

VARIOUS

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**CAUSES OF THE
INCREASE OF CRIME**

If the past increase and present amount of crime in the British islands be alone considered, it must afford grounds for the most melancholy forebodings. When we recollect that since the year 1805, that is, during a period of less than forty years, in the course of which population has advanced about sixty-five *per cent* in Great Britain and Ireland, crime in England has increased seven hundred per cent, in Ireland about eight hundred per cent, and in Scotland above *three thousand six hundred per cent*,¹ it is difficult to say what is destined to be the ultimate fate of a country in which the progress of wickedness is so much more rapid than the increase of the numbers of the people. Nor is the alarming nature of the prospect diminished by the reflection,

¹ See No. 343, *Blackwood's Magazine*, p. 534, Vol. lv.

that this astonishing increase in human depravity has taken place during a period of unexampled prosperity and unprecedented progress, during which the produce of the national industry had tripled, and the labours of the husbandman kept pace with the vast increase in the population they were to feed—in which the British empire carried its victorious arms into every quarter of the globe, and colonies sprang up on all sides with unheard-of rapidity—in which a hundred thousand emigrants came ultimately to migrate every year from the parent state into the new regions conquered by its arms, or discovered by its adventure. If this is the progress of crime during the days of its prosperity, what is it likely to become in those of its decline, when this prodigious vent for superfluous numbers has come to be in a great measure closed, and this unheard-of wealth and prosperity has ceased to gladden the land?

To discover to what causes this extraordinary increase of crime is to be ascribed, we must first examine the localities in which it has principally arisen, and endeavour to ascertain whether it is to be found chiefly in the agricultural, pastoral, or manufacturing districts. We must then consider the condition of the labouring classes, and the means provided to restrain them in the quarters where the progress of crime has been most alarming; and inquire whether the existing evils are insurmountable and unavoidable, or have arisen from the supineness, the errors, and the selfishness of man. The inquiry is one of the most interesting which can occupy the thoughts of the far-seeing and humane; for

it involves the temporal and eternal welfare of millions of their fellow-creatures;—it may well arrest the attention of the selfish, and divert for a few minutes the profligate from their pursuits; for on it depends whether the darling wealth of the former is to be preserved or destroyed, and the exciting enjoyments of the other arrested or suffered to continue.

To elucidate the first of these questions, we subjoin a table, compiled from the Parliamentary returns, exhibiting the progress of serious crime in the principal counties, agricultural pastoral, and manufacturing, of the empire, during the last fifteen years. We are unwilling to load our pages with figures, and are well aware how distasteful they are to a large class of readers; and if those results were as familiar to others as they are to ourselves, we should be too happy to take them for granted, as they do first principles in the House of Commons, and proceed at once to the means of remedy. But the facts on this subject have been so often misrepresented by party or prejudice, and are in themselves so generally unknown, that it is indispensable to lay a foundation in authentic information before proceeding further in the inquiry. The greatest difficulty which those practically acquainted with the subject experience in such an investigation, is to make people believe their statements, even when founded on the most extensive practical knowledge, or the more accurate statistical inquiry. There is such a prodigious difference between the condition of mankind and the progress of corruption in the agricultural or pastoral, and manufacturing

or densely peopled districts, that those accustomed to the former will not believe any statements made regarding the latter. They say they are incredible or exaggerated; that the persons who make them are *têtes montées*; that their ideas are very vague, and their suggestions utterly unworthy the consideration either of men of sense or of government. With such deplorable illusions does ignorance repel the suggestions of knowledge; theory, of experience; selfishness, of philanthropy; cowardice, of resolution. Thus nothing whatever is done to remedy or avert the existing evils: the districts not endangered unite as one man to resist any attempt to form a general system for the alleviation of misery or diminution of crime in those that are, and the preponderance of the unendangered districts in the legislature gives them the means of effectually doing so. The evils in the endangered districts are such, that it is universally felt they are beyond the reach of local remedy or alleviation. Thus, between the two, nothing whatever is done to arrest, or guard against, the existing or impending evils. Meanwhile, destitution, profligacy, sensuality, and crime, advance with unheard-of rapidity in the manufacturing districts, and the dangerous classes there massed together combine every three or four years in some general strike or alarming insurrection, which, while it lasts, excites universal terror, and is succeeded, when suppressed, by the same deplorable system of supineness, selfishness, and infatuation.

