VARIOUS

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THOMAS HOOD

Thomas Hood was originally intended for business, and entered a mercantile house; but the failure of his health, at fifteen years of age, compelled him to leave it, and go to Scotland, where he remained two years, with much gain to his body and his mind. On his return to London, he applied himself to learn the art of engraving; but his constitution would not allow him to pursue it. Yet what he did acquire of this art, with his genius for comic observation, must have been of excellent service to him in his subsequent career. This, at first, was simply literary, in a subordinate connection with "The London Magazine." His relation to this periodical gave him opportunities, which he did not neglect, of knowing many of its brilliant contributors. Among these was Charles Lamb, who took a strong liking to the youthful sub-editor, and, doubtless, discovered a talent that in some points had resemblance to his own. The influence of his conversation and companionship may have brought Hood's natural qualities of mind into early growth, and helped them into early ripeness. Striking as the difference was, in some respects, between them, in other respects the likeness was quite as striking. Both were playful in manner, but melancholy by constitution, and in each there lurked an unsuspected sadness; both had tenderness in their mirth, and mirth in their tenderness; and both were born punsters, with more meaning in their puns than met the ear, and constantly bringing into sudden and surprising revelation the wonderful mysteries of words.

With a genius of so singular a cast, Hood was not destined to continue long a subordinate. Almost with manhood he began to be an independent workman of letters; and as such, through ever-varying gravities and gayeties, tears and laughter, grimsicalities and whimsicalities, prose and verse, he labored incessantly till his too early death. The whole was truly and entirely "Hood's Own." In mind he owed no man anything. Unfortunately, he did in money. That he might economize, and be free to toil in order to pay, he went abroad, residing between four and five years out of England, part of the time at Coblentz, in Rhenish Prussia, and part at Ostend, in Belgium. The climate of Rhenish Prussia was bad for his health, and the people were disagreeable to his feelings. The change to Belgium was at first pleasant and an improvement; but complete recovery soon seemed as far away as ever; nay, it was absolutely away forever. But in the midst of his family—his wife, his little boy and girl, most loving and most loved—bravely he toiled, with pen and pencil, with head and heart; and while men held both their sides from laughter, he who shook them held both his sides from pain; while tears, kindly or comical, came at the touch of his genius into thousands of eyes, eyes were watching and weeping in secret by his bed-side in the lonely night, which, gazing through the cloud of sorrow on his thin features and his uneasy sleep, took note that the instrument was fast decaying which gave forth the enchantment and the charm of all this mirthful and melancholy music. Thus, in bodily pain, in bodily weakness even worse than pain, in pecuniary embarrassment worse than either, worst of all, often distressed in mind as to means of support for his family, he still persevered; his genius did not forsake him, nor did his goodness; the milk of human kindness did not grow sour, nor the sweet charities of human life turn into bitter irritations. But what a tragedy the whole suggests, in its combination of gayety with grief, and in the thought of laughter that must be created at the cost of sighs, of merriment in which every grin has been purchased by a groan!

An anecdote which we once read, always, when we recall it, deeply affects us. A favorite comic actor, on a certain evening, was hissed by the audience, who had always before applauded him. He burst into tears. He had been watching his dying wife, and had left her dead, as be came upon the stage. This was his apology for imperfection in his part. Poor Hood had also to unite comedy with tragedy,—not for a night, or a day, or a week, but for months and years. He had to give the comedy to the public, and keep the tragedy to himself; nor could he, if comedy failed him, plead with the public the tragedy of his circumstances. *That* was nothing to the public. He must give pleasure to the public, and not explanations and excuses. But genius, goodness, many friends, no enemy, the consciousness of imparting enjoyment to multitudes, and to no man wretchedness, a heart alive with all that is tender and gentle, and strong to manful and noble purpose and achievement,—these are grand compensations,—compensations for even more ills than Hood was heir to; and with such compensations Hood was largely blessed. Though his funds were nothing to the bounty of his spirit, yet he did not refuse to himself the blessedness of giving. Want, to his eye of charity, was neither native nor foreign, but *human*; and as *human* he pitied it always, and, as far as he could, relieved it. While abroad, he was constantly doing acts of beneficence; and the burlesque style with which, in his correspondence, he tries to disguise his own goodness, while using the incidents as items to write about, is one of the most delightful peculiarities in his delightful letters. The inimitable combination of humanity and humor in these passages renders them equal to the best things that Hood has anywhere written. To crown all, Hood had happiness unalloyed in his children and his wife. Mrs. Hood seems to have deserved to the utmost the abounding love which her husband lavished on her. She was not only, as a devoted wife, a cheerer of his heart, but, as a woman of accomplishment and ability, she was a companion for his mind. Her judgment was as clear and sure as her affection was warm and strong. Her letters have often a grave tenderness and an insinuated humor hardly inferior to her husband's. But as she must write from fact and not from fancy, what she writes naturally bears the impression of her cares. Here is a passage from one of her latest letters, which, half sadly, half amusingly, reminds us of Mrs. Primrose and her "I'll-warrant" and "Between-ourselves" manner.

"Hood dines to-day," she writes, "with Doctor Bowring, in Queen Square. He knew him well years ago in 'The London Magazine'; and he wrote, a few days ago, to ask Hood to meet Bright and Cobden on business,—*I* think, to write songs for the League. I augur good from it. This comes of 'The Song of the Shirt,' of which we hear something continually."

As an instance of her judgment, we may mention that she prophesied at once all the success which followed this same "Song of the Shirt." When read to her in manuscript,—"Now mind, Hood," said she, "mark my words, this will tell wonderfully! It is one of the best things you ever did." Her reference to "The Song" in her letter has a sort of pathetic *naïveté* in it; it shows that the thought with which she was concerned was practical, not poetical,—not her husband's fame, but her household cares. She was thinking of songs that would turn into substance,—of "notes" that could be exchanged for cash,—of evanescent flame that might be condensed into solid coal, which would, in turn, make the pot boil,—and of music that could be converted into mutton. O ye entranced bards, drunk with the god, seeing visions and dreaming dreams in the third heaven, that is, the third story! O ye voluminous historians, who live in the guilt and glory of the past, and are proud in making the biggest and thickest books for the dust, cobwebs, and moths of the future! O ye commentators, who delight to render obscurity more obscure, and who assume that in a multitude of words, as in a multitude of counsellors, there is wisdom! O ye critics, who vote yourselves the Areopagites of Intellect, whose decrees confer immortality in the Universe of Letters! O all ye that write or scribble,—all ye tribes, both great and small, of pen-drivers and paper-scrapers!—know ye, that, while ye are listening in your imaginative ambition to the praise of the elect or the applause of nations, your wives are often counting the coppers that are to buy the coming meal, alarmed at the approaching rent-day, or trembling in apprehension of the baker's bill.

Hood, in 1840, returned to reside in England during the small remainder of his life. For a few months he edited the "New Monthly," and then, for a few months more, a magazine of his own. But the whole of this period was filled with bodily and mental trials, of which it is painful to read. Yet within this period it was that he wrote some of his finest things, both laughable and serious. It is, however, to be remarked, it was now he reached down to that well of tears which lay in the depth of his nature. Always before, there had been misty exhalations from it, that oozed up into the sunshine of his fancy, and that took all the shapes of glisten or of gloom which his Protean genius gave them. In the rapid eccentricities of cloud and coruscation, the source which supplied to the varying forms so much of their substance was hidden or unminded. But now the fountain of thought and tragedy had been readied, whence the waters of sin and suffering spring forth clear and unalloyed in their own deep loneliness, and we hear the gush and the murmur of their stream in such monodies as "The Song of the Shirt," "The Lay of the Laborer," and "The Bridge of Sighs."

Hood died in 1845, and was then only forty-six or forty-seven years old. Alike esteemed by the poor and the rich, both united to consecrate a monument to his memory. Kindly should we ever think of those who make our hearts and our tempers bright; who, without pomp of wisdom, help us to a cheerfulness which no proud philosophy can give; who, in the motley of checkered mirth and wit, sparkle on the resting-spots of life. Such men are rare, and as valuable as they are rare. The world wants them more than it wants heroes and victors: for mirth is better than massacre; and it is surely better to hear laughter sounding aloud the jubilee of the heart, than the shout of battle and yell of conquest. Precious, then, are those whose genius brings pleasure to the bosom and sunshine to the face; who not only call our thoughts into festive action, but brighten our affections into generous feeling. Though we may not loudly celebrate such men, we greatly miss them; and not on marble monuments, but in our warmest memories, their names continue fresh. But laugh and make laugh as they may, they, too, have the destiny of grief; and unto them, as unto all men, come their passages of tragedy,—the days of evil, the nights of waking, and the need of pity.

When Hood was near his death a pension of a hundred pounds a year was settled on his wife, at the instance of Sir Robert Peel. The wife, so soon to become a widow, did not long survive her husband; then, in 1847, the pension was continued to their two orphan children, at the instance of Lord John Russell. Politics and parties were forgotten, in gratitude to an earnest lover of his kind; and the people, as well as the government, in helping to provide for those whom he left behind, showed that they had not forgotten one whose desire it was to improve even more than to amuse them. And still we cannot but feel sad that there should ever have been this need. Nor would there have been, had Hood had the strength to carry him into the vast reading public which has arisen since his death, and which it was not his fate to know. "The income," says his daughter, "which his works now produce to his children, might then have prolonged his life for many years."

We have written more on the personal relations of Hood than we had intended; but we have been carried on unwitttingly, while reading the "Memorials" of him recently published and edited by his children. The loving worth of the man, as therein revealed, made us slow to quit the companionship of his character to discuss the qualities of his genius. We trust that our time has not been misspent, morally or critically; for, besides the moral good which we gain from the contemplation of an excellent man, we enjoy also the critical satisfaction of learning that whatever is best in literature comes out of that which is best in life. We therefore close this section of our article with a bit of prose and a bit of poetry, among Hood's "last things,"—personally and pathetically characteristic of his nature and his genius.

"Dear Moir,[1]

"God bless you and yours, and goodbye! I drop these few lines, as in a bottle from a ship water-logged and on the brink of foundering, being in the last stage of dropsical debility; but, though

[1] The *Delta* of Blackwood

suffering in body, serene in mind. So, without reversing my union-jack, I await my last lurch. Till which, believe me, dear Moir,

"Yours most truly,
"THOMAS HOOD."

STANZAS

"Farewell, Life! My senses swim,
And the world is growing dim;
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night;
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapor chill;
Strong the earthly odor grows,—
I smell the Mould above the Rose!"

"Welcome, Life! The spirit strives!
Strength returns, and hope revives!
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn;
O'er the earth there comes a bloom,
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapors cold,—
I smell the Rose above the Mould!"

Nothing at first appears more easy than to define and to describe the genius of Hood. It is strictly singular, and entirely his own. That which is his is completely his, and no man can cry halves with him, or quarters,—hardly the smallest fraction. The estimate of his genius, therefore, puts the critic to no trouble of elaborate discrimination or comparison. When we think of Hood as a humorist, there is no need that we should at the same time think of Aristophanes, or Lucian, or Rabelais, or Swift, or Sterne, or Fielding, or Dickens, or Thackeray. When we think of him as a poet,—except in a few of his early compositions,—we are not driven to examine what he shares with Chaucer, or Spenser, or Shakspeare, or Milton, or Byron, or Coleridge, or Wordsworth, or any of the poetic masters of literature. Whether as humorist or as poet, he is in English literature what Richter is in German literature, "the only one." Then the characteristics of his genius are outwardly so evident, that, in merely a glance, we fancy we comprehend them. But the more we think, the more we reflect, the more the difficulty opens on us of doing full justice to the mind of Hood. We soon discover that we are dealing, not with a mere punster or jester, not with a mere master of grimace or manufacturer of broad grins, not with an eccentric oddity in prose or verse, not with a merry-andrew who tickles to senseless laughter, not with a spasmodic melodramatist who writhes in fictitious pain, but that we are dealing with a sincere, truthful, and most gifted nature,—many-sided, many-colored, harmonious as a whole, and having a real unity as the centre of its power. To enter into a complete exposition of such a nature is not our purpose: we must content ourselves with noting some of its most striking literary and moral peculiarities. We do not claim for Hood, that he was a man of profound, wide, or philosophic intellect, or that for grandeur of imagination he could be numbered among the godlike; we do not claim that he opened up the deeps of passion, or brought down transcendent truths from the higher spheres of mind; we claim for him no praise for science or for scholarship: we merely

maintain, that he was a man of rare humanity, of close, subtile, and various observation, of good sense and common sense, of intuitive insight into character, of catholic sympathy with his kind that towards the lowest was the most loving, of extraordinary social and miscellaneous knowledge that was always at his command, a thinker to the fullest measure of his needs, and, as humorist and poet, an originality and a novelty in the world of genius. This is our general estimate of Hood. What further we have to say shall be in accordance with it; and such has been the impressive influence of Hood's writings upon us, that our thoughts, whether we will or not, are more intent on their serious than on their comic import.

