther to seek the passage. His course is uncertain, and not very important, since his intentions were defeated.

During Cabot's absence, his crew upon the land suffered, it is supposed, with extreme cold, al-

though in the middle of July. "The dayes were very longe, and in manner without nyght." The territory was a wilderness, and provisions were unattainable; in a word, they missed their usual English comforts, and gave way to despondency. Several excursions for exploring the country were attempted; but the resolution, which the conduct and commands of their young leader had inspired, was gone, and they were naturally enough dispirited by the loss of companions and friends, who daily perished under the severity of the climate. Cabot, not finding what he sought, returned to Labrador; but how was the vexation of his other disappointments increased on learning the condition of his colonists! Not only had they taken no steps toward a settlement, but absolutely refused to remain longer on the coast. They complained of exposure to a cold climate, and, with a disregard to previous engagements and all manly discipline, insisted on being removed.

Cabot yielded to the demands of his crew, and having laid his course to the south as far as Cape Florida, he recrossed the Atlantic. His reception in England was calculated to hurt his pride, and it accounts for the blank at this period in his public life. Let us see how his nation repaid the discoverer of the American continent.*

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* I am aware, that at so late a day it seems presumptuous to deny that Columbus was the discoverer of Amer

Henry the Seventh was one of the most penurious monarchs ever seated on the throne of England; avarice was with him almost a disease, and so far from excelling, he fell far short of many of his subjects in liberality. Such was the king, who, it will be remembered, was considerably interested in Cabot's pecuniary success. When the navigator returned without having opened the new way to the luxuries of India, or having colonized the lately discovered territory, disappointment was manifested both by the King and private individuals. And, as the Cornish rebellion was demanding the royal attention, and the novelty of the voyages had worn away, Cabot met with coldness and neglect. The King's method of revenging a miscarriage, which no one could have prevented, convinces us that his disease, as has been said, "had now reached his moral sense."

The second letters patent empowered *John Cabot and his deputies*, with no mention of heirs;

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ica; certainly, presumptuous, despite the theories concerning the Northmen and others, to assert that Cabot first discovered it. That he is entitled to priority of claim to Columbus, in discovering the *continent*, will appear from a comparison of dates. Cabot's discovery was made June 24th, 1497. Columbus discovered the continent on his third voyage, which commenced May 30th, 1498; and Amerigo Vespucci did not leave Spain until May 20th, 1499. Cabot was, therefore, nearly one year in advance of Columbus, and nearly two in advance of Amerigo Vespucci.

so that in strictness the privilege expired at his death, and Sebastian, in acting under this grant, might possibly have violated his powers. Of this quibble, the magnanimous monarch availed him self to rescind the privileges of the first patent, in which his name actually appeared.

Cabot felt deeply the royal injustice, and although his means were limited, he had no idea of depending on a disappointed and mean-spirited sovereign. If Henry, like Ferdinand of Spain in his treatment of Columbus, could slight a man to whom the world was indebted, the poor mariner could rid himself of a monarch whose patronage was limited by hope of pecuniary compensation. In the year 1499, he again asked royal assistance; but, meeting with "noe greate or favourable en tertainment," he furnished out of his own means the suitable vessels, and, setting forth from Bristol, "made great discoveries."

For fifteen years he scarcely returned to England; at least, he took no part in any of her naval expeditions. We hear of him at one period at Maracaibo. That his spirit of adventure could be suddenly checked, is not probable; and perhaps, besides extending his reputation abroad, he was perfecting his naval education. Columbus had now made his second and third voyages, and had thereby gained the fame of having discovered America. Other adventurers, too, who but fol

lowed the steps of predecessors, were honored as public benefactors, while not one "bay, cape, or headland" in the new country recalled by its name the memory of Cabot. With these reflections were nearly fifteen years of his life embittered. He no more proffered his services to a monarch who had slighted them, and in the year 1512, we find him in the employ of the Spanish government.

CHAPTER II.

Henry the Eighth. — Ferdinand of Spain invites Cabot to his Service. — Cabot stationed at Seville. — Council of the Indies. — Death of Ferdinand. — Cabot returns to England. — Expedition of 1517. — Sir Thomas Pert the Cause of its Failure. — Cabot recalled to Spain by Charles the Fifth. — Appointed Pilot-Major of Spain. — Expedition to the Moluccas. — Council of Badajos. — Jealousy of the Portuguese. — Diego Garcia. — Martin Mendez. — The Brothers Rojas.

The loss of the documents before alluded to cannot be too much lamented. Without them, it must be confessed, the fifteen years previous to Cabot's appearance in Spain are poorly accounted for. A blank occurs, which these annals, written when his spirits were buoyant, and his mind active, would doubtless fill up.*

* That such papers were once accessible, may be inferred from the following passage in Hakluyt, which stands as the heading to Cabot's description of St. John's island, — "An extract taken out of the map of Sebastian Cabot, cut by Clement Adams, concerning his discovery of the West Indies, which is to be seene in her Majestie's privie gallerie at Westminster, *and in many other ancient merchants' houses.*"

King Henry the Seventh died in the year 1509, during Cabot's absence; and upon the accession of his son it became probable that the covetousness of the father would be in some measure atoned for, and that Cabot would be reinstated in the naval service. Henry the Eighth, only eighteen years of age when he ascended the throne, had an "active and fiery spirit," which had been hitherto directed toward the attainment of a superior education. His opinion of his own talents, and his ambition, were considerable, and he made free with the hoarded treasure of his father in encouraging projects of public utility. Such a monarch, particularly as the events of the last ten years had raised Cabot's original discoveries in the general estimation, was likely to retrieve the errors of his predecessor.

In this state of affairs, Ferdinand of Spain determined to anticipate the movements of Henry, by attaching Cabot to his service. Amerigo Vespucci having lately died, an opening in the naval department seemed to offer itself. Accordingly, while Henry was engaged in continental discussions, Ferdinand addressed a letter to Lord Willoughby, Captain-general of England, requesting him to forward his designs by sending Cabot to Spain; a direction which was complied with on the 13th of September, 1512. The king of Spain, with a very sudden desire to be

considered a patron of science, made great exertions to extend maritime discoveries. On Cabot's arrival in his kingdom, he gave him the title of his Captain, and stationed him at Seville with a liberal allowance, and at first, as it would appear, with no definite duties. Ferdinand seems to have wished to atone for his treatment in England, and to have been aware that no one could afford more valuable information concerning the North-west passage, and the coast of Labrador.

In 1515, Cabot was employed, with several of the best cosmographers of the age, on Ferdinand's favorite project, a general revision of maps and charts. During the same year he was honored by being chosen a member of the Council of the Indies, a fact which, considering his age and nativity, shows him to have been in high favor at court. These duties were probably well performed, since, when Ferdinand set on foot an expedition to sail the following year in search of the India passage, he complimented Cabot so highly as to give him the command. This advancement is doubtless as much attributable to Ferdinand's rivalry with Henry, as to the talents of the navigator. An ambitious king easily overlooks the faults of a favorite. We come now to one of the sudden changes, which it was Sebastian Cabot's fortune often to experience.

The new expedition was in considerable for

wardness, when, unluckily for him, Ferdinand died on the 23d of January, 1516. All preparations were checked, public well-wishers and ambitious speculators were disappointed, but Cabot had more cause than any other to regret the loss of his patron. Charles the Fifth, who was to be the successor, had lately been acknowledged Emperor in the Netherlands, and remained some time in Brussels before assuming the Spanish crown; a period of dissension and much confusion among the Spaniards, who, by means of his minister Chièvres, employed every intriguing art to find favor with the young sovereign.

Ferdinand's kindness to Cabot had incensed his jealous subjects; they were indignant, that the King should have raised a foreigner to his confidence, and availed themselves of his death to manifest their resentment. They insinuated that the voyage of 1496 had accomplished nothing, that Cabot was a foreign impostor, and that under their new king affairs should take a different turn. Cardinal Ximenes was too aged to govern with severity during the interregnum, and when Charles arrived in Spain, at only sixteen years of age, intriguers and misrepresenters had given an undue bias to his mind. Even Fonseca, the notorious calumniator of Columbus, was in office.