The table in the note exhibits the number of commitments for serious offences, with the population of each, of eight counties

—pastoral, agricultural, and manufacturing—in Great Britain during the year 1841². We take the returns for that year, both

² Table showing the number of committments for serious crimes, and population, in the year 1841, in the under-mentioned counties of Great Britain;—I.—PASTORAL.

Names of Counties.	Population in 1841.	Committments
Cumberland,	178,038	
Derby,	272,217	
Anglesey,	50,891	
Carnarvon,	81,093	
Inverness-shire,	97,799	
Selkirkshire,	7,990	
Argyleshire,	97,371	
Total,	785,399	

because it was the year in which the census was taken, and

Names of Counties.	Population in 1841.	Commitment
Shropshire,	239,048	
Kent,	548,337	
Norfolk,	412,664	
Essex,	344,979	
Northumberland,	250,278	
East Lothian,	35,886	
Perthshire,	137,390	
Aberdeenshire,	192,387	
Total,	2,160,969	

because the succeeding year, 1842, being the year of the great outbreak in England, and violent strike in Scotland, the figures, both in that and the succeeding year, may be supposed to exhibit a more unfavourable result for the manufacturing districts than a fair average of years. From this table, it appears that the vast

Names of Counties.	Population in 1841.	Commitment
Middlesex,	1,576,636	
Lancashire,	1,667,054	
Staffordshire,	510,504	
Yorkshire,	1,591,480	
Glamorganshire,	171,188	
Lanarkshire,	426,972	
Renfrewshire,	155,072	
Forfarshire,	170,520	
Total,	6,269,426	

preponderance of crime is to be found in the manufacturing or densely-peopled districts, and that the proportion per cent of commitments which they exhibit, as compared with the population, is generally three, often five times, what appears in the purely agricultural and pastoral districts. The comparative criminality of the agricultural, manufacturing, and pastoral districts is not to be considered as accurately measured by these returns, because so many of the agricultural counties, especially in England, are overspread with towns and manufactories or collieries. Thus Kent and Shropshire are justly classed with agricultural counties, though part of the former is in fact a suburb of London, and of the latter overspread with demoralizing coal mines. The entire want of any police force in some of the greatest manufacturing counties, as Lanarkshire, by permitting nineteen-twentieths of the crime to go unpunished, exhibits a far less amount of criminality than would be brought to light under a more vigilant system. But still there is enough in this table to attract serious and instructive attention. It appears that the average of seven pastoral counties exhibits an average of 1 commitment for serious offences out of 1155 souls: of eight counties, partly agricultural and partly manufacturing, of 1 in 682: and of eight manufacturing and mining, of 1 in 476! And the difference between individual counties is still more remarkable, especially when counties purely agricultural or pastoral can be compared with those for the most part manufacturing or mining. Thus the proportion of commitment for serious crime in the

pastoral counties of

Anglesey, is

Carnarvon,

Selkirk,

Cumberland,

In the purely agricultural counties of

Aberdeenshire, is

East-Lothian,

Northumberland,

Perthshire,

While in the great manufacturing or mining counties of

Lancashire, is
Staffordshire,
Middlesex,
Yorkshire,
Lanarkshire,
Renfrewshire,

³ Lanarkshire has no police except in Glasgow, or its serious crime would be about 1 in 400, or 350.

Further, the statistical returns of crime demonstrate, not only that such is the present state of crime in the densely peopled and manufacturing districts, compared to what obtains in the agricultural or pastoral, but that the tendency of matters is still worse;³ and that, great as has been the increase of population during the last thirty years in the manufacturing and densely peopled districts, the progress of crime has been still greater and more alarming. From the instructive and curious tables

³ Table, showing the comparative population, and committals for serious crime, in the under-mentioned counties, in the years 1821, 1831, and 1841. I.—PASTORAL. II.—AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURING. III.—MANUFACTURING AND MINING.—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables, and Census* 1841.

below, constructed from the criminal returns given in *Porter's Parliamentary Tables*, and the returns of the census taken in 1821, 1831, and 1841, it appears, that while in some of the purely pastoral counties, such as Selkirk and Anglesey, crime has remained during the last twenty years nearly stationary, and in some of the purely agricultural, such as Perth and Aberdeen, it has considerably *diminished*, in the agricultural and mining or manufacturing, such as Shropshire and Kent, it has *doubled* during the same period: and in the manufacturing and mining districts, such as Lancashire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, and Renfrewshire, more than *tripled* in the same time. It appears, from the same authentic sources of information, that the progress of crime during the last twenty years has been much more rapid in the manufacturing and densely peopled than in the simply densely peopled districts; for in Middlesex, during the last twenty years, population has advanced about fifty per cent, and serious crime has increased in nearly the same proportion, having swelled from 2480 to 3514: whereas in Lancashire, during the same period, population has advanced also fifty per cent, but serious crime has considerably *more than doubled*, having risen from 1716 to 3987.