In all the writings of Hood that are not absolutely serious the *grotesque* is a present and pervading element. Often it shows itself, as if from an irresistible instinct of fantastic extravagance, in the wild and reckless sport of oddity. Combinations, mental, verbal, and pictorial, to ordinary mortals the strangest and the most remote, were to Hood innate and spontaneous. They came not from the outward,—they were born of the inward. They were purely subjective, the sportive pranks of Hood's own ME, when that ME was in its queerest moods. How naturally the impossible or the absurd took the semblance of consistency in the mental associations of Hood, we observe even in his private correspondence. "Jane," (Mrs. Hood,) he writes, "is now drinking porter,—at which I look half savage….I must even *sip*, when I long to *swig*. I shall turn a fish soon, and have the pleasure of angling for myself." This, if without intention, would be a blunder or a bull. If it were written unwittingly, the result would be simply ludicrous, and consign it to the category of humor; but knowingly written, as we are aware it was, we must ascribe it to the category of wit.

This presence or absence of *intention* often decides whether a saying or an image is within the sphere of humor or of wit. But wit and humor constantly run into each other; and though the absence of intention at once shows that a ludicrous surprise belongs to the humorous, the presence of it will not so clearly define it as belonging to the witty. Nor will laughter quite settle this question; for there is wit which makes us laugh, and there is humor which does not. On the whole, it is as to what is purely wit that we are ever the most at fault. Certain phases of humor we cannot mistake,—especially those which are broadly comic or farcical. But sometimes we meet with incidents or scenes which have more in them of the pathetic than the comic, that we must still rank with the humorous. Here is a case in point. A time was when it was a penal offence in Ireland for a priest to say Mass, and under particular circumstances a capital felony. A priest was malignantly prosecuted; but the judge, being humane, and better than the law, determined to confound the informer.

"Pray, Sir," said the judge, "how do you know he said Mass?"

"Because I heard him say it, my Lord."

"Did he say it in Latin?" asked the judge.

"Yes, my Lord."

"Then you understand Latin?"

"A little."

"What words did you hear him say?"

"*Ave Maria*."

"That is the Lord's Prayer, is it not?" asked the judge.

"Yes, my Lord."

"Here is a pretty witness to convict the prisoner!" cried the judge; "he swears *Ave Maria* is Latin for the Lord's Prayer!"

Now, surely, this scene is hardly laughable, and yet it is thoroughly humorous. But take an instance which is entirely comic:—"All ye blackguards as isn't lawyers," exclaimed a crier, "quit the Coort." Or this:—"Och, Counsellor, darling," said a peasant once to O'Connell, "I've no way *here* to show your Honor my gratitude! but *I wish I saw you knocked down in my own parish*, and may be I wouldn't bring a faction to the rescue." A similar instance occurred in this country. An enthusiastic

Irishwoman, listening once to a lecturer praising Ireland, exclaimed,—"I wish to God I saw that man in poverty, that I might do something to relieve him."

We shall now cite an example of pure wit.

"How can you defend this item, Mr. Curran," said Lord Chancellor Clare,—"'To writing innumerable letters, £100'?"

"Why, my Lord," said Curran, "nothing can be more reasonable. *It is not a penny a letter*."

But we might fill the whole space of our article, ay, or of twenty articles, with such illustrations; we will content ourselves with two others. The idea is the same in both; but in the first it seems to have a mixture of the witty and the humorous; in the second, it belongs entirely to the humorous.

A lady at a dinner-party passing near where Talleyrand was standing, he looked up and significantly exclaimed, "Ah!" In the course of the dinner, the lady having asked him across the table, why on her entrance he said "Oh!" Talleyrand, with a grave, self-vindicatory look, answered, —"*Madame, je n'ai pas dit* 'Oh!' *J'ai dit* 'Ah!'"

Here is the second.—The Reverend Alonzo Fizzle had preached his farewell-sermon to his disconsolate people in Drowsytown. The next morning, Monday, he was strolling musingly along a silent road among the melancholy woods. The pastor of a neighboring flock, the Reverend Darius Dizzle, was driving by in his modest one-horse chaise.

"Take a seat, Fizzle?" said he. "Don't care if I do," said Fizzle,—and took it.

"Why, the mischief, Fizzle," said Dizzle, "did you say in your farewell-sermon, that it was just as well to preach to the dead buried six feet under the earth as to the people of Drowsytown?"

"I?—I?—I?" gasped the astonished Fizzle. "A more alive and wakeful people are not upon the earth than the citizens of Drowsytown. What calumniator has thus outraged them and *me*? Who told you this? *Who* dared to say it?"

"Brother Ichabod Muzzle," calmly answered Dizzle.

Fizzle leaped out, hurried to his home, and was soon seen whipping his unfortunate horse in a certain direction. He was on his way to the residence of the Reverend Ichabod Muzzle, who lived five or six miles off. He reached the home of the Reverend Ichabod. The friends greeted each other. Fizzle, though pregnant with indignation, assumed the benignant air of the Beloved Disciple. Muzzle looked Platonically the incarnate idea of the Christian Parson.

"Fine day," said Fizzle.

"Lovely," said Muzzle.

"Glorious view from this window," observed Fizzle.

"Superb," replied Muzzle.

"The beauties of Nature are calming and consolatory," murmured Fizzle.

"And so are the doctrines of grace," whispered Muzzle.

Fizzle could hold out no longer. Still he tried to look the placid, and to speak with meekness.

"Pray, how did it come, Brother Muzzle," said Fizzle, "that you reported I declared in my farewell-sermon it was as easy to preach to the dead buried six feet under the earth as to the people of Drowsytown?"

"You have been grossly misinformed, my brother," replied Muzzle. "I didn't say *six feet*. I said *four feet*."

In Hood we have all varieties of wit and humor, both separate and intermingled.

As we have already observed, the grotesque is that which is most obviously distinctive in Hood's writings. But in different degrees it is combined with other elements, and in each combination altered and modified. The combination which more immediately arrests attention is that with the ludicrous. In this the genius of Hood seemed to hold a very festival of antics, oddity, and mirth; all his faculties seemed to rant and riot in the Saturnalia of comic incongruity. And it is difficult to say whether, in provoking laughter, his pen or his pencil is the more effective instrument. The mere illustrations of the subject-matter are in themselves irresistible. They reach at once and directly the instinctive sense

of the ludicrous, and over them youth and age cachinnate together. We have seen a little girl, eight years old, laugh as if her heart would break, in merely looking at the pictures in a volume of Hood. The printed page she did not read or care to read; what the prints illustrated she knew nothing about; but her eyes danced with joy and overran with tears of childish merriment. But in all this luxury of fun, whether by pen or pencil, no word, idea, image, or delineation obscures the transparency of innocence, or leaves the shadow of a stain upon the purest mind. To be at the same time so comic and so chaste is not only a moral beauty, but a literary wonder. It is hard to deal with the oddities of humor, however carefully, without casual slips that may offend or shame the reverential or the sensitive. Noble, on the whole, as Shakspeare was, we would not in a mixed company, until after cautious rehearsal, venture to read his comic passages aloud. We may apply the statement, also, to the comic portions of Burns,—and, indeed, to comic literature in general. But who has fear to read most openly anything that Hood ever wrote? or who has a memory of wounded modesty for anything that he ever read secretly of Hood's? Dr. Johnson says that dirty images were as natural to Swift as sublime ones were to Milton;—we may say that images at once lambent and laughable were those which were natural to Hood. Even when his mirth is broadest, it is decent; and while the merest recollection of his drollery will often convulse the face in defiance of the best-bred muscles, no thought arises which the dying need regret. Who can ever forget "The Lost Heir," or remember it but to laugh at its rich breadth of natural, yet farcical, absurdity? The very opening begins the giggle:—

> "One day, as I was going by
> That part of Holborn christened High," etc.

Then there is that broadest of broad, but morally inoffensive stories, in which the laundress, in trying to cure a smoking chimney, blows herself to death, having merely power to speak a few words to Betty,—who gaspingly explains to her mistress "The Report from Below":—

> "Well, Ma'am, you won't believe it,
> But it's gospel fact and true,
> But these words is all she whispered,—
> *'Why, where is the powder blew?*'"

For other examples refer to "The Ode to Malthus" and "The Blow-up," which pain the sides while they cheer the heart.

Again, we find the grotesque through Hood's writings in union with the fantastic and the fanciful. His fertility in the most unexpected analogies becomes to the reader of his works a matter of continual wonder. Strange and curious contrasts and likenesses, both mental and. verbal, which might never once occur even to a mind of more than common eccentricity and invention, seem to have been in his mind with the ordinary flow of thinking. Plenteous and sustained, therefore, as his wit is, it never fails to startle. We have no doubt of his endless resources, and yet each new instance becomes a new marvel. His wit, too, is usually pregnant and vital with force and meaning. This constitutes the singular and peculiar worth of his verbal wit in general, and of his puns in particular. In verbal wit he has had but few equals, and in puns he has had none. He made the pun an instrument of power; and had his wit been malignant, he could have pointed the pun to a sharpness that would have left wounds as deep as thought, and could have added a poison to it that would have kept them rankling as long as memory lasted. The secret of his power in the pun is, that he does not rest in the analogy of sound alone, but seeks also for analogy of significance. Generally there is a subtile coincidence between his meaning and what the sound of the pun signifies, and thus the pun becomes an amusing or illustrative image, or a most emphatic and striking condensation of his thought. "Take care of your cough," he writes to his engraver, "lest you go to coughy-pot, as I said before; but I did *not* say before,

that nobody is so likely as a wood-engraver to cut his stick." Speaking of his wife, he says,—"To be sure, she still sticks to her old fault of going to sleep while I am dictating, till I vow to change my _Woman_uensis for a _Man_uensis." How keenly and well the pun serves him in burlesque, in his comic imitations of the great moralist! He hits off with inimitable ridicule the great moralist's dislike to Scotland. Boswell inquired the Doctor's opinion on illicit distillation, and how the great moralist would act in an affray between the smugglers and the excise. "If I went by the *letter* of the law, I should assist the customs; but according to the *spirit*, I should stand by the contrabandists." The Doctor was always very satirical on the want of timber in the North. "Sir," said he to the young Lord of Icombally, who was going to join his regiment, "may Providence preserve you in battle, and especially your nether limbs! You may grow a walking-stick here, but you must import a wooden leg." At Dunsinnane the old prejudice broke out. "Sir," said he to Boswell, "Macbeth was an idiot; he ought to have known that every wood in Scotland might be carried in a man's hand. The Scotch, Sir, are like the frogs in the fable: if they had a log, they would make a king of it." We will quote here a stanza which contains quite a serious application of the pun; and for Hood's purpose no other word could so happily or so pungently express his meaning. The poem is an "Address to Mrs. Fry"; and the doctrine of it is, that it is better and wiser to teach the young and uncorrupted that are yet outside the prison than the vicious and the hardened who have got inside it. Thus he goes on:—

"I like your chocolate, good Mistress Fry!
I like your cookery in every way;
I like your Shrove-tide service and supply;
I like to hear your sweet Pandeans play;
I like the pity in your full-brimmed eye;
I like your carriage and your silken gray,
Your dove-like habits, and your silent preaching;
But I don't like your *Newgatory* teaching."