Cabot could catch no glimmer of hope in all this darkness; and, that he might avoid undeserv

ed obloquy, he returned once more to England. We may remark here his determination, constantly adhered to, of being independent of royalty. If he perceived that he was not needed, he left his king's employment; otherwise, he considered his services an equivalent for the favors received His strong common sense, which generally exceeded his intellectual powers, prevented his considering a well-founded enterprise desperate because of a few untoward accidents; and he relied on his own honest intentions in withstanding envy or malice.

After a short residence in England, our navigator succeeded in fitting out the expedition which the death of Ferdinand had delayed. Henry the Eighth, probably not displeased at his return, "furnished certen shippes" and some funds, and appointed one Sir Thomas Pert first in command under Cabot, whose weakness, as we shall see, rendered the affair a failure. They sailed from England in 1517. Concerning their exact destination many disputes have arisen. Several historians say, that they went on a trading voyage to the Spanish settlements in the West Indies; but these accounts are so confused, that we find them at one time off the coast of Labrador, and shortly after as far south as Cape Florida. The point is interesting, because, if Cabot really undertook a trading voyage, he must have relinquished,

in a moment of pique, his hopes of discovering the Northwest passage. But the fact is otherwise. The trading voyage, which, by a confusion of dates, is assigned to 1517, actually took place ten years after, in 1527. So that Cabot was neither so inconsistent, nor so ungrateful to the memory of his late patron, as to interfere with a trade to which the Spanish government laid an exclusive claim.

Contemporary and subsequent accounts represent Sir Thomas Pert as totally unfit to be second in command in such an expedition. His cowardice was sufficient to render his commander's energy ineffectual. They penetrated to about the sixty-seventh degree of north latitude, and, entering Hudson's Bay, gave English names to various places in the vicinity, when, as previously, doubts of success arose among the crew. The severity of the climate, and many privations, increased their eagerness to return; while Pert, a man of high command and influence, favored their remonstrances. Under such circumstances it was impossible to quell the mutiny by force; and, the pilots being unable to convince the understandings of the crew, Cabot turned homeward. Although he had confessedly failed, he must have gained credit in England by his resolution, while Sir Thomas seems to have been recognised as the cause of the miscarriage. "His faint heart," says Eden,

"was the cause that the voyage took none effect."*

Neither the merchants interested in the late unfortunate expedition, nor the King, who was now engaged on the continent, were disposed to renew an attempt to discover the long-desired passage. Moreover, a frightful disease,† known as the *Sweating Sickness,* prevailed in England in 1517, and prevented the nation from thinking of an expensive and unpromising enterprise. Fortunately for Cabot, the affairs of Spain were in a better condition. Soon after his accession, Charles the Fifth, examining into the unsettled expedition of 1516, was surprised at the sudden disappearance of Cabot. He already knew something of his character, and the state records bore ample testimony of Ferdinand's high regard for him. These facts sufficiently exposed the jealousy and intrigues of the Spaniards; and Charles, anxious to atone for past injustice, appointed Cabot, in 1518, to the honorable office of Pilot-Major of

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* It has been a question whether this was not the first entrance into Hudson's Bay, and whether the latitude of sixty-seven was reached in 1497. As these questions have little interest for the general reader, I omit any further discussion of them. They are treated at length in the "Memoir of Cabot," Chapter xiv.

† Memoir of Cabot, p. 120

Spain.* This favor was confirmed when the Emperor visited England, in 1520.

Cabot's duties now became numerous and highly responsible. Public opinion inclined to a Southern expedition. "What need have we," said Peter Martyr, the historian, "of these things, which are common with all the people of Europe? To the South! to the South! They that seek for riches must not go to the cold and frozen North."

Attention was gradually directed to the Moluccas, and the other islands in the same latitude; and Cabot advised a voyage thither through the Straits of Magellan, then recently discovered. But, before the project was matured, he was brought conspicuously before the public. Portugal, having hitherto by the old route engrossed the trade of the Moluccas, remonstrated strongly against these movements in Spain, and contended, that, by the grants of the papal bull, the said islands fell within her limits. Spain laid an opposing claim; and, in order to a settlement, the Emperor ordained, that a solemn council should be held at Badajos in the year 1524. At the head of a list of persons summoned for consultation, and of course of the highest repute in the nautical profession, is the name of Cabot. After more than a month's

* Herrera, Dec. II. lib. iii. cap. 7.

cession, the council declared, on the 31st of May, that the islands fell, by at least twenty degrees, within the Spanish limits. The Portuguese representatives retired, much chagrined, and uttered blind threats of maintaining their pretensions by force. We shall hereafter see how they vented their dissatisfaction.

The important decision being made known, a Company was formed for the prosecution of the Molucca trade, of which, having received permission from the Council of the Indies, Cabot accepted the command. He gave bonds for the faithful performance of his duty, and by the articles of agreement, executed at Madrid in 1525, three ships and one hundred and fifty men were to be provided by the Emperor, and the Company were to supply all funds for commercial purposes. Four thousand ducats, and a share of the profits, were guarantied to the Emperor. In this enterprise Cabot received the title of Captain-general, and the month of August, 1525, was fixed upon for their departure. Numerous circumstances, however, were combined to cause delay.

When the Portuguese found their threats had no effect on Charles the Fifth, they resorted to more courteous remonstrances. Their young king insisted, that an invasion of his monopoly would be the ruin of his kingdom, from which the con-

sanguinity of the parties, as well as their connexion by marriage (he having obtained the hand oi the Emperor's sister), should secure him. To this Charles replied, that, however much he might regard domestic ties, he could not reasonably be expected to relinquish an enterprise, the right to which lay entirely on his side. Incensed by this refusal, the king of Portugal took secret measures to thwart his rival's hopes; employing, as the sequel renders probable, a worthless man, named Diego Garcia. This person, who could probably be induced by pay to any villany, prepared with great secrecy a squadron of three vessels, solely, we must believe, to embarrass Cabot's movements. We shall meet him at a more advanced stage of the enterprise.

Meantime many delays occurred at home to try the patience of our navigator. One set of men harassed him exceedingly by superintending, in the capacity of agents, the naval arrangements. In almost every point they were at variance. He wished to appoint his own lieutenant-general, and nominated one De Rufis, a trust-worthy friend, to that office. The deputies pretended to be provoked at his obstinacy, and committed the trust to one Martin Mendez, late an officer under Magellan. Whether Cabot was unjustly prejudiced against this man, which is quite possible, or not, it is evident that no unanimity could exist between

such officers; nor would Cabot consent to the appointment, until a written promise had been given, that Mendez should act only under his directions or in his absence. Instead of looking, therefore, for counsel and friendship in the lieutenant, the captain could only hope that he would not openly oppose his orders.

Two brothers, of Spanish extraction, named Miguel de Rojas and Francisco de Rojas, who afterwards made themselves conspicuous, were also attached to the expedition. The former was a man of considerable valor and nautical skill, the latter the commander of one of the ships, the *Trinidad*, and both of them zealous adherents of Martin Mendez.

Finally, to complete this dangerous outfit, the unprecedented step was taken of furnishing each ship with *sealed orders*, which were to be opened as soon as they were fairly embarked. These, which were probably given without Cabot's knowledge, contained the provision, that, in case of his death, the chief command should devolve on one of eleven persons therein nominated, and, in case of their death, on him chosen by the general vote, provided that, on an equality of votes, the candidates should cast lots. This was indeed a most ingenious "premium to disaffection," and, if these facts were known to him, Cabot was to blame for sailing at such odds Perhaps, how-

ever, as he had haggled so long with the captious deputies, he was unwilling to raise new objections

Under these inauspicious circumstances the ex pedition sailed at length in the beginning of April 1526. A temptation, as we have seen, was before every individual to strive after the supreme power. That its devolving on some of the inferiors was thought possible in Spain, the sealed orders plainly showed; and we cannot mark the commencement of such a voyage without more than one misgiving as to its success; without a fear lest the commander's energy may fail, in time of need, to calm those stormy elements of disaffection and treachery.

CHAPTER III.