Here, then, we are at length on firm ground in point of fact. Several writers of the liberal school who had a partiality for manufactures, because their chief political supporters were to be found among that class of society, have laboured hard to show that manufactures are noways detrimental either to health

or morals; and that the mortality and crime of the manufacturing counties were in no respect greater than those of the pastoral or agricultural districts. The common sense of mankind has uniformly revolted against this absurdity, so completely contrary to what experience every where tells in a language not to be misunderstood; but it has now been completely disproved by the Parliamentary returns. The criminal statistics have exposed this fallacy as completely, in reference to the different degrees of depravity in different parts of the empire, as the registrar-general's returns have, in regard to the different degrees of salubrity in employments, and mortality in rural districts and manufacturing places. It now distinctly appears that crime is greatly more prevalent in proportion to the numbers of the people in densely peopled than thinly inhabited localities, and that it is making far more rapid progress in the former situation than the latter. Statistics are not to be despised when they thus, at once and decisively, disprove errors so assiduously spread, maintained by writers of such respectability, and supported by such large and powerful bodies in the state.

Nor can it be urged with the slightest degree of foundation, that this superior criminality of the manufacturing and densely peopled districts is owing to a police force being more generally established than in the agricultural or pastoral, and thus crime being more thoroughly detected in the former situation than the latter. For, in the first place, in several of the greatest manufacturing counties, particularly Lanarkshire in Scotland,

there is no police at all; and the criminal establishment is just what it was forty years ago. In the next place, a police force is the *consequence* of a previous vast accumulation of crime, and is never established till the risk to life and insecurity to property had rendered it unbearable. Being always established by the voluntary assessment of the inhabitants, nothing can be more certain than that it never can be called into existence but by such an increase of crime as has rendered it a matter of necessity.

We are far, however, from having approached the whole truth, if we have merely ascertained, upon authentic evidence, that crime is greatly more prevalent in the manufacturing than the rural districts. That will probably be generally conceded; and the preceding details have been given merely to show the extent of the difference, and the rapid steps which it is taking. It is more material to inquire what are the causes of this superior profligacy of manufacturing to rural districts; and whether it arises unavoidably from the nature of their respective employments, or is in some degree within the reach of human amendment or prevention.

It is usual for persons who are not practically acquainted with the subject, to represent manufacturing occupations as necessarily and inevitably hurtful to the human mind. The crowding together, it is said, young persons, of different sexes and in great numbers, in the hot atmosphere and damp occupations of factories or mines, is necessarily destructive to morality, and ruinous to regularity of habit. The passions

are excited by proximity of situation or indecent exposure; infant labour early emancipates the young from parental control; domestic subordination, the true foundation for social virtue, is destroyed; the young exposed to temptation before they have acquired strength to resist it; and vice spreads the more extensively from the very magnitude of the establishments on which the manufacturing greatness of the country depends. Such views are generally entertained by writers on the social state of the country; and being implicitly adopted by the bulk of the community, the nation has abandoned itself to a sort of despair on the subject, and regarding manufacturing districts as the necessary and unavoidable hotbed of crimes, strives only to prevent the spreading of the contagion into the rural parts of the country.

There is certain degree of truth in these observations; but they are much exaggerated, and it is not in these causes that the principal sources of the profligacy of the manufacturing districts is to be found.

The real cause of the demoralization of manufacturing towns is to be found, not in the nature of the employment which the people there receive, so much as in the manner in which they are brought together, the unhappy prevalence of general strikes, and the prodigious multitudes who are cast down by the ordinary vicissitudes of life, or the profligacy of their parents, into a situation of want, wretchedness, and despair.