Hood had not only an unexampled facility in the discovery of analogies in a multitude of separate resemblances and relations, but he had an equal facility of tracing with untiring persistency a single idea through all its possible variations. Take, for example, the idea of *gold*, in the poem of "Miss Kilmansegg," and there is hardly a conceivable reference to *gold* which imagination or human life can suggest, that is not presented to us.

But this play of words and thought would, after all, be in itself little more than serious trifling, a mere exhibition of mental and verbal ingenuity. It would be a kind of intellectual and linguistical dexterity, which would give the author a singularity and supremacy above the world. It would make him the greatest of mental acrobats or jugglers, and he might almost deserve as eminent a reputation as a similar class of artists in bodily achievements; possibly he might claim to be ranked with the man who cooked his dinner and ate it on a tight rope over the Niagara Rapids, or with the man who placed a pea-nut under a dish-cover and turned it into the American eagle. Such, however, is not Hood's case. In all feats of mental and verbal oddity, he does, indeed, rank the highest,—but *that* is the very lowest of his attainments. His pranks do verily cause us to laugh and wonder; but there is also that ever in his pranks which causes us to think, and even sometimes to weep. In much of his that seems burlesque, the most audacious, there are hidden springs of thought and tears. Often, when most he seems as the grimed and grinning clown in a circus girded by gaping spectators, he stops to pour out satire as passionate as that of Juvenal, or morality as eloquent and as pure as that of Pascal. And this he does without lengthening his face or taking off his paint. Sometimes, when he most absurdly scampers in his thoughts, when he kicks up the heels of his fancy in the most outrageous fashion, he is playing as it most doth please him on our human sympathy, and the human heart becomes an instrument to his using, out of which he discourseth eloquent music according to his moods. The

interest one finds in reading Hood is often the sudden pleasure which comes upon him. When in the midst of what appears a wilful torrent of absurdity, there bursts out a rush of earnest and instinctive nature. We could quote enough in confirmation of this assertion to make a moderate volume. And then the large and charitable wisdom, which in Hood's genius makes the teacher humble in order to win the learner, we value all the more that it conceals authority in the guise of mirth, and under the coat of motley or the mantle of extravagance insinuates effective and salutary lessons.

No writer has ever so successfully as Hood combined the grotesque with the terrible. He has the art, as no man but himself ever had, of sustaining the illusion of an awful or solemn narrative through a long poem, to be closed in a catastrophe that is at once unexpected and ludicrous. The mystification is complete; the secret of the issue is never betrayed; suspense is maintained with Spartan reticence; curiosity is excited progressively to its utmost tension; and the surprise at the end is oftentimes electric. "A Storm at Hastings" and "The Demon Ship" are of this class. But sometimes the terrible so prevails as to overpower the ludicrous, or rather, it becomes more terrible by the very presence of the ludicrous. We have evidence of this in the poem called "The Last Man." Sometimes we find the idea of the supernatural added to the ludicrous with great moral and imaginative effect. Observe with what pathetic tenderness this is done in the "Ode to the Printer's Devil,"—with what solemn moral power in "The Tale of a Trumpet,"—and with what historical satire and social insight in "The Knight and the Dragon." Sometimes the ludicrous element entirely disappears, and we have the purely terrible,—the terrible in itself, as in "The Tower of Lahneck,"—the terrible in pathos, as in "The Work-House Clock,"—the terrible in penitence and remorse, as in "The Lady's Dream,"—the terrible in temptation and despair, as in "The Dream of Eugene Aram."

Hood, as we have seen, is a perfect master equally of the grotesque and the terrible. Some writers, it may be, were as powerful as he in the grotesque. Rabelais had a certain hugeness in it, which Hood did not have and did not need. Other writers transcended Hood in the region of the terrible. It is almost useless to name such sublime masters of it as Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton. But in the intermingling of the grotesque and terrible, and in the infinite diversification of them as thus united, not only has Hood no equal, but no rival. In some few marked and outward directions of his genius he may have imitators; but in this magical alchemy of sentiment, thought, passion, fancy, and imagination, the secret of his laboratory was *his* alone; no other man has discovered it, and no other man, as he did, could use it. But he worked in the purely ideal also;—if he did not work supremely, he worked well, as we have proof in many of his serious poems, and particularly in his "Plea for the Midsummer Fairies." And when aroused,—but that was rarely,—he could wield a burningly satiric pen, and with manly indignation and impassioned scorn wield it to chastise the hypocritical and the arrogant, as his letter to a certain pious lady and his "Ode to Rae Wilson" bear sufficient witness.

Along with the grotesque and terrible in Hood's writings we also often observe a wizard-like command over the elements of the desolate, the weird, the sad, the forlorn, and the dreary. We may trace it in many of the poems to which we have already alluded. But it appears with all its lonely gloom of power in "The Haunted House." This poem is surely the work of a fancy that must have often gone into the desert of the soul to meditate, and that must have made itself acquainted with all that is dismal in imagery and feeling. Pictures, in succession or combination, it would be impossible to conceive, which more dolefully impress the mind with a sense of doom, dread, and mystery; yet every picture is in itself natural, and, while each adds to the intensity of the impression, each is in itself complete.

Now, having gone over some of the most noticeable qualities in the writings of Hood, we come to the crowning quality of his genius, the *simply pathetic*. We could, if space remained, adduce many psychological and other reasons why we apply this phrase to the pathos of Hood. One reason is, that Hood's pathos involves none of the complications of higher passion, nor any of the pomp which belongs, in mood, situation, or utterance, to the loftier phases of human suffering. The sorrow of those who most attracted his sympathy was not theatrical or imposing. It has been well said of him,

that his "bias was towards all that was poor and unregarded." And thus, while those who painfully moved the charity and compassion of his genius were considered by him the victims of artificial civilization, his own feeling for them was natural and instinctive; yet never did natural and instinctive feeling receive expression more artistic, but with that admirable art in which elaboration attains the utmost perfection of simplicity. It excites our wonder to observe how in pathos Hood's genius divests itself of attributes which had seemed essential to its existence. All that is grotesque, whimsical, or odd disappears, and we have only the soul of pity in the sound of song,—in song "most musical, most melancholy." In pathos, Hood's is not what we should call a transformed genius so much as a genius becoming divested of its coarser life, and then breathing purely the inner spirit of goodness and beauty. The result is what one might almost term the "absolute" in pathos. Nothing is excluded that is necessary to impression; nothing is admitted that could vulgarize or weaken it. We have thus pathos at once practical and poetic,—pathos at once the most affecting and the most ideal,—coming from a heart rich with all human charities, and gaining worthy and immortal form by means of a subtile, deep, cultivated imagination. The pathetic, therefore, no less than the comic, in Hood's writings has all the author's peculiar originality, but has it in a higher order. Pathos was the product of the author's mind when it was most matured by experience, and when suffering, without impairing its strength, had refined its characteristic benevolence to the utmost tenderness.

Hood's pathos culminates in "The Song of the Shirt," "The Lay of the Laborer," and "The Bridge of Sighs."

These are marvellous lyrics. In spirit and in form they are singular and remarkable. We cannot think of any poems which more show the mystic enchantment of genius. How else was a ragged sempstress in a squalid garret made immortal, nay, made universal, made to stand for an entire sisterhood of wretchedness? Here is the direst poverty, blear-eyed sorrow, dim and dismal suffering, —nothing of the romantic. A stern picture it is, which even the softer touches render sterner; still there is nought in it that revolts or shocks; it is deeply poetic, calls into passionate action the feelings of reverence and pity, and has all the dignity of tragedy. Even more wonderful is the transformation that a rustic hind undergoes in "The Lay of the Laborer," in which a peasant out of work personifies, with eloquent impressiveness, the claims and calamities of toiling manhood. But an element of the sublime is added in "The Bridge of Sighs." In that we have the truly tragic; for we have in it the union of guilt, grief, despair, and death. An angel from heaven, we think, could not sing a more gentle dirge, or one more pure; yet the ordinary associations suggested by the corpse of the poor, ruined, self-murdered girl are such as to the prudish and fastidious would not allow her to be mentioned, much less bring her into song. But in the pity almost divine with which Hood sings her fate there is not only a spotless delicacy, there is also a morality as elevated as the heavenly mercy which the lyrist breathes. The pure can afford to be pitiful; and the life of Hood was so exemplary, that he had no fear to hinder him from being charitable. The cowardice of conscience is one of the saddest penalties of sin; and to avert suspicion from one's self by severity to others is, indeed, the most miserable expediency of self-condemnation. The temper of charity and compassion seems natural to men of letters and of art. They are emotional and sensitive, and by the necessity of their vocation have to hold much communion with the inmost consciousness of our nature; they thus learn the weakness of man, and the allowances that he needs; they are conversant with a broad and diversified humanity, and thence they are seldom narrow, intolerant, or self-righteous; feeling, too, their full share of moral and mortal imperfection, they refuse to be inquisitors of the unfortunate, but rather choose to be their advocates and helpers. No man ever had more of this temper than Hood; and out of it came these immortal lyrics upon which we have been commenting. For such a temper the writing of these lyrics was exceeding great reward; not only because they made the author an everlasting benefactor to the poor, but also because they became an interpretation of his own deeper genius, and revealed a nobler meaning in his works than had ever before been discerned. Hence-forth, he was more thought of as a profound poet than as the greatest of mimes, jesters, and punsters. The lyrics of the poor saved him from imminent injustice.

—All that we have further to say of these lyrics is to express our admiration as to the classical finish of their diction, and as to the wild, sweet, and strange music in their sadly sounding measures.

Hood is a writer to whom, in his degree, we may apply the epithet *Shakspearian*. We do not, indeed, compare him with Shakspeare in bulk or force of genius, but only in quality and kind. He had, as the great dramatist, the same disregard of the temporary and discernment of the essential; the same wonderful wealth of vocabulary, and the same bold dexterity in the use of it; the same caprices of jestings and conceits; the same comminglings of mirth and melancholy; the same many-sided conception of existence; the same embracing catholicity of tastes and tendencies; the same indifference to sects and factions; the same freedom from jealousies, asperities, and spites; and in the lower scale of his genius, he resembled the mighty dramatist in subtile perception of life and Nature, in his mental and moral independence, and in his intuitive divinations of abstract truth and individual character.

As a poet of the poor, Crabbe is the only poet with whom he can be critically compared. The comparison would be a contrast; and in order to handle it to any purpose, a long essay would be required. Hood wrote but a few short lyrics on the poor; Crabbe wrote volumes. Crabbe was *literal*: Hood *ideal*. Crabbe was concrete; Hood was abstract. Crabbe lived among the rural poor; Hood among the city poor. Crabbe saw the poor constantly, and went minutely and practically into the interior of their life; if Hood ever directly saw them at all, it was merely with casual glimpses, and he must have learned of them only by occasional report. Crabbe was a man of vigorous constitution, he lived a hardy life, and he lived it long; Hood was a man of feeble health, he lived a life of pain, and he closed it early. Crabbe had a hard youth, but after that a certain and settled competence; Hood's was also a youth of struggle, but struggle was his destiny to the end. These radical and circumstantial differences between the men will account for their different modes in thinking and writing of the poor. But both were men of genius, of genial humanity, and of singular originality. No one who reads Crabbe's writings will deny him genius; no one who reads them with adequate sympathy and attention will deny that his genius is vital with passion and imagination. Only the latent heat of passion and imagination could save these seemingly bald and monotonous narratives from being as dull as a dictionary. But they are not so; they have an interest which holds the reader with a fixedness of grasp which he cannot loosen. Crabbe's poetry of the poor is slow and epic; Hood's is rapid and lyrical. Crabbe's characters are only actual and intensified individuals; Hood's characters are idealized and representative persons. Hood gives you only the pathetic or tragical essentials; but, along with these, Crabbe gives you the complexity and detail of life which surrounded them. Hood presents you with the picture of a lonely woman at midnight toiling and starving in the slavery of sewing; but Crabbe would trace her from her quiet country-home, through the follies which led her to a London garret. Hood, in his "Lay of the Laborer," makes you listen to the wail of a strong man imploring leave to toil; Crabbe would find him drunk in the beer-house or the gin-shop, and then carry you on to the catastrophe in his ruined home or in his penal death. Hood, in his "Bridge of Sighs," brings you into the presence of death, and you gaze, weeping, over the lifeless form of beauty that had once been innocent and blooming girlhood, but from which the spirit, early soiled and saddened, took violent flight in its despair; Crabbe would give us the record of her sins, and connect her end retributively with her conduct. Much is in Crabbe that is repulsive and austere; but he is, notwithstanding, an earnest moral teacher and a deep tragic poet. Let us be content with both Crabbe and Hood: we need to look at the aspect which each of them gives us of life,—the stern poetry of fact in Crabbe, and the lyrical poetry of feeling in Hood. Crabbe has dealt with groups and masses; Hood has immortalized single figures, which, by their isolation and intensity, take full and forcible possession of the mind, and can never be driven out from memory.