Cabot sails to the Canaries, and thence to the Cape de Verds. — Disaffection of Mendez and the Rojas.—Mutiny. — Cabot enters the River La Plata. — Annoyed by the Natives. — Enters the Paranà and the Paraguay. — Three Spaniards seized, and a violent Contest ensues. — The Party harassed by Diego Garcia, who overtakes Cabot at Santa Aña, and claims the Right of Discovery. — Cabot resists. — Garcia leaves the Country. — Cabot sends a Messenger to Spain, and determines to conquer Peru. — The Emperor's pecuniary Embarrassments, when he receives the Report. — Cabot explores the La Plata. — Quarrel between the Followers of Cabot and Garcia. — Capture of Sanctus Spiritus. — The Adventurers return to Spain.

No one would have been surprised, had the smothered flame of mutiny, which every arrangement must have tended to cherish, broken out the very day of leaving the shore. That event was reserved for a later period. The testimony of personal friends, as well as his public life, gives us a high idea of Cabot's gentleness of character. His

companions always speak of him with affection, and few instances of his harshness or severity are recorded. Of firmness, in time of danger, we shall see he was not destitute. His ambition was indulged for the public good. Had he been more mindful of himself, he would have escaped many disappointments, and enjoyed more renown.

He first sailed to the Canaries,* and thence to the Cape de Verd Islands, touching at both, it is probable, to replenish the stock of provisions, and committing no such outrages as his enemies have represented. The Islanders were uniformly kind to him, and injury in return would have been unnecessary and impolitic. Cape St. Augustine was their next stopping-place, from which they laid their course to the south. But the voyage was not thus far accomplished without trouble; for the three secret traitors were much confirmed by the extraordinary arrangements of the deputies to provide for the Captain-general's losing the command.

Cunning men in power may always find causes of dissatisfaction; and Martin Mendez and the brothers Rojas soon began to complain, that Cabot did not strive to allay the disputes which had arisen at Seville. They tried to convince the sailors, that he had laid in no adequate store of provisions, or, at any rate, that he secreted them in his own

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* Lives of the Admirals, Vol. I. p. 409.

vessel from general distribution. Mendez desired his partisans, if they were true men, to withstand oppression, and depose a tyrant in favor of honest officers. The plans of revolt were originated and matured by these reckless mariners in utter secrecy. At length the time came, which was agreed on for active resistance.

As the squadron was running down the coast of Brazil, these men became openly insolent in blaming the movements of their commander, exhorting the crews, who naturally partook of the excitement, to avail themselves promptly of the privileges of the sealed orders. Cabot's situation was a critical one; but two of his countrymen were in the expedition, and he heard all around him insinuations of foreign usurpation, and that he was raised by favor to govern a people whom he had never materially served. As his three highest officers were inimical, he saw that he must rely solely on himself. The band which rallied around Mendez, he was well aware, hoped to intimidate him by numbers, and were not prepared for decisive resistance; accordingly, without the scruples of a weaker man, and with no attempt at a compromise, he ordered Martin Mendez and Miguel and Francisco de Rojas to be seized, (taking the latter from his ship without ceremony,) and, placing them with two faithful seamen in an open boat, he put them on shore at the nearest island. This

degrading treatment of men so lately glorying in their superiority was never forgotten; and years afterward we find them employing their malice against their energetic commander.

The measure was entirely successful in quelling further mutiny. But as the Captain-general had lost his highest officers, he felt unauthorized, without special permission, to prosecute the original enterprise, and, as the best expedient, directed his course to the mouth of the La Plata. It is probable, that he intended to make this river merely a temporary stopping-place. It proved, however, the scene of much wild adventure. In fact, we have now reached the most romantic period in Cabot's life. In addition to being deprived of his officers, he lost one of his vessels by shipwreck, which deterred him altogether from prosecuting the voyage. He resolved, with his usual activity of mind, to renew the attempt to explore the La Plata; in making which, his predecessor in the office of Pilot-Major, Diego de Solis, had perished. This course, under existing circumstances, was probably the best; certainly he was right in waiting further commands from the Emperor. The next five years did much to unfold his character, prove his skill, and mature his judgment. His predecessor, it must be remembered, with a body of fifty men, had been inhumanly butchered, and actually devoured by the people among whom he was thrown.

Cabot sailed boldly up the river, from which modern navigating skill has not yet removed the dangers, as far as the small island afterwards called St. Gabriel, just off the city of Buenos Ayres. Near this is the island called after Martin Garcia, pilot of the unfortunate Solis, and one of the few who escaped the voracity of the savages. He afterwards died and was buried in the place where Diego was destroyed.

But this melancholy spot was not necessary to remind our adventurer of the hostility of the natives; for their very first landing at St. Gabriel was stoutly resisted. His courage, however, prevailed; and, obtaining a suitable ground for anchoring his vessels, the captain with most of his crew proceeded to further discovery in boats. Seven leagues farther up, he found the port which he named St. Salvador,* situated on an island just where the La Plata changes into the Paraná, and nearly opposite the mouth of the Uruguay. Here the inhabitants likewise annoyed the Spaniards by killing two of their number; declaring, however, that to make a meal of them was not their intention, since the party of Solis had given them sufficient opportunity to taste the flesh of soldiers.

St. Salvador proved an excellent harbor, and the ships were left there with a guard under

* Memoir of Cabot, p. 150.

Antonio de Grajeda. Meantime Cabot prepared several boats and a small caravel, and proceeded up the Paraná. Some miles higher up, he erected the fort still seen on the maps as Sanctus Spiritus, finding the inhabitants for the first time very intelligent, and, according to Herrera, "a good, rational people." Although our voyager's party, at first not numerous, was greatly diminished by defection and mortality, his hopes do not seem to have been weakened for a moment. He encouraged the avaricious by hopes of gain, and pointed out to the weary the wonderful novelties of the country through which they were passing. Besides, the natives were daily attracted from the shore, and, in the simplicity of their admiration, flocked to the ships.

After sailing through a land "very fayre and inhabited with infinite people," they reached the point where the river receives the Paraguay, itself branching off to the right. Leaving the Paraná, therefore, on the right, they ascended the new river about thirty-four leagues.* The inhabitants of this district differed from any before seen, being acquainted with agriculture, and carrying to a great extent their jealousy of foreign invasion, and par-

* Campbell and others transpose the names of these rivers. Herrera, however, together with the author of the "Memoir of Cabot," who are more worthy to be trusted, furnish the above account.

ticularly their hatred toward the Spanish and Portuguese. These qualities contrasted singularly with some other points in their character; they were industrious, regardful of each other's rights, and cultivated their land to advantage; while their continual enmity to strangers rendered our navigator's situation extremely critical. Notwithstanding his care to avert difficulty, his hitherto peaceful voyage was soon changed into fierce contention.

Three Spaniards having one day unwittingly left their party, to gather the fruit of the palm tree, the natives laid violent hands on them. Resistance was impossible, and the poor fellows were easily captured. Their comrades, on learning the news, determined to avenge the wrong; and Cabot, for the first time, became a military commander.

The small band of Spanish adventurers, worn by the labors of a long voyage, might well have declined a contest with the hordes of natives that now came against them. But their national spirit, together with the hardihood of their profession, made them alive to every injury. They were ignorant of the country, and unskilled in their enemy's mode of warfare; but yet, under Cabot's command, they sustained their part of a long and bloody contest with unflinching courage. It probably lasted most of the day, doubly severe for our adventurers, inasmuch as they had no strong-holds

on the shore; yet, on its conclusion, three hundred natives and only twenty-five Spaniards were found to have fallen. The Captain-general, we may suppose from this fact, showed a fair degree of military skill; he was enabled to retain his position in the river, and, after the battle, despatched a letter to the commander of one of the forts, giving the particulars of the affray, and the loss on each side.