Consider how, during the last half century, the people have

been brought together in the great manufacturing districts of England and Scotland. So rapid has been the progress of manufacturing industry during that period, that it has altogether out-stripped the powers of population in the districts where it was going forward, and occasioned a prodigious influx of persons from different and distant quarters, who have migrated from their paternal homes, and settled in the manufacturing districts, never to return.⁴ Authentic evidence proves, that not less than *two millions* of persons have, in this way, been transferred to the manufacturing counties of the north of England within the last forty years, chiefly from the agricultural counties of the south of that kingdom, or from Ireland. Not less than three hundred and fifty thousand persons have, during the same period, migrated into the two manufacturing counties of Lanark and Renfrew alone, in Scotland, chiefly from the Scotch Highlands, or north of Ireland. No such astonishing migration of the human species in so short a time, and to settle on so small a space, is on record in the whole annals of the world. It is unnecessary to say that the increase is to be ascribed chiefly, if not entirely, to immigration; for it is well known that such is the unhealthiness of manufacturing towns, especially to young children, that, so far from being able to add to their numbers, they are hardly ever able, without extraneous addition, to maintain them.

Various causes have combined to produce demoralization

⁴ Table showing the Population in 1801, 1891, and 1841, in the under-mentioned counties of Great Britain.—*Census of 1841*. Preface, p. 8 and 9.

among the vast crowd, thus suddenly attracted, by the alluring prospect of high wages and steady employment, from the rural to the manufacturing districts. In the first place, they acquired wealth before they had learned how to use it, and that is, perhaps, the most general cause of the rapid degeneracy of mankind. High wages flowed in upon them before they had acquired the artificial wants in the gratification of which they could be innocently spent. Thence the general recourse to the grosser and sensual enjoyments, which are powerful alike on the savage and the sage. Men who, in the wilds of Ireland or the mountains of Scotland, were making three or four shillings a-week, or in Sussex ten, suddenly found themselves, as cotton-spinners, iron-moulders, colliers, or mechanics, in possession of from twenty to thirty shillings. Meanwhile, their habits and inclinations had undergone scarce any alteration; they had no taste for comfort in dress, lodging, or furniture; and as to laying by money, the thing, of course, was not for a moment thought of. Thus, this vast addition to their incomes was spent almost exclusively on eating and drinking. The extent to which gross sensual enjoyment was thus spread among these first settlers in the regions of commercial opulence, is incredible. It is an ascertained fact, that above a million a-year is annually spent in Glasgow on ardent spirits;⁵ and it has recently been asserted by a respectable and intelligent operative in Manchester, that, in that city, 750,000 *more* is annually spent on beer and spirits, than on the purchase

⁵ ALISON *on Population*, ii. Appendix A.

of provisions. Is it surprising that a large part of the progeny of a generation which has embraced such habits, should be sunk in sensuality and profligacy, and afford a never-failing supply for the prisons and transport ships? It is the counterpart of the sudden corruption which invariably overtakes northern conquerors, when they settle in the regions of southern opulence.

Another powerful cause which promotes the corruption of men, when thus suddenly congregated together from different quarters in the manufacturing districts, is, that the restraints of character, relationship, and vicinity are, in a great measure, lost in the crowd. Every body knows what powerful influence public opinion, or the opinion of their relations, friends, and acquaintances, exercises on all men in their native seats, or when living for any length of time in one situation. It forms, in fact, next to religion, the most powerful restraint on vice, and excitement to virtue, that exists in the world. But when several hundred thousand of the working classes are suddenly huddled together in densely peopled localities, this invaluable check is wholly lost. Nay, what is worse, it is rolled over to the other side; and forms an additional incentive to licentiousness. The poor in these situations have no neighbours who care for them, or even know their names; but they are surrounded by multitudes who are willing to accompany them in the career of sensuality. They are unknown alike to each other, and to any persons of respectability or property in their vicinity. Philanthropy seeks in vain for virtue amidst thousands and tens of thousands of

unknown names; charity itself is repelled by the hopelessness of all attempts to relieve the stupendous mass of destitution which follows in the train of such enormous accumulation of numbers. Every individual or voluntary effort is overlooked amidst the prodigious multitude, as it was in the Moscow campaign of Napoleon. Thus the most powerful restraints on human conduct—character, relations, neighbourhood—are lost upon mankind at the very time when their salutary influence is most required to enable them to withstand the increasing temptations arising from density of numbers and a vast increase of wages. Multitudes remove responsibility without weakening passion. Isolation ensures concealment without adding to resolution. This is the true cause of the more rapid deterioration of the character of the poor than the rich, when placed in such dense localities. The latter have a neighbourhood to watch them, because their station renders them conspicuous—the former have none. Witness the rapid and general corruption of the higher ranks, when they get away from such restraint, amidst the profligacy of New South Wales.