This is a rather serious conclusion of an article on a comic genius. As the humorist is for the most part on the play-side of literature, he should, we are apt to suppose, be entirely on the play-side of life. He ought to laugh and grow fat,—and he ought to have an easy-chair to laugh in. Why should

he who makes so many joyous not have the largest mess of gladness to his share? He ought to be a favored Benjamin at the banquet of existence,—and have, above the most favored of his brethren, a double portion. He ought, like the wind, to be "a chartered libertine,"—to blow where he listeth, and have no one to question whence he cometh or whither he goeth. He ought to be the citizen of a comfortable world, and he ought to have an ungrudged freedom in it. What debt is he should not be allowed to learn or to know,—and the idea of a dun it should not be possible for him even to conceive. Give him good cheer; enrich the juices of his blood, nourish generously the functions of his brain; give him delicate viands and rosy wine; give him smiles and laughter, music and flowers; let him inherit every region of creation, and be at home in air and water as well as on the earth; at last, in an Anacreontic bloom of age, let him in a song breathe away his life. Such is the lot, we believe, that many imagine as the condition of a humorist; but which the humorist, less than most men, has ever enjoyed. All great humorists have been men grave at heart, and often men of more than ordinary trials. None but the superficial can fail to recognize the severity of Rabelais's genius. The best portion of poor Molière's manhood was steeped in sorrow. The life of Swift was a hidden tragedy. The immortal wit of "Hudibras" did not save Butler from the straits and struggles of narrow means. Cervantes spent much of his time in a prison, and much of his grandest humor had there its birthplace. Farquhar died young, and in terrible distress of mind at the desolate prospect that he saw before his orphan children. How Sheridan died is familiar to us all. The very conditions of temperament which gave Sterne genius gave him also torment. Fielding and Smollett battled all their lives with adversity; and Goldsmith died in his prime, embittered in his last hours by distress and debt. Banim, the great Irish novelist, withered early out of life upon a government pittance of a pension; Griffin gave up literature, became a monk, and found in youth a grave; Carleton, one of the most gifted humorists that ever painted the many-colored pictures of Irish character, is now struggling against the pressure of a small income in his advancing years. Not to carry this melancholy list farther,—which might be indefinitely prolonged,—we close it with the name of Thomas Hood.

But not by contest with realities of life alone have humorists been saved from temptations to any dangerous levity; great humorists, as we have said, have generally been earnest men, very grave at heart, and much that they have written has been tragedy in the guise of irony. All readers cannot find this out. They cannot see the grief of life beneath its grin; they cannot detect the scorn or the pity that is hidden in joke or banter; neither can they always find out the joke or banter that is covered by a solemn face; and many a sincere believer has been deemed an atheist because he burlesqued hypocrites with their own gravity. Numbers judge only by the outside, and never reach the spirit of writing or of man. They laugh at the contortions of grimace, but of the mysteries of mind or the pains of heart which underlie the contortions they know nothing. They snatch their rapid pleasure, and leave unvalued the worth of him who gives it; they care not for the cost of genius or labor at which it has been procured; and when they have had their transient indulgence, they have had all they sought and all that they could enjoy.

The relation of many to the humorist is illustrated by that of the doctor, on a certain occasion, to Liston, the celebrated comedian. Liston was subject to constitutional melancholy, and in a severe attack of it he consulted a famous physician.

"Go and see Liston," said the doctor.

"I am Liston," said the actor.

And thus the inner soul of a great humorist is often as unrecognized by those who read him as was the natural personality of Liston by the doctor.

FAYAL AND THE PORTUGUESE

Every man when he first crosses the ocean is a Columbus to himself, no matter how many voyages by other navigators he may have heard described or read recorded. Geographies convince only the brain, not the senses, that the globe is round; and when personal experience exhibits the fact, it is as wonderful as if never before suggested. You have dwelt for weeks within one unbroken loneliness of sea and sky, with nothing that seemed solid in the universe but the bit of painted wood on which you have floated. Suddenly one morning something looms high and cloudlike far away, and you are told that it is land. Then you feel, with all ignorant races, as if the ship were a god, thus to find its way over that trackless waste, or as if this must be some great and unprecedented success, and in no way the expected or usual result of such enterprises. A sea-captain of twenty-five years' experience told me that this sensation never wore off, and that he still felt as fresh a sense of something extraordinary, on making land, as upon his first voyage. To discover for one's self that there is really another side to the ocean, —that is the astonishing thing. And when it happens, as in our case, that the haven thus gained is not merely a part of a great continent which the stupidest ship could not miss, if it only sailed far enough, but is actually a small volcanic island, a mere dot among those wild waves, a thing which one might easily have passed in the night, unsuspecting, and which yet was not so passed,—it really seems like the maddest piece of good-luck, as if one should go to sea in a bowl, hoping somewhere or other to land on the edge of a tea-cup.

As next day we stumbled on deck in the foggy dawn, the dim island five miles off seemed only dawning too, a shapeless thing, half-formed out of chaos, as if the leagues of gray ocean had grown weary of their eternal loneliness, and bungled into something like land at last. The phrase "*making* land" at once became the simple and necessary expression; we had come upon the very process itself. Nearer still, the cliffs five hundred feet in height, and the bare conical hills of the interior, divided everywhere by cane-hedges into a regular checker-work of cultivation, prolonged the mystery; and the glimpses of white villages scarcely seemed to break the spell. Point after point we passed,—great shoulders of volcanic mountain thrust out to meet the sea, with steep green ravines furrowed in between them; and when at last we rounded the Espalamarca, and the white walls and the Moorish towers of Horta stood revealed before us, and a stray sunbeam pierced the clouds on the great mountain Pico across the bay, and the Spanish steamship in the harbor flung out her gorgeous ensign of gold and blood—then, indeed, we felt that all the glowing cup of the tropics was proffered to our lips, and the dream of our voyage stood fulfilled.

Not one of our immediate party, most happily, had ever been beyond Boston Harbor before, and so we all plunged without fear or apology into the delicious sense of foreignness; we moved as those in dreams. No one could ever precisely remember what we said or what we did, only that we were somehow boated ashore till we landed with difficulty amid high surf on a wave-worn quay, amid an enthusiastic throng of women in dark-blue hooded cloaks which we all took for priestly vestments, and of beggars in a combination of patches which no sane person could reasonably take for vestments of any sort, until one saw how scrupulously they were washed and how carefully put together.

The one overwhelming fact of the first day abroad is the simple sensation that one *is* abroad: a truth that can never be made anything but commonplace in the telling, or anything but wonderful in the fulfilling. What Emerson says of the landscape is true here: no particular foreign country is so remarkable as the necessity of being remarkable under which every foreign country lies. Horace Walpole found nothing in Europe so astonishing as Calais; and we felt that at every moment the first edge of novelty was being taken off for life, and that, if we were to continue our journey round the world, we never could have that first day's sensations again. Yet because no one can spare time to describe it at the moment, this first day has never yet been described; all books of travels begin on the second day; the daguerreotype-machine is not ready till the expression has begun to fade out.

Months had been spent in questioning our travelled friends, sheets of old correspondence had been disinterred, sketches studied, Bullar's unsatisfactory book read, and now we were on the spot, and it seemed as if every line and letter must have been intended to describe some other place on the earth, and not this strange, picturesque, Portuguese, Semi-Moorish Fayal.

One general truth came over us instantly, and it was strange to think that no one had happened to speak of it before. The essence of the surprise was this. We had always been left to suppose that in a foreign country one would immediately begin to look about and observe the foreign things,—these novel details having of course that groundwork of ordinary human life, the same all the world over. To our amazement, we found that it was the groundwork itself that was foreign; we were shifted off our feet; not the details, but the basis itself was wholly new and bewildering; and, instead of noting down, like intelligent travellers, the objects which were new, we found ourselves stupidly staring about to find something which was old,—a square inch of surface anywhere which looked like anything ever seen before,—that we might take our departure from that, and then begin to improve our minds. Perhaps this is difficult for the first hours in any foreign country; certainly the untravelled American finds it utterly impossible in Fayal. Consider the incongruities. The beach beneath your feet, instead of being white or yellow, is black; the cliffs beside you are white or red, instead of black or gray. The houses are of white plaster on the outside, with wood-work, often painted in gay stripes, within. There are no chimneys to the buildings, but sometimes there is a building to the chimney; the latter being a picturesque tower with smoke coming from the top and a house appended to the base. One half the women go about bareheaded, save a handkerchief, and with a good deal of bareness at the other extremity,—while the other half wear hoops on their heads in the form of vast conical hoods attached to voluminous cloth cloaks which sweep the ground. The men cover their heads with all sorts of burdens, and their feet with nothing, or else with raw-hide slippers, hair outside. There is no roar or rumble in the streets, for there are no vehicles and no horses, but an endless stream of little donkeys, clicking the rough pavement beneath their sharp hoofs, and thumped solidly by screaming drivers. Who wears the new shoes on the island does not appear; but the hens limp about the houses, tethered to the old ones.

Further inspection reveals new marvels. The houses are roofed with red and black tiles, semi-cylindrical in shape and rusty in surface, and making the whole town look as if incrusted with barnacles. There is never a pane of glass on the lower story, even for the shops, but only barred windows and solid doors. Every house has a paved court-yard for the ground-floor, into which donkeys may be driven and where beggars or peasants may wait, and where one naturally expects to find Gil Blas in one corner and Sancho Panza in another. An English lady, on arriving, declared that our hotel was only a donkey-stable, and refused to enter it. In the intervals between the houses the streets are lined with solid stone walls from ten to twenty feet high, protecting the gardens behind; and there is another stone wall inclosing the town on the water side, as if to keep the people from being spilled out. One must go some miles into the country before getting beyond these walls, or seeing an inch, on either side. This would be intolerable, of course, were the country a level; but, as every rod of ground slopes up or down, it simply seems like walking through a series of roofless ropewalks or bowling-alleys, each being tilted up at an angle, so that one sees the landscape through the top, but never over the sides. Thus, walking or riding, one seldom sees the immediate foreground, but a changing background of soft valleys, an endless patchwork of varied green rising to the mountains in the interior of the island, or sinking to the blue sea, beyond which the mountain Pico rears its graceful outline across the bay.

From the street below comes up a constant hum of loud voices, often rising so high that one runs to see the fight commence, and by the time one has crossed the room it has all subsided and everybody is walking off in good-humor. Meanwhile the grave little donkeys are constantly pattering by, sometimes in pairs or in fours with a cask slung between; and mingled with these, in the middle of the street, there is an endless stream of picturesque figures, everybody bearing something on the

head,—girls, with high water-jars, each with a green bough thrust in, to keep the water sweet,—boys, with baskets of fruit and vegetables, —men, with boxes, bales, bags, or trunks for the custom-house, or an enormous fagot of small sticks for firewood, or a long pole hung with wooden jars of milk, or with live chickens, head downward, or perhaps a basket of red and blue and golden fishes, fresh from the ocean and glistening in the sun. The strength of their necks seems wonderful, as does also their power of balancing. On a rainy day I have seen a tall man walk gravely along the middle of the street through the whole length of the town, bearing a large empty cask balanced upon his head, over which he held an umbrella.