Cabot could ill afford to lose these men, particularly as their fate depressed the hopes of the survivors, who had by no means agreed to undergo the hardships of a voyage up the La Plata. From this time, the prospects of the party, hith erto bright, became dark and ominous. Cabot doubtless might have withstood any further attacks during his voyage, had not Diego Garcia, a man whom we have met before, and who seems always to have been the evil genius of our navigator, interrupted his plans at this point. It is time to trace this man's movements after leaving Spain under the auspices of the Portuguese government

The reasons for believing that the king of Portugal, disappointed by the decision of the council at Badajos, employed Garcia to follow Cabot's steps, and frustrate his projects, have already been stated. Let us see how faithfully the mission was performed. Garcia left Spain in 1526, made his way to the Canaries, next to the Cape de Verds,

and thence to the coast of Brazil. During the early months of 1527, he visited the bay of All Saints, the island of Patos, and at length, probably baulked of his intention of meeting Cabot at either of the abovementioned places, he entered the mouth of the La Plata. His course thus far, it will be seen, was exactly that of Cabot, and he ascended the river immediately.

Antonio de Grajeda, commander of the ships which Cabot left at St. Salvador, had just received the letter announcing the dreadful battle, when he perceived Garcia's party coming up the La Plata. Agitated by the late news, he fancied that they were no others than the mutineers, whom the captain had put on shore; accordingly Garcia was met with several armed boats, led by the commander in person. At first he favored the misconception, and they had nearly come to open contest; he declared himself, however, in time to secure a peaceable issue. Parting with one of his vessels, which he had shamefully allowed to be employed in the slave business, he ordered the remainder to follow him immediately to the commodious harbor of St. Salvador. Perhaps he foresaw that Cabot would give him no favorable reception, and was willing to have forces at hand.

Garcia then manned two brigantines with sixty men, and ascended thence to the fort of Sanctus Spiritus, where Cabot had left a small force under

Gregorio Caro. This commander was courteous and good-natured; and to Garcia's haughty demand of a surrender of the fort, he replied, that, although very ready to serve his guest, he should hold command in the name of Cabot and the Emperor. He seems, however, to have kept terms with the Portuguese. Indeed, we can hardly suppose that he was aware of Garcia's character and intentions; for he requested, as a favor, that he would liberate any of Cabot's party that might have fallen into the enemy's hands, pledging himself to reimburse whatever ransom money was expended; and finally besought him to befriend the Spaniards, should they in the late skirmish have lost their commander.

This is not the language he would have used towards Garcia, had he fully known him; and it was only likely to excite a smile in an unprincipled man, in the employ of a revengeful government. Indeed, when he reached the Paraguay, Diego was so mindful of Caro's requests, that he made an excursion along the right branch of the Paraná. This movement is the only one which seems to contradict the supposition, that he intended from the first to overtake and embarrass our navigator. If such was his intention, a digression was both useless and prejudicial.

Garc.a soon returned to his purpose, and led his party to Santa Aña, near which port the battle

had taken place and Cabot was now stationed His surprise at seeing Diego can best be imagined. No historian has left a particular account of their interview. Probably much displeasure manifested tself in his reception, and perhaps Garcia was pleased to perceive that his rival's force, what with mortality and the detachments at the forts, was much weakened. The new-comer repeated his demands of a surrender; insisting, upon grounds not very justifiable, on the sole right of discovery. Cabot was not a man to yield to such injustice; neither was he inclined, in a savage and obscure region, to involve his men in a contest, which, whoever got the better, must necessarily produce great distress. The result of their altercations cannot be known. In a short time they returned, not in much mutual cordiality, to Sanctus Spiritus. Garcia, having stationed at the forts a large body of his followers, who partook of his spirit, and from whom Cabot subsequently suffered inconvenience, left the country without delay.

Cabot's only course was to despatch messengers to Charles the Fifth, in order, by a candid account of his voyage, his treatment of the mutinous officers, and consequent change of destination, to counteract the calumnies which a disappointed rival might circulate in Spain. The persons so employed were Francis Calderon and George Barlow, and their original report is still in exist

ence.* To understand fully the force of this document, it is necessary to bring before ourselves the hopes which Cabot's success in ascending the river, together with his ambitious temperament, naturally inspired.

At the commencement of the voyage, he was expected to touch at the western shore of America. "Having passed the winding strait of Magellan, he is to direct his course to the right hand, in the rear of our supposed continent." Accident had changed his course, and he now hoped, that, by continuing his ascent of the river, and by risking a few more contests with the savages, he should reach the intended coast by a route hitherto unknown. Besides, he observed that gold and silver ornaments were worn in profusion by several tribes along the La Plata, and, with his usual shrewdness, making friends of them, "he came to learn many secrets of the country." Having reached the waters which would lead him to the mines, he had possibly fixed his hopes on the reduction of a region, the riches of which would secure a competency to his party, and repay the generosity of his sovereign. In other expeditions he had been baffled; this discovery seemed indisputably his own.

We have no accounts of Garcia's efforts, on

* Herrera, Dec. IV. lib. iii. cap. 1.

arriving in Europe, further than what is to be gathered from the ill-natured sneers of several historians. He was not idle, and in some quarters doubtless brought Cabot into disrepute. Perhaps he was exciting the Portuguese government to a decisive step in opposition. Whatever were his endeavors, he influenced not at all the mind of Charles the Fifth. Cabot's demands, in case of undertaking the great conquest, were "provision, ammunition, goods proper for trade, and a complete recruit of seamen and soldiers." These seeming exorbitant, the merchants interested in the squadron decided that their rights should escheat to the crown; but the Emperor, willing to avow his confidence in the navigator, agreed to stand personally responsible for the enterprise.

But Charles showed more generosity than foresight in this affair. At the very time of this proposal, Bourbon's soldiers were mutinous for pay; the Moluccas had been mortgaged;* and even the pecuniary assistance solicited by the Emperor from the Cortes had been refused. The good will of a king so straitened of necessity spent itself in promises.

It was at this time that Pizarro offered to reduce Peru solely at his own expense. He followed up the offer by personal importunity, and it

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* Memoir of Cabot, p. 160.

was accepted. After an extravagant promise to provide every thing, and resign all conquests to the crown, the entire and exclusive range of the coast of Peru was granted to him; and thus was Cabot frustrated by the very sovereign who had nearly been his benefactor. If the seaman was at fault for immoderate requisitions, Charles was no less so for holding out hopes which his empty treasury could not fulfil. The facts in the case should clear the monarch from the imputations of neglect and dilatoriness, which many historians have cast upon his character.

During these negotiations in Spain, Cabot was awaiting anxiously the result of his embassy, and continuing to hope, until hope became folly. He was confirmed in his belief, that the waters of the Paraná would convey him to the mines of Potosí; and, while doubtful of the Emperor's pleasure, he improved and amused his men by exploring the country, and ascertaining the manners of the several tribes bordering on the La Plata. Whether the Emperor apprized him of his change of mind, or left him in uncertainty until he returned to Spain, their many delays must have been distressing to a band eager to penetrate a region, which promised a recompense for their previous deprivations.

Cabot and his crew were bold men, and left no region in the vicinity of the river unsearched. It

required no little resolution in men anxiously expecting news from home, and who had seen one after another of their number drop away, to explore the strong-holds of savages, and gather knowledge at the risk of life and limb. One or two were often left in charge of the vessels, while the band rambled into the interior, trusting for shelter to the hospitality of the natives, or a temporary tent. The Spanish government, moreover, neglecting to send supplies, they were cast on their own resources for subsistence; and Herrera gives part of a report from Cabot to the Emperor, in which the productions of Brazil, and the improvements in various breeds of Spanish animals, are described with an accuracy of observation not unworthy the agriculturist or man of science. Cabot was endued with an elasticity of temper, which, united with sound principles and intelligence, enabled him to profit by every event. At home, he explained his projects to heedless sovereigns; at sea, won affection by courageous perseverance; and in a region of savages, while waiting the pleasure of his king, found time to instruct his followers, and stimulate them to industry.

Things were thus proceeding, when misfortune broke loose on the little community. Those of Garcia's party, whom he had left behind, wanting the good influence of a Cabot, fell one day into a violent dispute with the natives, and at length

so enraged them, that they declared vengeance against every white man on the river. Of course the little garrisons at Sanctus Spiritus and St. Salvador, though not the offenders, did not escape the indignation of the savages. The most hostile tribe was the Guaranis, a wantonly ferocious people, whose animosity made them forget that they had entered into an explicit treaty of peace with our navigator. After the affront, several meetings were secretly held, until their sanguinary project was perfected.