In the foremost rank of the causes which demoralize the urban and mining population, we must place the frequency of those strikes which unhappily have now become so common as to be of more frequent occurrence than a wet season, even in our humid climate. During the last twenty years there have been six great strikes: viz. in 1826, 1828, 1834, 1837, 1842, and 1844. All of these have kept multitudes of the labouring poor idle for months

together. Incalculable is the demoralization thus produced upon the great mass of the working classes. We speak not of the actual increase of commitments during the continuance of a great strike, though that increase is so considerable that it in general augments them in a single year from thirty to fifty per cent.⁶ We allude to the far more general and lasting causes of demoralization which arise from the arraying of one portion of the community in fierce hostility against another, the wretchedness which is spread among multitudes by months of compulsory idleness, and the not less ruinous effect of depriving them of *occupation* during such protracted periods. When we recollect that such is the vehemence of party feeling produced by these disastrous combinations, that it so far obliterates all sense of right and wrong as generally to make their members countenance contumely and insult, sometimes even robbery, fire-raising, and murder, committed on innocent persons who are only striving to earn an honest livelihood for themselves by hard labour, but in opposition to the strike; and that it induces twenty and thirty thousand persons to yield implicit obedience to the commands of an unknown committee, who have power to force them to do what the Sultan Mahmoud, or the Committee of Public Safety, never ventured to attempt—to abstain from labour, and endure want and starvation for months together, for an object of which they often in secret disapprove—it may

⁶ Commitments:—⁸ Strike. ⁹ Strike. PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, xi. 162.—*Parl. Paper of Crime*, 1843, p. 53.

be conceived how wide-spread and fatal is the confusion of moral principle, and habits of idleness and insubordination thus produced. Their effects invariably appear for a course of years afterwards, in the increased roll of criminal commitments, and the number of young persons of both sexes, who, loosened by these protracted periods of idleness, never afterwards regain habits of regularity and industry. Nor is the evil lessened by the blind infatuation with which it is uniformly regarded by the other classes of the community, and the obstinate resistance they make to all measures calculated to arrest the violence of these combinations, in consequence of the expense with which they would probably be attended—a supineness which, by leaving the coast constantly clear to the terrors of such associations, and promising impunity to their crimes, operates as a continual bounty on their recurrence.

Infant labour, unhappily now so frequent in all kinds of factories, and the great prevalence of female workers, is another evil of a very serious kind in the manufacturing districts. We do not propose to enter into the question, recently so fiercely agitated in the legislature, as to the practicability of substituting a compulsory ten-hours' bill for the twelve hours' at present in operation. Anxious to avoid all topics on which there is a difference of opinion among able and patriotic men, we merely state this prevalence and precocity of juvenile labour in the manufacturing and mining districts as *a fact* which all must deplore, and which is attended with the most unhappy effects on

the rising generation. The great majority, probably nine-tenths, of all the workers in cotton-mills or printfields, are females. We have heard much of the profligacy and licentiousness which pervade such establishments; but though that may be too true in some cases, it is far from being universal, or even general; and there are numerous instances of female virtue being as jealously guarded and effectually preserved in such establishments, as in the most secluded rural districts. The real evils—and they follow universally from such employment of juvenile females in great numbers in laborious but lucrative employment—are the emancipation of the young from parental control, the temptation held out to idleness in the parents from the possibility of living on their children, and the disqualifying the girls for performing all the domestic duties of wives and mothers in after life.

These evils are real, general, and of ruinous consequence. When children—from the age of nine or ten in some establishments, of thirteen or fourteen in all—are able to earn wages varying from 3s. 6d. to 6s. a-week, they soon become in practice independent of parental control. The strongest of all securities for filial obedience—a sense of dependence—is destroyed. The children assert the right of self-government, because they bear the burden of self-maintenance. Nature, in the ordinary case, has effectually guarded against this premature and fatal emancipation of the young, by the protracted period of weakness during childhood and adolescence, which precludes the possibility of serious labour being undertaken before the age

when a certain degree of mental firmness has been acquired. But the steam-engine, amidst its other marvels, has entirely destroyed, within the sphere of its influence, this happy and necessary exemption of infancy from labour. Steam is the moving power; it exerts the strength; the human machine is required only to lift a web periodically, or damp a roller, or twirl a film round the finger, to which the hands of infancy are as adequate as those of mature age. Hence the general employment of children, and especially girls, in such employments. They are equally serviceable as men or women, and they are more docile, cheaper, and less given to strikes. But as these children earn their own subsistence, they soon become rebellious to parental authority, and exercise the freedom of middle life as soon as they feel its passions, and before they have acquired its self-control.