Perhaps it is a procession-day, and all the saints of some church are taken out for an airing. They are figures composed of wood and wax, life-size, and in full costume, each having a complete separate wardrobe, but more tawdry and shabby, let us hope, than the originals ever indulged in. Here are Saint Francis and Saint Isabella, Saint Peter with a monk kneeling before him, and Saint Margaret with her dog, and the sceptred and ermined Saint Louis, and then Joseph and Mary sitting amicably upon the same platform, with an additional force of bearers to sustain them. For this is the procession of the *Bem-casados* or Well-married, in honor of the parents of Jesus. Then there are lofty crucifixes and waving flags; and when the great banner, bearing simply the letters S.P.Q.R., comes flapping round the windy corner, one starts in wonder at the permanent might of that vast superstition which has grasped the very central symbol of ancient empire, and brought it down, like a boulder on a glacier, into modern days. It makes all Christianity seem but a vast palimpsest, since the letters which once meant "*Senatus Populusque Romanus*" stand now only for the feebler modern formula, "*Salve populum quem redemisti*."

All these shabby splendors are interspersed among the rank and file of two hundred, or thereabouts, lay brethren of different orders, ranging in years from six to sixty. The Carmelites wear a sort of white bathing-dress, and the Brotherhood of Saint Francis are clothed in long brown robes, girded with coarse rope. The very old and the very young look rather picturesque in these disguises,—the latter especially, urchins with almost baby-faces, toddling along with lighted candle in hand; and one often feels astonished to recognize some familiar porter or shopkeeper in this ecclesiastical dress, as when discovering a pacific next-door neighbor beneath the bear-skin of an American military officer. A fit suggestion; for next follows a detachment of Portuguese troops-of-the-line,—twenty shambling men in short jackets, with hair shaved close, looking most like children's wooden monkeys, by no means live enough for the real ones. They straggle along, scarcely less irregular in aspect than the main body of the procession; they march to the tap of the drum. I never saw a Fourth-of-July procession in the remotest of our rural districts which was not beautiful, compared to this forlorn display; but the popular homage is duly given, the bells jangle incessantly, and, as the procession passes, all men uncover their heads or have their hats knocked off by official authority.

Still watching from our hotel-window, turn now from the sham picturesqueness of the Church to the real and unconscious picturesqueness of every day. It is the orange-season, and beneath us streams an endless procession of men, women, and children, each bearing on the head a great graceful basket of yellow treasures. Opposite our window there is a wall by which they rest themselves, after their three-mile walk from the gardens. There they lounge and there they chatter. Little boys come slyly to pilfer oranges, and are pelted away with other oranges; for a single orange has here no more appreciable value than a single apple in our farmers' orchards; and, indeed, windfall oranges are left to decay, like windfall apples. During this season one sees oranges everywhere, even displayed as a sort of thank-offering on the humble altars of country-churches; the children's lips and cheeks assume a chronic yellowness; and the narrow side-walks are strewn with bits of peel, punched through and through by the boys' pop-guns, as our boys punch slices of potato.

All this procession files down, the whole day long, to the orange-yards by the quay. There one finds another merry group, or a series of groups, receiving and sorting the fragrant loads, papering, packing, boxing. In the gardens there seems no end to the varieties of the golden fruit, although only

one or two are here being packed. There are shaddocks, *zamboas,* limes, sour lemons, sweet lemons, oranges proper, and *Tangerinas*; these last being delicate, perfumed, thin-skinned, miniature-fruit from the land of the Moors. One may begin to eat oranges at Fayal in November; but no discriminating person eats a whole orange before March,—a few slices from the sunny side, and the rest is thrown upon the ground. One learns to reverse the ordinary principles of selection also, and choose the smaller and darker before the large and yellow: the very finest in appearance being thrown aside by the packers as worthless. Of these packers the Messrs. Dabney employ two hundred, and five hundred beside in the transportation. One knows at a glance whether the cargo is destined for America or England: the English boxes having the thin wooden top bent into a sort of dome, almost doubling the solid contents of the box. This is to evade the duty, the custom-house measurement being taken only at the corners. It also enables the London dealers to remove some two hundred oranges from every box, and still send it into the country as full.—When one thinks what a knowing race we came from, it is really wonderful where we Yankees picked up our honesty.

Let us take one more glance from the window; for there is a mighty jingling and rattling, the children are all running to see something, and the carriage is approaching. "The carriage": it is said advisedly; for there is but one street on the island passable to such an equipage, and but one such equipage to enjoy its privileges,—only one, that is, drawn by horses, and presentable in Broadway. There are three other vehicles, each the object of envy and admiration, but each drawn by oxen only. There is the Baroness, the only lady of title, who sports a sort of butcher's cart, with a white top; within lies a mattress, and on the mattress recline her ladyship and her daughter, as the cart rumbles and stumbles over the stones;—nor they alone, for, on emerging from an evening party, I have seen the oxen of the Baroness, unharnessed, quietly munching their hay at the foot of the stairs, while a pair of bare feet emerging from one end of the vehicle, and a hearty snore from the other, showed the mattress to be found a convenience by some one beside the nobility. Secondly, there is a stout gentleman near the Hotel, reputed to possess eleven daughters, and known to possess a pea-green omnibus mounted on an ox-cart; the windows are all closed with blinds, and the number of young ladies may be an approximation only. And, lastly, there sometimes rolls slowly by an expensive English curricle, lately imported; the springs are somehow deranged, so that it hangs entirely on one side; three ladies ride within, and the proprietor sits on the box, surveying in calm delight his two red oxen with their sky-blue yoke, and the tall peasant who drives them with a goad.

After a few days of gazing at objects like these, one is ready to recur to the maps, and become statistical. It would be needless to say (but that we all know far less of geography than we are supposed to know) that the Azores are about two-thirds of the way across the Atlantic, and about the latitude of Philadelphia; sharing, however, in the greater warmth of the European coast, and slightly affected, also, by the Gulf Stream. The islands are supposed to have been known to the Phoenicians, and Humboldt holds out a flattering possibility of Phoenician traces yet discoverable. This lent additional interest to a mysterious inscription which we hunted up in a church built in the time of Philip II., at the north end of the island; we had the satisfaction of sending a copy of it to Humboldt, though it turned out to be only a Latin inscription clothed in uncouth Greek characters, such as have long passed for Runic in the Belgian churches and elsewhere. The Phoenician traces yet remain to be discovered; so does a statue fabled to exist on the shore of one of the smaller islands, where Columbus landed in some of his earlier voyages, and, pacing the beach, looked eagerly towards the western sea: the statue is supposed still to portray him. In the fifteenth century, at any rate, the islands were re-discovered. They have always since then been under Portuguese control, including in that phrase the period when Philip II. united that crown with his own; and they are ruled now by Portuguese military and civil governors, with the aid of local legislatures.

Fayal stands, with Pico and San Jorge, rather isolated from the rest of the group, and out of their sight. It is the largest and most populous of the islands, except St. Michael and Terceira; it has the best harbor and by far the most of American commerce, St. Michael taking most of the English.

Whalers put into Fayal for fresh vegetables and supplies, and to transship their oil; while distressed vessels often seek the harbor to repair damages. The island is twenty-five miles long, and shaped like a turtle; the cliffs along the sea range from five hundred to a thousand feet in height, and the mountainous interior rises to three thousand. The sea is far more restless than upon our coast, the surf habitually higher; and there is such a depth of water in many places around the shore, that, on one occasion, a whale-ship, drawn too near by the current, broke her mainyard against the cliff, without grazing her keel.

The population numbers about twenty-five thousand, one-half of these being found in the city of Horta, and the rest scattered in some forty little hamlets lying at irregular distances along the shores. There are very few English or French residents, and no Americans but the different branches of the Consul's family,—a race whose reputation for all generous virtues has spread too widely to leave any impropriety in mentioning them here. Their energy and character have made themselves felt in every part of the island; and in the villages farthest from their charming home, one has simply to speak of *a familia*, "the family," and the introduction is sufficient. Almost every good institution or enterprise on the island is the creation of Mr. Dabney. He transacts without charge the trade in vegetables between the peasants and the whale-ships, guarantying the price to the producers, giving them the profits, if any, and taking the risk himself; and the only provision for pauperism is found in his charities. Every Saturday, rain or shine, there flocks together from all parts of the island a singular collection of aged people, lame, halt, and blind, who receive, to the number of two hundred, a weekly donation of ten cents each, making a thousand dollars annually, which constitutes but a small part of the benefactions of this remarkable man, the true father of the island, with twenty-five thousand grown children to take care of.

Ten cents a week may not seem worth a whole day's journey on foot, but by the Fayal standard it is amply worth it. The usual rate of wages for an able-bodied man is sixteen cents a day; and an acquaintance of ours, who had just got a job on the roads at thirty cents a day, declined a good opportunity to emigrate to America, on the ground that it was best to "let well alone." Yet the price of provisions is by no means very low, and the difference is chiefly in abstinence. But fuel and clothing cost little, since little is needed,—except that no woman thinks herself really respectable until she has her great blue cloak, which requires an outlay of from fifteen to thirty dollars, though the whole remaining wardrobe may not be worth half that. The poorer classes pay about a dollar a month in rent; they eat fish several times a week and meat twice or thrice a year, living chiefly upon the coarsest corn-bread, with yams and beans. Still they contrive to have their luxuries. A soldier's wife, an elderly woman, said to me pathetically, "We have six *vintems* (twelve cents) a day,—my husband smokes and I take snuff,—and how *are* we to buy shoes and stockings?" But the most extreme case of economy which I discovered was that of a poor old woman, unable to tell her own age, who boarded with a poor family for four *patacos* (twenty cents) a month, or five cents a week. She had, she said, a little place in the chimney to sleep in, and when they had too large a fire, she went out of doors. Such being the standard of ordinary living, one can compute the terrors of the famine which has since occurred in Fayal, and which has only been relieved through the contributions levied in this country, and the energy of Mr. Dabney.

Steeped in this utter poverty,—dwelling in low, dark, smoky huts, with earthen floors,—it is yet wonderful to see how these people preserve not merely the decencies, but even the amenities of life. Their clothes are a chaos of patches, but one sees no rags; all their well-worn white garments are white in the superlative degree; and when their scanty supply of water is at the scantiest, every bare foot on the island is sure to be washed in warm water at night. Certainly there are fleas and there are filthinesses in some directions; and yet it is amazing, especially for one accustomed to the Irish, to see an extreme of poverty so much greater, with such an utter absence of squalidness. But when all this is said and done, the position of the people of Fayal is an abject one, that is, it is a *European* position; it teaches more of history in a day to an untravelled American than all his studies had told

him besides,—and he returns home ready to acquiesce in a thousand dissatisfactions, in view of that most wondrous of all recorded social changes, the transformation of the European peasant into the American citizen.

Fayal is not an expensive place. One pays six dollars a week at an excellent hotel, and there is nothing else to spend money on, except beggars and donkeys. For a shilling an hour one can go to ride, or, as the Portuguese phrase perhaps circuitously expresses it, go to walk on horseback on a donkey, —*dar um passeio a cavallo n'um burro*. The beggars, indeed, are numerous; but one's expenditures are always happily limited by the great scarcity of small change. A half-cent, however, will buy you blessings enough for a lifetime, and you can find an investment in almost any direction. You visit some church or cemetery; you ask a question or two of a lounger in a black cloak, with an air like an exiled Stuart, and, as you part, he detains you, saying, "Sir, will you give me some little thing, (*alguma cousinha*,)—I am so poor?" Overwhelmed with a sense of personal humility, you pull out three half-cents and present them with a touch of your hat, he receives them with the same, and you go home with a feeling that a distinguished honor has been done you. The Spaniards say that the Portuguese are "mean even in their begging": they certainly make their benefactors mean; and I can remember returning home, after a donation of a whole *pataco*, (five cents,) with a debilitating sense of too profuse philanthropy.

It is inevitable that even the genteel life of Fayal should share this parsimony. As a general rule, the higher classes on the island, socially speaking, live on astonishingly narrow means. How they do it is a mystery; but families of eight contrive to spend only three or four hundred dollars a year, and yet keep several servants, and always appear rather stylishly dressed. The low rate of wages (two dollars a month at the very highest) makes servants a cheap form of elegance. I was told of a family employing two domestics upon an income of a hundred and twenty dollars. Persons come to beg, sometimes, and bring a servant to carry home what is given. I never saw a mechanic carry his tools; if it be only a hammer, the hired boy must come to fetch it.