One morning, just before daybreak, this bloodthirsty race rushed in a body upon Sanctus Spiritus. The inmates, a part surprised asleep, and a part fatigued with previous exertions, could offer no resistance, and the fort was carried. The savages, elated with their good fortune, next besieged St. Salvador. But by this time, the alarm had spread, and the admiral was able to maintain his position, until he could prepare one of his largest vessels for sea. The others he determined to leave behind. Collecting, therefore, all the supplies which could be obtained, the little band, much reduced in number, and driven before a tribe of Indians, embarked for their native country. They landed in Spain in the year 1531, exactly five years from the time of their departure.

CHAPTER IV.

Cabot's Reception in Spain.—Resumes the Office of Pilot-Major.—Account of a personal Interview with Cabot.—His private Character.—Relinquishes his Office and returns to England.—Edward the Sixth.—Charles the Fifth requests him to return to Spain.—His Occupations in England.—Errors with Regard to the Knighting of the Cabots.

Cabot was about fifty-three years of age when he returned to Spain, and, after his wild life in South America, we are glad to find him holding office in civilized society. It is not easy to say what was his reception at the Spanish court. One writer declares that he was received with coldness and ill nature, while the author of the "Memoir" strives to show that his report was perfectly satisfactory. Perhaps neither is entirely correct. The fact, that the merchants withdrew from the concern, shows them to have been disappointed, but surely Charles did not venture to frown on a man, whom he had ungenerously deluded, and who originated the project, that, in Pizarro's hands, now promised the monarch wealth and reputation

The Spaniards were piqued at Cabot's severity

to the mutineers, but they could not sully the fame he had acquired by his conduct in the La Plata. His crew could bear witness to his composure in times of great and most varied danger. Moreover, his generosity in alluding to the better fortunes of Columbus won him many friends; without the jealousy of a selfish man, he did not hesitate to declare his exploits to be "more divine than human." For these and similar reasons his resumption of the office of Pilot-Major afforded general satisfaction, and for many years his occupation was one of great emolument and honor.

Several passages in the old authors show, as clearly as documents so imperfect and antiquated can show, that, besides being esteemed a strictly honorable man, he was the first navigator of the day. A thorough theorist, he had learned by practice how theory was useful. Charles the Fifth relied entirely on his opinion, which was always readily given. In all their intercourse no allusion is found to the character or progress of Pizarro. To the one, his name probably brought a twinge of conscience; and the other, however glad to aid a rival by his propositions, must have felt that the monarch's favors were unjustly conferred. A contemporary writer thus speaks of him at this time; "He is so valiant a man, and so well practised in all things pertaining to navigations, and the science of cosmographie

that at this present he hath not his like in all Spaine." On another occasion, a gentleman of the time, desiring some important maritime information, was referred to Cabot; and his account of their personal interview, even now that three centuries have elapsed, is highly interesting. The writer says, "It was tolde mee that there was in the city a valiant man, a Venetian* born, named Sebastian Cabot, who had charge of the navigations of the Spaniards, being an expert man in that science, and one that could make cardes for the sea with his owne hand, and, by this report, seeking his acquaintance, I found him *a very gentle and courteous person, who entertained mee friendly*, and shewed mee many things, and among other a large mappe of the world, with certaine particuler navigations, as well of the Portugals as of the Spaniards, and he spake further unto mee to this effect." †

Several like hints disclose to us the private character of Sebastian Cabot. His warm ambition was changed into maturer hopes, and we can anticipate an old age, calm, benevolent, and useful. Whilst holding the office of Pilot-Major, he frequently led in person small naval expeditions which served to keep alive public interest, more than to promote discovery. His leisure was prob-

* This error has already been exposed.

† Hakluyt, Vol. III. p. 7.

ably occupied with preparing the documents relative to his eventful life, which carelessness and accident have destroyed.

These were doubtless among the pleasantest years of Cabot's life. He had, indeed, considering his extensive plans, been singularly unsuccessful; neither does it appear that domestic comforts were gathered thickly around him. But he was a man whom many, like Richard Eden, delighted to consider their "very friend, and have sometimes keepe them company in their own houses." He had, moreover, done the world much service, only failing because he intended to do much more. He sought distinction, because it increased his usefulness.

He thus concludes a letter some years after the La Plata expedition. "After this I made many other voyages, which I now pretermit, and, waxing olde, I give myself to rest from such travels, because there are nowe many young and lustie pilots and mariners of good experience, by whose forwardness I do rejoyce in the fruit of my labours, and rest with the charge of this office, as you see."* This is the language of a man, who could view disappointment in the proper light, preferring a competency and the general respect to success gained by intrigue, or the favors showered upon a parasite. By this time he must have

* Hakluyt, Vol. III. p. 7.

seen, that his name would never rival that of Columbus; that it would even be shaded by it; and yet we find him reviewing the past with gratitude, and anticipating the future with more than ordinary calmness.

Seventeen years thus elapsed, when the natural feeling of an old man induced Cabot to relinquish his situation in Spain, in order to dwell again in his native country. It is a pleasant thing, after all his wanderings, to see him turning his steps homeward. We rejoice when the recipient of foreign favor remembers the land which gave him birth. In the year 1548, while in full favor with the Emperor, he returned to England. Spain lost an exemplary officer; he knew, better than any one, her naval interest, and his eminence was acknowledged both by the king and people. But Charles the Fifth had nothing to fear from Cabot's intimate knowledge of his affairs; no combination of circumstances could have induced him to use his information against a sovereign, in whose confidence he had gained it.

Edward the Sixth had just reached the British throne, when our navigator returned, and fixed his residence in Bristol. Public hopes had been much raised touching the young king. Having enjoyed an excellent education, and naturally fond of naval affairs, it was thought that his reign would be memorable for the encouragement of maritime

excellence. "In childhood," Burnet tells us "he knew all the harbors and ports both of his own dominions, and of France and Scotland, and how much water they had, and what was the way of coming into them." Add to this, that nature's other gifts exactly fitted him for a popular monarch, and that, in the second year of his reign, Sebastian Cabot, an old man respected in private life, and the greatest seaman of the age, became one of his subjects, and no one will fail to anticipate brilliant naval adventures.

When Charles the Fifth perceived this state of things, he repented that on any consideration he had lost his Pilot-Major; accordingly the English monarch received before long a formal demand, that "Sebastian Cabote, Grand Pilot of the Emperor's Indies, then in England, might be sent over to Spain, as a very necessary man for the Emperor, whose servant he was, and had a pension of him." These latter words might lead us to think that Charles, hoping his removal would be temporary, had wished to continue Cabot's pension; at any rate, it is gratifying to see what golden opinions the seaman had won by his services in Spain. The request was not complied with.

It is difficult to ascertain precisely what Cabot's office was after he returned to England. He had expected to continue in private life in his native

city; but the importunities of Edward changed his determination, and it is supposed, by Hakluyt and others, that he was appointed to an office like that held under Charles the Fifth, then first created, and that he bore the title of Grand Pilot of England. However this may be, he was director of all maritime enterprises, being consulted, as we shall see, on every occasion, and experiencing in an eminent degree the royal munificence. Edward's respect for his character, and gratitude for his services, showed themselves by many marks of favor; among others a generous pension, as appears by the following document.

"Edward the Sixt, by the grace of God, King of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, to all Christian people, to whom these presents shall come, sendeth greeting. Know yee, that we, in consideration of the good and acceptable service done, and to be done, unto us by our beloved servant, Sebastian Cabota, of our speciale grace, certaine knowledge, meere motion, and by the advice and counsel of our most honourable uncle, Edward Duke of Somerset, governor of our person, and protector of our kingdomes, dominions, and subjects, and of the rest of our counsaile, have given and granted, and, by these presents, do give and grant to the said Sebastian Cabota, a certain annuitie, or yerely revenue of one hundred, threescore and sixe pounds, thirteene

shillings four pence sterling, to have, enjoy, and yerely receive the foresaid annuities, or yerely revenue to the foresaid Sebastian Cabota during his natural life, out of our treasurie at the receit of our exchequer at Westminster, at the hands of our treasurers and paymasters, there remayning for the time being, at the feast of the Annuntiation of the blessed Virgin Mary, the Nativitie of S. John Baptist, S. Michael y[e] Archangel, and the Nativitie of our Lord, to be paid by equal portions. In witnesse whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patents; witnesse the King at Westminster the sixt day of January, in the second yeere of his raigne. The yeere of our Lord 1548." *

Besides the above, a salary was granted at the same rate, "from the feast of S. Michael last past unto this present time."