Fortunately, there is not much to transport, the mechanic arts being in a very rudimentary condition. For instance, there are no saw-horses nor hand-saws, the smallest saw used being a miniature wood-saw, with the steel set at an angle, in a peculiar manner. It takes three men to saw a plank: one to hold the plank, another to saw, and a third to carry away the pieces.

Farming-tools have the same simplicity. It is one odd result of the universal bare feet that they never will use spades; everything is done with a hoe, most skilfully wielded. There are no wheelbarrows, but baskets are the universal substitutes. The plough is made entirely of wood, only pointed with iron, and is borne to and from the field on the shoulder. The carts are picturesque, but clumsy; they are made of wicker-work, and the iron-shod wheels are solidly attached to the axle, so that all revolves together, amid fearful creaking. The people could not be induced to use a cart with movable wheels which was imported from America, nor will they even grease their axles, because the noise is held to drive away witches. Some other arts are a little more advanced, as any visitor to Mr. Harper's pleasant Fayal shop in Boston may discover. They make homespun cloth upon a simple loom, and out of their smoky huts come beautiful embroideries and stockings whose fineness is almost unequalled. Their baskets are strong and graceful, and I have seen men sitting in village doorways, weaving the beautiful broom-plant, yellow flowers and all, until basket and bouquet seemed one.

The greater part of the surface of the island is cultivated like a kitchen-garden, even up to the top of volcanic cones eight hundred feet high, and accessible only by steps cut in the earth. All the land is divided into little rectangular patches of various verdure, —yellow-blossomed broom, blue-flowering flax, and the contrasting green of lupines, beans, Indian corn, and potatoes. There is not a spire of genuine grass on the island, except on the Consul's lawn, but wilds covered with red heather, low *faya*-bushes, (whence the name of the island,) and a great variety of mosses. The cattle are fed on beans and lupines. Firewood is obtained from the opposite island of Pico, five miles off, and from the *Caldeira* or Crater, a pit five miles round and fifteen hundred feet deep, at the summit of

Fayal, whence great fagots are brought upon the heads of men and girls. It is an oversight in the "New American Cyclopaedia" to say of Fayal that "the chief object of agriculture is the vine," because there are not a half dozen vineyards on the island, the soil being unsuitable; but there are extensive vineyards on Pico, and these are owned almost wholly by proprietors resident in Fayal.

There is a succession of crops of vegetables throughout the year; peas are green in January, which is, indeed, said to be the most verdant month of the twelve, the fields in summer becoming parched and yellow. The mercury usually ranges from 50° to 80°, winter and summer; but we were there during an unusually cool season, and it went down to 45°. This was regarded as very severe by the thinly clad Fayalese, and I sometimes went into cottages and found the children lying in bed to keep warm. Yet roses, geraniums, and callas bloomed out of doors all the time, and great trees of red camellia, which they cut as we cut roses. Superb scarlet banana-flowers decked our Christmas-Tree. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter there, however, and exotic plants retain the habits they brought with them, with one singular exception. The *Morus multicaulis* was imported, and the silk-manufacture with it; suddenly the trees seemed to grow bewildered, they put forth earlier and earlier in the spring, until they got back to January; the leaves at last fell so early that the worms died before spinning cocoons, and the whole enterprise was in a few years abandoned because of this vegetable insanity.

In spite of the absence of snow and presence of verdure, this falling of the leaves gives some hint of winter; yet blackbirds and canaries sing without ceasing. The latter are a variety possessing rather inferior charms, compared with the domestic species; but they have a pretty habit of flying away to Pico every night: it was pleasant to sit at sunset on the high cliffs at the end of the island and watch the little brown creatures, like fragments of the rock itself, whirled away over the foaming ocean. The orange-orchards were rather a disappointment; they suggested quince-trees with more shining leaves; and, indeed, there was a hard, glossy, coriaceous look to the vegetation generally, which made us sometimes long for the soft, tender green of more temperate zones. The novel beauty of the Dabney gardens can scarcely be exaggerated; each step was a new incursion into the tropics, —a palm, a magnolia, a camphor-tree, a dragon-tree, suggesting Humboldt and Orotava, a clump of bamboos or cork-trees, or the startling strangeness of the great grass-like banana, itself a jungle. There are hedges of pittosporum, arbors veiled by passion-flowers, and two of that most beautiful of all living trees, the *araucaria*, or Norfolk Island pine,—one specimen being some eighty feet high, and said to be the tallest north of the equator. And when over all this luxuriant exotic beauty the soft clouds furled away and the sun showed us Pico, we had no more to ask, and the soft, beautiful blue cone became an altar for our gratitude, and the thin mist of hot volcanic air that flickered above it seemed the rising incense of the world.

In the midst of all these charming surprises, we found it hard to begin at once upon the study of the language, although the prospect of a six-months' stay made it desirable. We were pleased to experience the odd, stupid sensation of having people talk loud to us as being foreigners, and of seeing even the little children so much more at their ease than we were. And every step beyond this was a new enjoyment. We found the requisites for learning a language on its own soil to be a firm will, a quick ear, flexible lips, and a great deal of cool audacity. Plunge boldly in, expecting to make countless blunders; find out the shops where they speak English, and don't go there; make your first bargains at twenty-five per cent. disadvantage, and charge it as a lesson in the language; expect to be laughed at, and laugh yourself, because you win. The daily labor is its own reward. If it is a pleasure to look through a telescope in an observatory, gradually increasing its powers until a dim nebula is resolved into a whole galaxy of separate stars, how much more when the nebula is one of language around you, and the telescope is your own more educated ear!

We discovered further, what no one had ever told us, that the ability to speak French, however poorly, is rather a drawback in learning any less universal language, because the best company in any nation will usually have some knowledge of French, and this tempts one to remain on neutral ground

and be lazy. But the best company in Fayal was so much less interesting than the peasantry, that some of us persevered in studying the vernacular. To be sure, one finds English spoken by more of the peasants than of the small aristocracy of the island, so many of the former have spent some years in American whale-ships, and come back to settle down with their savings in their native village. In visiting the smaller hamlets on the island, I usually found that the owners of the two or three most decent houses had learned to speak English in this way. But I was amused at the dismay of an American sea-captain who on a shooting excursion ventured on some free criticisms on the agriculture of a farm, and was soon answered in excellent English by the proprietor.

"Look at the foolish fellow," quoth the captain, "carrying his plough to the field on his shoulder!"

"Sir," said the Portuguese, coolly, "I have no other way to take it there."

The American reserved his fire, thereafter, for bipeds with wings.

These Americanized sailors form a sort of humbler aristocracy in Fayal, and are apt to pride themselves on their superior knowledge of the world, though their sober habits have commonly saved them from the demoralization of a sailor's life. But the untravelled Fayalese peasantry are a very gentle, affectionate, childlike people, pensive rather than gay, industrious, but not ingenious, with few amusements and those the simplest, incapable of great crimes or very heroic virtues, educated by their religion up to the point of reverent obedience, but no higher.

Their grace and beauty are like our impressions of the Italian peasantry, and probably superior to the reality in that case. Among the young men and boys, especially, one sees the true olive cheeks and magnificent black eyes of Southern races. The women of Fayal are not considered remarkable for beauty, but in the villages of Pico one sees in the doorways of hovels complexions like rose-petals, and faces such as one attributes to Evangeline, soft, shy, and innocent. But the figure is the chief wonder, the figure of woman as she was meant to be, beautiful in superb vigor,—not diseased and tottering, as with us, but erect and strong and stately; every muscle fresh and alive, from the crown of the steady head, to the sole of the emancipated foot,—and yet not heavy and clumsy, as one fancies barefooted women must be, but inheriting symmetry and grace from the Portuguese or Moorish blood. I have looked through the crowded halls of Saratoga in vain for one such figure as I have again and again seen descending those steep mountain-paths with a bundle of firewood on the head, or ascending them with a basket of farm-manure. No person who has never left America can appreciate the sensation of living among healthy women; often as I heard of this, I was utterly unprepared for the realization; I never lost the conscious enjoyment of it for a single day; and when I reached home and walked across Boston Common on a June Sunday, I felt as if I were in a hospital for consumptives.

This condition of health cannot be attributed to any mere advantage of climate. The higher classes of Fayal are feeble and sickly; their diet is bad, they take no exercise, and suffer the consequences; they have all the ills to which flesh is heir, including one specially Portuguese complaint, known by the odd name of *dôr do cotovelo*, elbow-disease, which corresponds to that known to Anglo-Saxons, by an equally bold symbol, as the green-eyed monster, Jealousy. So the physical superiority of the peasantry seems to come solely from their mode of life,—out-door labor, simple diet, and bare feet. Change these and their health goes; domestic service in foreign families on the island always makes them ill, and often destroys their health and bloom forever; and strange to say, that which most nauseates and deranges their whole physical condition, in such cases, is the necessity of wearing shoes and stockings.

The Pico peasants have also the advantage of the Fayalese in picturesqueness of costume. The men wear homespun blue jackets and blue or white trousers, with a high woollen cap of red or blue. The women wear a white waist with a gay kerchief crossed above the bosom, a full short skirt of blue, red, or white, and a man's jacket of blue, with tight sleeves. On the head there is the pretty round-topped straw hat with red and white cord, which is now so extensively imported from Fayal; and beneath this there is always another kerchief, tied under the chin, or hanging loosely. The costume

is said to vary in every village, but in the villages opposite Horta this dress is worn by every woman from grandmother to smallest granddaughter; and when one sails across the harbor, in the lateen-sail packet-boat, and old and young come forth on the rocks to see the arrival, it seems like voyaging to some realm of butterflies.

This out-door life begins very early. As soon as the Fayalese baby is old enough to sit up alone, he is sent into the nursery. The nursery is the sunny side of the house-door. A large stone is selected, in a convenient position, and there the little dusky creature squats, hour after hour, clad in one garment at most, and looking at the universe through two black beads of eyes. Often the little dog comes and suns himself close by, and the little cat beside the dog, and the little pig beside the cat, and the little hen beside the pig,—a "Happy Family," a row of little traps to catch sunbeams, all down the lane. When older, the same child harnesses his little horse and wagon, he being the horse and a sheep's jawbone the wagon, and trots contentedly along, in almost the smallest amount of costume accessible to mortals. All this refers to the genuine, happy, plebeian baby. The genteel baby is probably as wretched in Fayal as elsewhere, but he is kept more out of sight.

These children are seldom noisy and never rude: the race is not hilarious, and their politeness is inborn. Not an urchin of three can be induced to accept a sugar-plum until he has shyly slid off his little cap, if he has one, and kissed his plump little hand. The society of princes can hardly surpass the natural courtesy of the peasant, who insists on climbing the orange-tree to select for you the choicest fruit. A shopkeeper never can sell you a handful of nuts without bringing the bundle near to his lips, first, with a graceful wave of salutation. A lady from Lisbon told us that this politeness surpassed that of the native Portuguese; and the wife of an English captain, who had sailed with her husband from port to port for fifteen years, said that she had never seen anything to equal it. It is not the slavishness of inferiors, for the poorest exhibit it towards each other. You see two very old women talking eagerly in the street, each in a cloak whose every square inch is a patch, and every patch a different shade, —and each alternate word you hear seems to be *Senhora*. Among laboring men, the most available medium of courtesy is the little paper cigar; it contains about four whiffs, and is smoked by about that number of separate persons.