Cabot seems to have been much indebted in these affairs to the abovementioned uncle, the Duke of Somerset, who first introduced him to his royal nephew. The terms of the above pension would seem to show, that Cabot was actually in office; but of his duties we have no particular account. On one occasion we find a French pilot, who "had frequented the coast of Brazil eighteen voyages," giving testimony to Sir John Yorke

* Hakluyt, Vol. III. p. 10.

"before Sebastian Cabote"; and a long anonymous article is recorded by Hakluyt, descriptive of the voyage "unto the mouth of the river of Plata, and along up within the sayd river," which has been supposed with great plausibility to be Cabot's own testimony. From these fragments of testimony, it is perhaps probable, that, without holding any formal title, he was regarded with universal confidence.

I shall now advert to a point, about which misrepresentation and error have thickly clustered. Nearly two thirds of the old writers confer on one or both of the Cabots the honors of knighthood. Campbell gives us the memoir of "Sir John Cabot," and Purchas commences a couplet, —

> "Hail, Sir Sebastian! England's northern pole,
> Virginia's finder," &c.*

Henry, in his "History of Great Britain," falls into a similar error; indeed, most readers may have expected to meet the subject of this biography with the title of knight. Now that modern ingenuity has given us the means, it is amusing to perceive how minute an error has caused the misapprehension.†

In the palace at Whitehall formerly hung a portrait of Sebastian Cabot, under which was the following inscription; "*Effigies Seb. Caboti Angli*

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* Purchas's Pilgrims.

† See "Memoir of Cabot," ch. xxvii.

filii Joannis Caboti militis aurati." This possessed just enough of oracular ambiguity to cause great trouble. Were the terms "*militis aurati*" to be applied to John or Sebastian? Purchas saw the portrait, and immediately knighted the latter, while Campbell quotes this very inscription to prove, that the father for certain services became Sir John Cabot. We have not mentioned either as having been knighted; and, if we will guard against inaccuracies of translation, we shall see that the above inscription affords no ground for ascribing such an honor to either. *Eques* and not *miles* would have been the Latin term to designate knighthood. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir Hugh Willoughby, Sir Martin Frobisher, and Sir Francis Drake are mentioned by Hakluyt, each with the term *eques auratus*, and no other of their rank is once styled otherwise.*

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* Hakluyt, Vol. III. p. 137. A particular account of this portrait is contained in the appendix to the "Memoir of Cabot." It is believed to have been painted by Holbein. The picture is now in the United States, having been purchased by Mr. Richard Biddle.

CHAPTER V.

Magnetic Variation. — Cabot's early Observations. — Explains his Theory in Public to the King. — Bad Condition of English Commerce. — Cabot consulted. — His Remedy. — Opposed by "The Stilyard." — Nature of that Corporation. — Remonstrances laid before the Privy Council. — The Stilyard broken up. — Preparations for Expeditions to the North. — Cabot furnishes the Instructions. — A Part of the Squadron under Chancellor reaches Russia. — Chancellor's personal Interview with the Emperor. — The Adventurers obtain a Charter. — Change in Cabot's Fortune. — King Edward's Death. — Cabot's Pension suspended for two Years. — Characteristic Anecdote. — Cabot resigns his Pension. — His Death.

The remainder of our narrative will contain none of the bustle of adventure; but it will exhibit wha is rather remarkable, a man of more than threescore years and ten, devoting himself to the illustration of new truths, and originating great national enterprises. Cabot's mind retained to the last its vigor, and the experience of his manhood was an unfailing fund of information.

In one of his early voyages he observed a variation in the magnetic needle; but his observations, although carefully recollected, at the time only found a place in his memorandum book. No theory of the variation had been started; and, until he could frame one, he chose to say little of what he had seen. Thirty years afterwards, the mystery still remaining inexplicable, he was surprised to perceive the same phenomenon in the La Plata. His active and roving life then prevented him from giving much attention to the subject, and he could only note carefully the variations, now and then stealing a moment to seek the solution of the problem.

During all changes of fortune, he did not forget what he had seen; and availing himself of the information of contemporaries, he now announced a matured theory of the variation of the needle. There is something in this, characteristic of the man. He mostly withheld his observations for forty years, lest the superstitious might reject or fear what the scientific could not explain. Had he been less cautious, he would have been indisputably acknowledged the discoverer of this great wonder of nature.

When Edward heard of Cabot's theory of the variation, with his usual ardor he insisted on a convocation of the learned men of the kingdom, before whom the venerable seaman had the honor

of explaining the phenomenon to his young sov ereign. He showed the extent of the variation, and that it was different in different latitudes Unfortunately we are without the papers of Cabot himself, and are thus unable to know precisely the theory offered to the prince. Although not the correct one, it attracted general attention, and added to the esteem which our navigator now en joyed in his native land.*

Notwithstanding young Edward's willingness to encourage maritime enterprise, English commerce, about the year 1551, became almost extinct. Native produce was in no demand; and, while foreign nations easily found markets, there seemed to be a general stagnation in the trade, which had once raised England to opulence. This affected equally the pride and purses of the English merchants, and they resolved to detect the cause of the evil, and reëstablish their credit. The first men in the kingdom took the matter in hand; "certaine grave citizens of London, and men of great wisedome and carefulle for the good of their countrey, began to thinke with themselves howe this mischief might bee remedied." After conferring on the subject,

* Livio Sanuto, a noble Venetian, on learning Cabot's eminence from a friend, applied to him for information on the subject of magnetic variation, and received a chart marked with the degrees in various parts of the world, and a full account of his several observations.

they agreed to consult Sebastian Cabot. "And whereas at the same time one Sebastian Cabota, a man in those days very renowned, happened to bee in London, they began first of all to deale and consult diligently with him." From this moment Cabot's influence is perceptible in every stage of the investigation.

He was enabled to propose a project, which he had long since conceived, and which has eventually secured to England one of her most valuable branches of trade. He advised his countrymen to seek a new northern market, telling them, that, although neighboring nations had been sated with their commodities, doubtless tribes might be found to remunerate their ingenuity. The proposition seeming favorable to the merchants and the King, it was agreed that three ships "should be prepared and furnished for the search and discovery of the northern part of the world."

But, at this point, the adventurers were opposed by a powerful foreign corporation, established in London, under the title of *The Stilyard*, and claiming, what they had long possessed, a monopoly of the trade with the northern European ports. It consisted chiefly of the factors of extensive mercantile houses in Antwerp and Hamburg, who, by art and good fortune, had obtained command of most English markets, and used their superiority to ruin native merchants. Their im-

positions had become insufferable; and now, when they endeavored to fetter lawful enterprise, Cabot determined to rid his country of such an incumbrance. He ascertained them to be guilty of certain fraudulent acts, and, in the name of the new company, laid a remonstrance before Edward's privy council.

Such an established favorite was not likely to offer a fruitless petition, particularly as the young King must himself have perceived the justice of the complaints. Parts of his Majesty's private journal, which have been preserved, show his interest in the dispute, and the result is recorded, one may fancy, with something like triumph. "*February* 23*d*, 1551. A decree was made by the board, that, upon knowledge and information of their charters, they had found; first, that they (the Stilyard) were no sufficient corporation; secondly, that their number, names, and nature was unknown; thirdly, that, when they had forfeited their liberties, King Edward the Fourth did restore them on this condition, that they should color no strangers' goods, which they had done. For these considerations, sentence was given that they had forfeited their liberties, and were in like case with other strangers."