But to fully appreciate this natural courtesy, one must visit the humbler Fayalese at home. You enter a low stone hut, thatched and windowless, and you find the mistress within, a robust, black-eyed, dark-skinned woman, engaged in grinding corn with a Scriptural handmill. She bars your way with apologies; you must not enter so poor a house; you are so beautiful, so perfect, and she is so poor, she has "nothing but the day and the night," or some equally poetic phrase. But you enter and talk with her a little, and she readily shows you all her little possessions,—her chest on the earthen floor, her one chair and stool, her tallow-candle stuck against the wall, her husk mattress rolled together, with the precious blue cloak inside of it. Behind a curtain of coarse straw-work is a sort of small boudoir, holding things more private, an old barrel with the winter's fuel in it, a few ears of corn hanging against the wall, a pair of shoes, and a shelf with a large pasteboard box. The box she opens triumphantly and exhibits her *santinhos*, or little images of saints. This is San Antonio, and this is Nossa Senhora do Conceiçao, Our Lady of the Conception. She prays to them every day for sunshine; but they do not seem to hear, this winter, and it rains all the time. Then, approaching the climax of her blessedness, with beaming face she opens a door in the wall, and shows you her pig.

The courtesy of the higher classes tends to formalism, and has stamped itself on the language in some very odd ways. The tendency common to all tongues, towards a disuse of the second person singular, as too blunt and familiar, is carried so far in Spanish and Portuguese as to disuse the second person plural also, except in the family circle, and to substitute the indirect phrases, *vuestra Merced* (in Spanish) and *vossa Mercé* (in Portuguese), both much contracted in speaking and familiar writing, and both signifying "your Grace." The joke of invariably applying this epithet to one's valet would seem sufficiently grotesque in either language, and here the Spanish stops; but Portuguese propriety has gone so far that even this phrase has become too hackneyed to be civil. In talking with your equals,

it would be held an insult to call them simply "your Grace"; it must be some phrase still more courtly, —*vossa Excellencia*, or *vossa Senhoria*.—One may hear an elderly gentleman talking to a young girl of fourteen, or, better still, two such damsels talking together, and it is "your Excellency" at every sentence; and the prescribed address on an envelope is *"Illustrissima Excellentissima Senhora Dona Maria*." The lower classes have not quite reached the "Excellency," but have got beyond the "Grace," and hence the personal pronouns are in a state of colloquial chaos, and the only safe way is to hold to the third person and repeat the name of Manuel or Maria, or whatever it may be, as often as possible.

This leads naturally to the mention of another peculiar usage. On visiting the Fayal post-office, I was amazed to find the letters arranged alphabetically in the order of the baptismal, not the family names, of the persons concerned,—as if we should enumerate Adam, Benjamin, Charles, and so on. But I at once discovered this to be the universal usage. Merchants, for instance, thus file their business papers; or rather, since four-fifths of the male baptismal names in the language fall under the four letters, A, F, J, M, they arrange only five bundles, giving one respectively to Antonio, Francisco, José or João, and Manuel, adding a fifth for sundries. This all seemed inexplicable, till at last there proved to be an historical kernel to the nut. The Portuguese, and to some extent the Spaniards, have kept nearer to the primitive usage which made the personal name the important one and the patronymic quite secondary. John Smith is not known conversationally as Mr. Smith, but as Mr. John,—Senhor João. One may have an acquaintance in society named Senhor Francisco, and another named Senhora Dona Christina, and it may be long before it turns out that they are brother and sister, the family name being, we will suppose, Garcia da Rosa; and even then it will be doubtful whether to call them Garcia or da Rosa. This explains the great multiplication of names in Spain and Portugal. The first name being the important one, the others may be added, subtracted, multiplied, or divided, with perfect freedom. A wife may or may not add her husband's name to her own; the eldest son takes some of the father's family names, the second son some of the mother's, saints' names are sprinkled in to suit the taste, and no confusion is produced, because the first name is the only one in common use. Each may, if he pleases, carry all his ancestors on his visiting-card, without any inconvenience except the cost of pasteboard.

Fayal exhibits another point of courtesy to be studied. The gentleman of our party was early warned that it was very well to learn his way about the streets, but far more essential to know the way to the brim of his hat. Every gentleman touches his hat to every lady, acquaintance or stranger, in street or balcony. So readily does one grow used to this, that I was astonished, for a moment, at the rudeness of some French officers, just landed from a frigate, who passed some ladies, friends of mine, without raising the hat. "Are these," I asked, "the polite Frenchmen one reads about?"—not reflecting that I myself should not have ventured on bowing to strange ladies in the same position, without special instruction in Portuguese courtesies. These little refinements became, indeed, very agreeable, only alloyed by the spirit of caste in which they were performed,—elbowing the peasant-woman off the sidewalk for the sake of doffing the hat to the Baroness. I thought of the impartial courtesies shown towards woman as woman in my own country, and the spread eagle within me flapped his pinions. Then I asked myself, "What if the woman were black?" and the eagle immediately closed his wings, and flapped no more. But I may add, that afterwards, attending dances among the peasants, I was surprised to see my graceful swains in humble life smoking and spitting in the presence of white-robed belles, in a manner not to be witnessed on our farthest western borders.

The position of woman in Portuguese countries brings one nearer to that Oriental type from which modern society has been gradually diverging. Woman is secluded, so far as each family can afford it, which is the key to the Oriental system. Seclusion is aristocracy, and if it cannot be made complete, the household must do the best they can. Thus, in the lowest classes, one daughter is often decreed by the parents to be brought up like a lady, and for this every sacrifice is to be made. Her robust sisters go bare-footed to the wells for water, they go miles unprotected into the lonely mountains; no social ambition, no genteel helplessness for them. But Mariquinha is taught to read,

write, and sew; she is as carefully looked after as if the world wished to steal her; she wears shoes and stockings and an embroidered kerchief and a hooded cloak; and she never steps outside the door alone. You meet her, pale and demure, plodding along to mass with her mother. The sisters will marry laborers and fishermen; Mariquinha will marry a small shop-keeper or the mate of a vessel, or else die single. It is not very pleasant for the poor girl in the mean time; she is neither healthy nor happy; but "let us be genteel or die."

On *festa*-days she and her mother draw their hoods so low and their muffling handkerchiefs so high that the costume is as good as a *yashmak*, and in passing through the streets these one-eyed women seem like an importation from the "Arabian Nights." Ladies of higher rank, also, wear the hooded cloak for disguise and greater freedom, and at a fashionable wedding in the cathedral I have seen the jewelled fingers of the uninvited acquaintances gleam from the blue folds of broadcloth. But very rarely does one see the aristocratic lady in the street in her own French apparel, and never alone. There must be a male relative, or a servant, or, at the very least, a female companion. Even the ladies of the American Consul's family very rarely go out singly,—not from any fear, for the people are as harmless as birds, but from etiquette. The first foreign lady who walked habitually alone in the streets was at once christened "The Crazy American." A lady must not be escorted home from an evening party by a gentleman, but by a servant with a lantern; and as the streets have no lamps, I never could see the breaking-up of any such entertainment without recalling Retzsch's quaint pictures of the little German towns, and the burghers plodding home with their lanterns,—unless, perchance, what a foreign friend of ours called a "sit-down chair" came rattling by, and transferred our associations to Cranford and Mr. Winkle.

We found or fancied other Orientalisms. A visitor claps his hands at the head of the court-yard stairs, to summon an attendant. The solid chimneys, with windows in them, are precisely those described by Urquhart in his delightful "Pillars of Hercules"; so are the gardens, divided into clean separate cells by tall hedges of cane; so is the game of ball played by the boys in the street, under the self-same Moorish name of *arri*; so is the mode of making butter, by tying up the cream in a goat-skin and kicking it till the butter comes. Even the architecture fused into one all our notions of Gothic and of Moorish, and gave great plausibility to Urquhart's ingenious argument for the latter as the true original. And it is a singular fact that the Mohammedan phrase *Oxald*, "Would to Allah," is still the most familiar ejaculation in the Portuguese language and the habitual equivalent in their religious books for "Would to God."

We were treated with great courtesy and hospitality by our Portuguese neighbors, and an evening party in Fayal is in some respects worth describing. As one enters, the anteroom is crowded with gentlemen, and the chief reception-room seems like a large omnibus, lighted, dressed with flowers, and having a row of ladies on each side. The personal beauty is perhaps less than one expects, though one sees some superb dark eyes and blue-black hair; they dress with a view to the latest French fashions, and sometimes rather a distant view. At last a lady takes her seat at the piano, then comes an eager rush of gentlemen into the room, and partners are taken for cotillons,—large, double, *very* double cotillons, here called *contradanças*. The gentlemen appear in scrupulous black broadcloth and satin and white kid; in summer alone they are permitted to wear white trousers to parties; and we heard of one anxious youth who, about the turn of the season, wore the black and carried the white in his pocket, peeping through the door, on arrival, to see which had the majority. It seemed a pity to waste such gifts of discretion on a monarchical country, when he might have emigrated to America and applied them to politics.

The company perform their dancing with the accustomed air of civilized festivity, "as if they were hired to do it, and were doubtful about being paid." Changes of figure are announced by a clapping of hands from one of the gentlemen, and a chorus of such applauses marks the end of the dance. Then they promenade slowly round the room, once or twice, in pairs; then the ladies take their seats, and instantly each gentleman walks hurriedly into the anteroom, and for ten minutes there is

as absolute a separation of the sexes as in a Friends' Meeting. Nobody approves of this arrangement, in the abstract; it is all very well, they think, for gentlemen, if foreigners, to remain in the room, but it is not the Portuguese custom. Yet, with this exception, the manners are agreeably simple. Your admission to the house guaranties you as a proper acquaintance, there are no introductions, and you may address any one in any language you can coin into a sentence. Many speak French, and two or three English,—sometimes with an odd mingling of dialects, as when the Military Governor answered my inquiry, made in timid Portuguese, as to how long he had served in the army. *"Vinte-cinco annos,"* he answered, in the same language; then, with an effort after an unexceptionable translation, "Vat you call, Twenty-cinq year"!

The great obstacle to the dialogue soon becomes, however, a deficit of subjects rather than of words. Most of these ladies never go out except to mass and to parties, they never read, and if one of them has some knowledge of geography, it is quite an extended education; so that, when you have asked them if they have ever been to St. Michael, and they have answered, Yes,—or to Lisbon, and they have answered, No,—then social intercourse rather flags. I gladly record, however, that there were some remarkable exceptions to this, and that we found in the family of the late eminent Portuguese statesman, Mousinho d'Albuquerque, accomplishments and knowledge which made their acquaintance an honor.

During the intervals of the dancing, little trays of tea and of cakes are repeatedly carried round,—astonishing cakes, in every gradation of insipidity, with the oddest names: white poison, nuns' kisses, angels' crops, cats' tails, heavenly bacon, royal eggs, coruscations, cocked hats, and *esquecidos*, or oblivion cakes, the butter being omitted. It seems an unexpected symbol of the plaintive melancholy of the Portuguese character that the small confections which we call kisses they call sighs, *suspiros*. As night advances, the cakes grow sweeter and the dances livelier, and the pretty national dances are at last introduced; though these are never seen to such advantage as when the peasants perform them on a Saturday or Sunday evening to the monotonous strain of a viola, the musician himself taking part in the complicated dance, and all the men chanting the refrain. Nevertheless they add to the gayety of our genteel entertainment, and you may stay at the party as long as you have patience,—if till four in the morning, so much the better for your popularity; for, though the gathering consist of but thirty people, they like to make the most of it.

Perhaps the next day one of these new friends kindly sends in a present for the ladies of the party: a bouquet of natural flowers with the petals carefully gilded; a *folar* or Easter cake, being a large loaf of sweetened bread, baked in a ring, and having whole eggs, shell and all, in the midst of it. One lady of our acquaintance received a pretty basket, which being opened revealed two little Portuguese pigs, about eight inches long, snow-white, wearing blue ribbons round their necks and scented with cologne.

Beyond these occasional parties, there seems very little society during the winter, the native ladies seldom either walking or riding, and there being no places of secular amusement. In summer, it is said, when the principal families resort to their vineyards at Pico, formalities are laid aside, and a simpler intercourse takes place. But I never saw any existence more thoroughly pitiable than that of the young men of the higher classes; they had literally nothing to do, except to dress themselves elegantly and lounge all day in an apothecary's shop. A very few went out shooting or fishing occasionally; but anything like employment, even mercantile, was entirely beneath their caste; and they only pardoned the constant industry of the American Consul and his family, as a sort of national eccentricity, for which they must not be severely condemned.