When the Stilyard heard the decision, they were so reluctant to relinquish their monopolies, that ambassadors were immediately despatched to

the English court, "to speak in their behalf." Again the matter came before the Privy Council, and the former judgment was confirmed. A few days after this memorable defeat, Cabot received a donation from the King. "To Sebastian Cabota, the great seaman, two hundred pounds, by way of the King's majesty's reward, dated in March, 1551." This tells more plainly than any comment, of his successful exertions in the affair.

Obstacles being removed, the expedition rapidly advanced. Great pains were taken to provide plank, "very strong and well seasoned," master workmen were engaged in the construction of the vessels, the merchants spared no expense in the provision of stores, and, for the first time in England, the ships' bottoms were sheathed with copper. Sir Hugh Willoughby, with whose melancholy fate most readers are familiar, was, after some debate, appointed Chief Captain; "both," as we are told, "*by reason of his goodly personage*, (for he was of tall stature,) as also for his singular skill in the services of warre." The second in command was Richard Chancellor, a shrewd and persevering man, who had been educated with much care by the father of Sir Philip Sidney. We may form some idea of Cabot's strength of mind, when we know, that, although between seventy and eighty years old, he superintended personally these extensive outfits; but our

admiration should not stop here. That nothing might be wanting to complete success, he wrote, with his own hand, a volume of instructions in duty,* which were ordered to be read before the ships' companies every week, and which have ever been regarded as a model of high principle and good sense, as well as a proof of sagacity and an extended knowledge of human nature.

On the 20th of May, 1553, naval stores and crews were in readiness, and the squadron, consisting of the *Bona Esperanza*, of one hundred and twenty tons, Sir Hugh Willoughby master, the *Edward Bonaventure*, of one hundred and sixty tons, Richard Chancellor master, and the *Bona Confidentia*, of ninety tons, Cornelius Durfooth master, each furnished with a pinnace and boat, dropped down the river to Greenwich. The spirits of the men were high, amid the bustle of leave taking and crowds of spectators, although occasionally damped by bidding farewell to familiar faces, which the dangers before them rendered it probable many would behold no more. The large ships floating slowly downward, the sailors dressed

* They were entitled, "Ordinances, Instructions, and Advertisements of, and for the Direction of, the intended Voyage for Cathay, compiled, made, and delivered by the right worshipful M. Sebastian Cabota, Esq., Governour of the Mysterie and Companie of the Merchants, Adventurers," &c. &c.

all alike in "watchet or skie-colored cloth," and the crowded decks, filled with impatient crews, must have formed a highly exciting scene.

The court happened to be at Greenwich as they approached; and "presently the courtiers came running out, and the common people flockt together, standing very thick upon the shoare; the privie counsel, they lookt out at the windows of the court, and the rest ranne up to the toppes of the towers; the shippes hereupon discharge their ordinance, and shoot off their pieces after the manner of warre, and of the sea, insomuch that the toppes of the hills sounded therewith, the valleys and the waters gave an echo, and the mariners, they shouted in such sort, that the skie rang again with the noise thereof." *

The only thing to lessen the happiness of the occasion, was the absence of the young monarch, whose exertions had given existence to the expedition. He beheld none of the regrets or rejoicings, being confined by the illness which soon caused his death. As the vessels left port, shrouds and mainyards were crowded by those eager to take the last look of recognition; presently the land faded in the distance, and, mutually agreeing to meet at the castle of Wardhouse, in Norway, should mischance disperse the squadron, they committed themselves to the Ruler of the ocean.

* Hakluyt, Vol. I. p. 245.

We cannot follow minutely this band of adventurers. We have spoken thus much of it, because their enterprise was the last of importance in which Cabot was concerned, and because of the distinguished services he rendered it, at a time of life when most are content to repose in ease and inaction. The dreaded evil was experienced, and, on the very day of the agreement to keep together, the vessels were separated by a furious tempest. Sir Hugh Willoughby, finding a passage to the east impracticable, resolved, on the 18th of September, to winter with Durfooth in Lapland. But the severity of the climate proved fatal to the wearied frames of their party, and their heroic commander was obliged to behold his men fall victims to a death, whose horrors were soon to overtake himself.

One of the most melancholy records ever preserved, is Sir Hugh's manuscript journal, detailing their fruitless attempts to reach Wardhouse, their resolution to pass the winter on an unknown coast, and their extreme destitution after the landing was effected. The commander, it is supposed, lingered until the month of January, 1554; the two ships were found deserted and decayed, and the journal lying beside the body of its author. The sad diary is said to have contained a description of the wolves and other carnivorous animals, which flocked around the bodies of the first victims to

the climate. The last entry is thus mournfully abrupt. "*September.* We sent out three men south-southwest, to search if they could find people, who went three dayes journey, but could find none; after that, we sent other three men westward foure dayes journey, which also returned without finding any people. Then sent we three men southeast three dayes journey, who, in like sorte, returned without finding of people, or any similitude of habitation." "Here endeth," the historian adds, "Sir Hugh Willoughbie his note, which was written with his owne hand."*

Richard Chancellor had the good fortune to reach Wardhouse, whence with singular resolution he prosecuted his voyage, and, after a passage through unknown latitudes, where the sunlight was perpetual, he landed at Archangel. The inhabitants at first fled in terror; but, mindful of Cabot's injunctions, he so succeeded in soothing their apprehensions by mild treatment, that they threw themselves at his feet, and supplied him liberally with such things as he needed. The natives being forbidden by the emperor to trade with foreigners, several undertook a journey to Moscow, in order to represent to him the object of Chancellor in visiting their shores. The emperor received the representation with courtesy,

* Hakluyt, Vol. I. p. 237

and invited the Englishman to a personal interview. Chancellor of course embraced the opportunity, and, providing himself with a sledge, soon reached the city of Moscow. He there related the design of his voyage, and before long laid the foundation of a permanent and extensive trade between England and Russia.

There is something heart-stirring in the manful efforts of these early travellers; they teach us of modern times a good lesson of self-forgetting, generous enthusiasm. Chancellor so represented the views and intentions of the English government, that Russia, it would seem, with little hesitation, acceded to his propositions. In the year 1554 or 1555, a charter was granted to the company of English adventurers, and Sebastian Cabot, in consideration of having originated the enterprise, was therein named governor for life.

Soon afterwards the Emperor of Russia granted them certain privileges, which show their commercial intercourse to have been extensive. The articles are called, "A Copie of the first Privileges graunted by the Emperor of Russia to the English Marchants in the Yeere 1555," and thus commence; "John Vasilvich, by the grace of God, Emperor of Russia, Great Duke of Novogrode, Moscovia, &c. To all people that shall see, reade, heare, or understand these presents, greeting. Know ye, therefore, that we of our grace

speciale, meere motion, certaine knowledge, have given and granted, and by these presents for us, our heires, and successours, do give and grant as much as in us is and lieth, unto Sebastian Cabota, Governour, Sir George Barnes, Knight," &c.*

From this time the Russia trade increased in value and extent, until it gave a fresh impulse to productive industry in England. Instead of suffering under foreign monopolies, native artisans found fair markets; while, on the other hand, its intercourse with the English gradually secured to the Russian nation, civilization, intelligence, and comfort. Cabot must have observed with unspeakable delight the ultimate success of this expedition. Four ships were purchased for the trade, and their number annually increased.

Probably the earliest specimens of the English mercantile style, are to be found in the correspondence between the Russian and English companies at this period.† The first articles of barter were cloths, tar, hemp, and feathers; afterward they shipped copper, steel, and in short those various products, both natural and artificial, which form the basis of all commerce between civilized nations. As if by magic, the complete stagna-

* Hakluyt, Vol. I. p. 265.

† These letters, which are worthy of a careful perusal, may be found at length in Hakluyt, Vol. I. p. 297.

tion in English trade was succeeded by a healthy mercantile circulation.