A good school-system is being introduced into all the Portuguese dominions, but there is no book-store in Fayal, though some dry-goods dealers sell a few religious books. We heard a rumor of a Portuguese "Uncle Tom" also, but I never could find the copy. The old Convent Libraries were sent to Lisbon, on the suppression of the monasteries, and never returned. There was once a printing-press on the island, but one of the Governors shipped it off to St. Michael. "There it goes," he said

to the American Consul, "and the Devil take it!" The vessel was wrecked in the bay. "You see," he afterwards piously added, "the Devil *has* taken it." It is proper, however, to mention, that a press and a newspaper have been established since our visit, without further Satanic interference.

Books were scarce on the island. One official gentleman from Lisbon, quite an accomplished man, who spoke French fluently and English tolerably, had some five hundred books, chiefly in the former tongue, including seventy-two volumes of Balzac. His daughter, a young lady of fifteen, more accomplished than most of the belles of the island, showed me her little library of books in French and Portuguese, including three English volumes, an odd selection,—"The Vicar of Wakefield," Gregory's "Legacy to his Daughters," and Fielding's "Life of Jonathan Wild." But, indeed, her supply of modern Portuguese literature was almost as scanty, (there is so very little of it,) and we heard of a gentleman's studying French "in order to have something to read," which seemed the last stage in national decay.

Perhaps we were still more startled by the unexpected literary criticisms of a young lady from St. Michael, English on the father's side, but still Roman Catholic, who had just read the New Testament, and thus naïvely gave it her indorsement in a letter to an American friend:—"I dare say you have read the New Testament; but if you have not, I recommend it to you. I have just finished reading it, and find it *a very moral and nice book*." After this certificate, it will be safe for the Bible Society to continue its operations.

Nearly all the popular amusements in Fayal occur in connection with religion. After the simpler buildings and rites of the Romish Church in America, the Fayal churches impress one as vast baby-houses, and the services as acted charades. This perfect intermingling of the religious and the melodramatic was one of our most interesting experiences, and made the Miracle Plays of history a very simple and intelligible thing. In Fayal, holiday and holy-day have not yet undergone the slightest separation. A festival has to the people necessarily some religious association, and when the Americans celebrate the Fourth of July, Mr. Dabney's servants like to dress with flowers a wooden image in his garden, the fierce figure-head of some wrecked vessel, which they boldly personify as the American Saint. On the other hand, the properties of the Church are as freely used for merrymaking. On public days there are fireworks provided by the priests; they are kept in the church till the time comes, and then touched off in front of the building, with very limited success, by the sacristan. And strangest of all, at the final puff and bang of each remarkable piece of pyrotechny, the bells ring out just the same sudden clang which marks the agonizing moment of the Elevation of the Host.

On the same principle, the theatricals which occasionally enliven the island take place in chapels adjoining the churches. I shall never forget the example I saw, on one of these dramatic occasions, of that one cardinal virtue of Patience, which is to the Portuguese race the substitute for all more positive manly qualities. The performance was to be by amateurs, and a written programme had been sent from house to house during the day; and this had announced the curtain as sure to rise at eight. But as most of the spectators went at six to secure places,—literally, places, for each carried his or her own chair,—one might suppose the audience a little impatient before the appointed hour arrived. But one would then suppose very incorrectly. Eight o'clock came, and a quarter past eight, but no curtain rose. Half-past eight. No movement nor sign of any. The people sat still. A quarter to nine. The people sat still. Nine o'clock. The people sat perfectly still, nobody talking much, the gentlemen being all the while separated from the ladies, and all quiet. At last, at a quarter past nine, the orchestra came in! They sat down, laid aside their instruments, and looked about them. Suddenly a whistle was heard behind the scenes. Nothing came of it, however. After a time, another whistle. The people sat still. Then the orchestra began to tune their instruments, and at half-past nine the overture began. And during all that inexplicable delay of one hour and a half, after a preliminary waiting of two hours, there was not a single look of annoyance or impatience, nor the slightest indication, on any face, that this was viewed as a strange or extraordinary thing. Indeed, it was not.

We duly attended, not on this occasion only, but on all ecclesiastical festivals, grave or gay,—the only difficulty being to discover any person in town who had even approximate information as to when

or where they were to occur. We saw many sights that are universal in Roman Catholic countries, and many that are peculiar to Fayal: we saw the "Procession of the Empress," when, for six successive Saturday evenings, young girls walk in order through the streets white-robed and crowned; saw the vessels in harbor decorated with dangling effigies of Judas, on the appointed day; saw the bands of men at Easter going about with flags and plates to beg money for the churches, and returning at night with feet suspiciously unsteady; saw the feet-washing, on Maundy-Thursday, of twelve old men, each having a square inch of the instep washed, wiped, and cautiously kissed by the Vicar-General, after which twelve lemons were solemnly distributed, each with a silver coin stuck into the peel; saw and felt the showers of water, beans, flour, oranges, eggs, from the balcony-windows during Carnival; saw weddings in churches, with groups of male companions holding tall candles round kneeling brides; saw the distribution to the poor of bread and meat and wine from long tables arranged down the principal street, on Whitsunday,—a memorial vow, made long since, to deprecate the recurrence of an earthquake. But it must be owned that these things, so unspeakably interesting at first, became a little threadbare before the end of the winter; we grew tired of the tawdriness and shabbiness which pervaded them all, of the coarse faces of the priests, and the rank odor of the incense.

We had left Protestantism in a state of vehement intolerance in America, but we soon found, that, to hear the hardest things said against the priesthood, one must visit a Roman Catholic country. There was no end to the anecdotes of avarice and sensuality in this direction, and there seemed everywhere the strangest combination of official reverence with personal contempt. The principal official, or *Ouvidor*, was known among his parishioners by the endearing appellation of "The Black Pig," to which his appearance certainly did no discredit. There was a great shipwreck at Pico during our stay, and two hundred thousand dollars' worth of rich goods was stranded on the bare rocks; there were no adequate means for its defence, and the peasants could hardly be expected to keep their hands off. But the foremost hands were those of the parish priest; for three weeks no mass was said in his church, and a funeral was left for days unperformed, that the representative of God might steal more silks and laces. When the next service occurred, the people remained quiet until the priest rose for the sermon; then they rose also tumultuously, and ran out of the church, crying, "*Ladrão!*" "Thief!" "But why this indignation?" said an intelligent Roman Catholic to us; "there is not a priest on either island who would not have done the same." A few days after I saw this same cool critic, candle in hand, heading a solemn ecclesiastical procession in the cathedral.

In the country-villages there naturally lingers more undisturbed the simple, picturesque life of Roman Catholic society. Every hamlet is clustered round its church, almost always magnificently situated, and each has its special festivals. Never shall I forget one lovely day when we went to witness the annual services at Praya, held to commemorate an ancient escape from an earthquake. It was the first day of February. After weeks of rain, there came at one burst all the luxury of June, winter seemed to pass into summer in a moment, and blackbirds sang on every spray. We walked or rode over a steep promontory, down into a green valley, scooped softly to the sea: the church was by the beach. As we passed along, the steep paths converging from all the hills were full of women and men in spotless blue and white, with bright kerchiefs; they were all walking barefooted over the rocky ways, only the women stopping, ere reaching the church, to don stockings and shoes. Many persons sat in sunny places by the roadsides to beg, with few to beg from,—blind old men, and groups of children clamorous for coppers, but propitiated by sugar-plums. Many others were bringing offerings, candles for the altar, poultry, which were piled, a living mass, legs tied, in the corner of the church, and small sums of money, which were recorded by an ancient man in a mighty book. The church was already so crowded that it was almost impossible to enter; the centre was one great flower-garden of headdresses of kneeling women, and in the aisles were penitents, toiling round the church upon their knees, each bearing a lighted candle. But the services had not yet begun, and we went down among the rocks to eat our luncheon of bread and oranges; the ocean rolled in languidly, a summer sea; we sat beside sheltered, transparent basins, among high and pointed rocks, and great, indolent waves sometimes

reared their heads, looking in upon our retreat, or flooding our calm pools with a surface of creamy effervescence. Every square inch of the universe seemed crowded with particles of summer.

On our way past the church, we had caught a glimpse of unwonted black small-clothes, and, slyly peeping into a little chapel, had seen the august Senate of Horta apparently arraying themselves for the ceremony. Presently out came a man with a great Portuguese flag, and then the Senators, two and two, with short black cloaks, white bands, and gold-tipped staves, trod statelily towards the church. And as we approached the door, on our return, we saw these dignitaries sitting in their great arm-chairs, as one might fancy Venetian potentates, while a sonorous Portuguese sermon rolled over their heads as innocuously as a Thanksgiving discourse over any New-England congregation.

Do not imagine, by the way, that critical remarks on sermons are a monopoly of Protestantism. After one religious service in Fayal, my friend, the Professor of Languages, who sometimes gave lessons in English, remarked to me confidentially, in my own tongue,—"His sermon is good, but his *exposition* is bad; he does not *expose* well." Supposing him to refer to the elocution, I assented,—secretly thinking, however, that the divine in question had exposed himself exceedingly well.

Another very impressive ceremony was the Midnight Mass on New Year's Eve, when we climbed at midnight, through some close, dark passages in the vast church edifice, into a sort of concealed opera-box above the high altar, and suddenly opened windows looking down into the brilliantly lighted cathedral, crammed with kneeling people and throbbing with loud music. It seemed centuries away from all modern life,—a glimpse into some buried Pompeii of the Middle Ages. More impressive still was Holy Week, when there were some rites unknown to other Roman Catholic countries. For three days the great cathedral was closely veiled from without and darkened within,—every door closed, every window obscured. Before this there had been seventy candles lighting up the high altar and the eager faces; now these were all extinguished, and through the dark church came chanting a procession bearing feeble candles and making a strange clapping sound, with *matracas*, like watchmen's rattles; men carried the symbolical bier of Jesus in the midst, to its symbolical rest beneath the altar, where the three candles, representing the three Marys, blazed above it. During the time of darkness there were frequent masses and sermons, while terrible transparencies of the Crucifixion were suddenly unrolled from the lofty pulpit, and the throng below wept in sympathy, and clapped their cheeks in token of anguish, like the flutter of many doves. Then came the Hallelujah Saturday, when at noon the mourning ended. It was a breathless moment. The priests kneeled in gorgeous robes, chanting monotonously, with their foreheads upon the altar-steps; and the hushed multitude hung upon their lips, in concentrated ecstasy, waiting for the coming joy. Suddenly burst the words, *Gloria in Excelsis*. In an instant every door was flung open, every curtain withdrawn, the great church was bathed in meridian sunlight, the organ crashed out triumphant, the bells pealed, flowers were thrown from the galleries in profusion, friends embraced and kissed each other, laughed, talked, and cried, and all the sea of gay head-dresses below was tremulous beneath a mist of unaccustomed splendor. And yet (this thought smote me) all the beautiful transformation has come by simply letting in the common light of day. Then why not keep it always? Clear away, Humanity, these darkened windows, but clear away also these darkening walls, and show us that the simplest religion is the best!

I cannot dwell upon the narrative of our many walks:—to the Espalamarca, with its lonely telegraph-station;—to the Burnt Mountain, with its colored cliffs;—to visit the few aged nuns who still linger in what was once a convent;—to Porto Pim, with its curving Italian beach, its playing boys and picturesque fishermen beneath the arched gateway;—to the tufa-ledges near by, where the soft rocks are honeycombed with the cells hollowed by echini below the water's edge, a fact undescribed and almost unexampled, said Agassiz afterwards;—to the lofty, lonely Monte da Guia, with its solitary chapel on the peak, and its extinct crater, where the sea rolls in and out;—to the Dabney orange-gardens, on Sunday afternoons;—to the beautiful Mirante ravine, whenever a sudden rain filled the cascades and set the watermills and the washerwomen all astir, and the long brook ran down in whirls of white foam to the waiting sea;—or to the western shores of the island, where we turned to

Ariadnes, as we watched departing home-bound vessels from those cliffs whose wave-worn fiords and innumerable sea-birds make a Norway of Fayal.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.