The Emperor continued his favors toward the new traders, and a branch of the company was established at Moscow. He sent an ambassador to England with instructions to complete and confirm the arrangement. The Russia trade soon became important. It was conceived with much boldness, and sustained with unfailing spirit. Cabot was the director of every movement; his old age, instead of gliding away in debility or sloth, was occupied by the innumerable cares arising from his connexion with the adventurers. The whale fishery of Spitzbergen, and the famous Newfoundland fisheries, were improved, if not established by him at this period. His ambition seems to have been, to do good to the last moment. "With strict justice," observes Campbell, "it may be said of Sebastian Cabot, that he was the author of our maritime strength, and opened the way to those improvements, which have rendered us so great, so eminent, so flourishing a people."

Cabot was now eighty years old; and, after following him through so many changes of fortune, we have to regret, that gloom should overspread his latter days. But, like many others who have depended on the justice of crowned heads, he found, that gratitude did not invariably follow

meritorious exertion. We must retrace our steps a moment to ascertain the origin of the vexations we are going to record.

Not long after the departure of the first expedition to Russia, young Edward died. This monarch had respected Cabot's age, and recompensed his talents; he had given life to naval enterprise by liberality, and won the confidence of his subjects by an intimate acquaintance with their interests. His death was in many respects a public loss. To Cabot, as the sequel shows, it was almost ruinous.

The King was a warm Protestant; and, on the accession of the Catholic Mary, eager to spread her bigoted faith, his favorites stood no chance of fair treatment. It is not probable, that insult was shown to the venerable navigator, but he was regarded with coldness, doubly severe because partially concealed; he was made often to feel his dependence on the crown, and he saw younger men daily gaining the royal confidence to which he was entitled.

The first open neglect was in regard to his means of support. His pension, which expired at Edward's death, was not renewed for more than two years. His cheerfulness did not desert him now that his private circumstances were inauspicious. Without pretending to be a philosopher, he used all with benevolence and generosity

uniting, as is the privilege of age, good counsel and a good example. The following extract from the journal of Stephen Burroughs gives us much insight into his character.

"The 27th being Munday, the right worshipful Sebastian Cabota came aboord our pinesse at Gravesende, accompanied with divers gentlemen and gentlewomen, who, after that they had viewed our pinesse, and tasted of such cheer as we could make them aboord, they went on shore, giving to our mariners right liberal rewards; and the good olde gentleman, master Cabota, gave to the poore most liberall almes, wishing them to pray for the good fortune and prosperous success of the *Searchthrift,* our pinesse. And then, at the signe of the Christopher, hee and his friends banketed, and made me, and them that were in the company, great cheere; and so very joy that he had to see the towardness of our intended discovery, *he entered into the dance himselfe*, among the rest of the young and lusty company; which being ended, hee and his friends departed, most gently commending us to the governance of Almighty God."* This gayety of temper is remarkable, considering his private necessities. The remainder of his career is brief and gloomy.

The Queen had occupied the throne but one

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*Hakluyt, Vol. I. p. 274.

year, when, to the dismay of her subjects, she gave her hand to Philip of Spain. Matters had already undergone a disagreeable change, and this union with an intriguing and jealous sovereign promised England little advantage. Philip came into his new dominions exceedingly envious of the English naval superiority; and Cabot, the man to whom it was chiefly ascribable, and who had refused the order of Philip's father to return to Spain, could hope little courtesy at his hands. Philip's first act was to declare war against France, and Mary was forced to resort to all expedients to supply the requisite funds. Seven days after the King reached London, Cabot resigned his pension. Of the neglect and cold insinuations which led to such a step, and of the wounded feelings of the beneficiary, no one, who knows the state of the kingdom and the character of the man, can fail to conceive.

Shortly afterward, indeed, the pension was renewed, but no longer in favor of Cabot alone One half was granted to a William Worthington. With Mary the new favorite was in the ascendant; she committed to Worthington all Cabot's manuscripts, which have since eluded the most patient search.

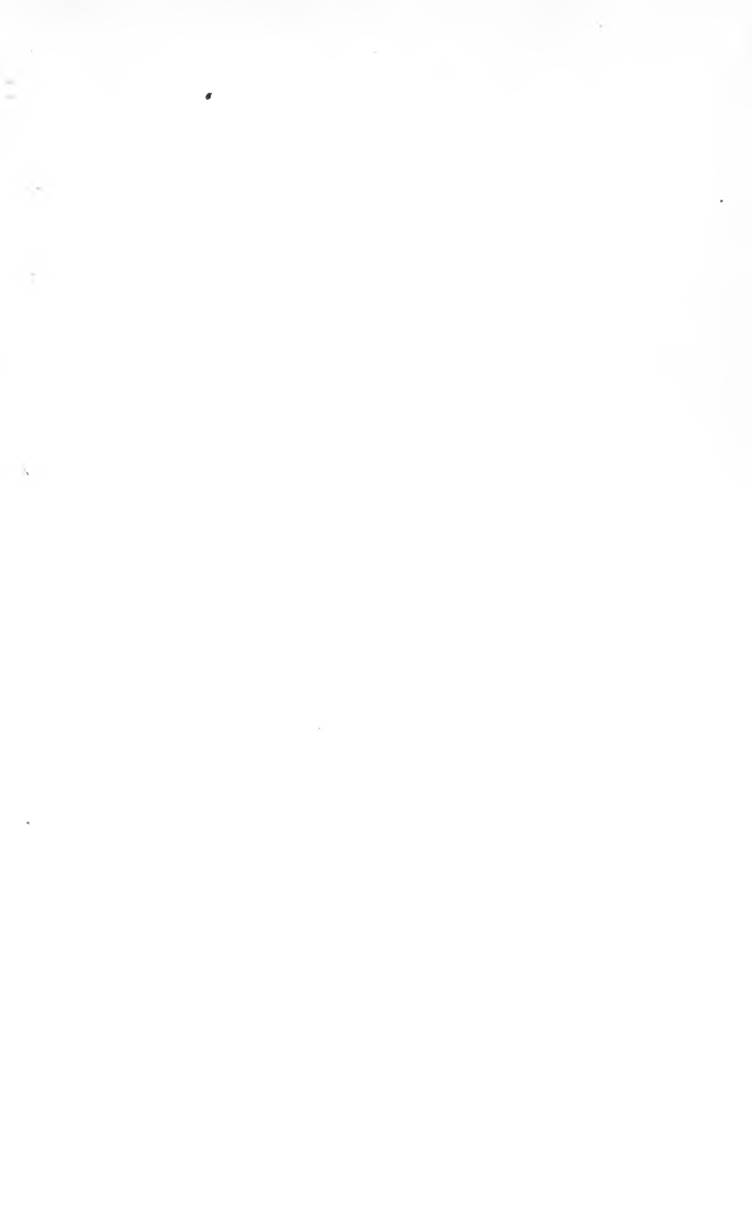
The neglect, which we have lately seen shown to him, followed him to the last; and but for his friend Richard Eden, we had known no-

thing of his end. Eden stood by his death-bed, and he tells us, with his usual simplicity, that "the good old man had not even in the article of death shaken off all worldlie vanitie." He still hovered over the scene of his adventures; he thought of his boyhood, and, with that sudden mental illumination, which precedes the more perfect light of another existence, reviewing his past struggles, he "spoke flightily" of a divine revelation with regard to an infallible method of ascertaining the longitude, which he might disclose to no mortal. Truly, the ruling passion was strong in death! He died calmly as he had lived; and, it is supposed, in the city of London. But although, as has been well said, "he gave a continent to England," we know neither the date of his death, nor does the humblest monument show where his remains were interred.

Such were the adventures, and such is an outline of the character, of Sebastian Cabot. His mind, perhaps, cannot be properly regarded as of the highest order. It was better fitted to investigate by help of data, than to create for itself; to draw sound conclusions, than to wander in speculations. He had strong common sense, and could view the most intricate subjects clearly and calmly; he had command over himself, over his feelings, and over his mental powers. Hence, he was composed in danger, and cheerful in affliction;

and, being generally directed by high moral principle, failure, of which he experienced a great deal, was robbed of half its pangs. He erred at times in judgment, and often conceived what he could not execute. But what he discovered and divulged is of the highest value; and, in a career like his, a man must attempt much to accomplish even a little. He conferred many benefits on his fellow men; and, although he received very inadequate compensation, he was always a good citizen, a warm friend, and a faithful public officer

THE END.



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