If the effect of such premature emancipation of the young is hurtful to them, it is, if possible, still more pernicious to their parents. Labour is generally irksome to man; it is seldom persevered in after the period of its necessity has passed. When parents find that, by sending three or four children out to the mills or into the mines, they can get eighteen or twenty shillings a-week without doing any thing themselves, they soon come to abridge the duration and cost of education, in order to accelerate the arrival of the happy period when they may live on their offspring, not their offspring on them. Thus the purest and best affections of the heart are obliterated on the very threshold of life. That best school of disinterestedness and virtue, the *domestic*

hearth, where generosity and self-control are called forth in the parents, and gratitude and affection in the children, from the very circumstance of the dependence of the latter on the former, is destroyed. It is worse than destroyed, it is made the parent of wickedness: it exists, but it exists only to nourish the selfish and debasing passions. Children come to be looked on, not as objects of affection, but as instruments of gain; not as forming the first duty of life and calling forth its highest energies, but as affording the first means of relaxing from labour, and permitting a relapse into indolence and sensuality. The children are, practically speaking, sold for slaves, and—oh! unutterable horror!—*the sellers are their own parents!* Unbounded is the demoralization produced by this monstrous perversion of the first principles of nature. Thence it is that it is generally found, that all the beneficent provisions of the legislature for the protection of infant labour are so generally evaded, as to render it doubtful whether any law, how stringent soever, could protect them. The reason is apparent. The parents of the children are the chief violators of the law; for the sake of profit they send them out, the instant they can work, to the mills or the mines. Those whom nature has made their protectors, have become their oppressors. The thirst for idleness, intoxication, or sensuality, has turned the strongest of the generous, into the most malignant of the selfish passions.

The habits acquired by such precocious employment of young women, are not less destructive of their ultimate utility and

respectability in life. Habituated from their earliest years to one undeviating mechanical employment, they acquire great skill in it, but grow up utterly ignorant of any thing else. We speak not of ignorance of reading or writing, but of ignorance in still more momentous particulars, with reference to their usefulness in life as wives and mothers. They can neither bake nor brew, wash nor iron, sew nor knit. The finest London lady is not more utterly inefficient than they are, for any other object but the one mechanical occupation to which they have been habituated. They can neither darn a stocking nor sew on a button. As to making porridge or washing a handkerchief, the thing is out of the question. Their food is cooked out of doors by persons who provide the lodging-houses in which they dwell—they are clothed from head to foot, like fine ladies, by milliners and dressmakers. This is not the result of fashion, caprice, or indolence, but of the entire concentration of their faculties, mental and corporeal, from their earliest years, in one limited mechanical object. They are unfit to be any man's wife—still more unfit to be any child's mother. We hear little of this from philanthropists or education-mongers; but it is, nevertheless, not the least, because the most generally diffused, evil connected with our manufacturing industry.

But by far the greatest cause of the mass of crime of the manufacturing and mining districts of the country, is to be found in the prodigious number of persons, especially in infancy, who are reduced to a state of destitution, and precipitated into the

very lowest stations of life, in consequence of the numerous ills to which all flesh—but especially all flesh in manufacturing communities—is heir. Our limits preclude the possibility of entering into all the branches of this immense subject; we shall content ourselves, therefore, with referring to one, which seems of itself perfectly sufficient to explain the increase of crime, which at first sight appears so alarming. This is the immense proportion of *destitute widows with families*, who in such circumstances find themselves immovably fixed in places where they can neither bring up their children decently, nor get away to other and less peopled localities.

From the admirable statistical returns of the condition of the labouring poor in France, prepared for the *Bureau de l'Intérieure*, it appears that the number of widows in that country amounts to the enormous number of 1,738,000.⁷ This, out of a population now of about 34,000,000, is as nearly as possible *one in twenty* of the entire population! Population is advancing much more rapidly in Great Britain than France; for in the former country it is doubling in about 60 years, in the latter in 106. It is certain, therefore, that the proportion of widows must be greater in this country than in France, especially in the manufacturing districts, where early marriages, from the ready employment for young children, are so frequent; and early deaths, from the unhealthiness of employment or contagious disorders, are so

⁷ *Statistique de la France, publiée par le Gouvernement*, viii. 371-4. A most splendid work.

common. But call the proportion the same: let it be taken at a twentieth part of the existing population. At this rate, the two millions of strangers who, during the last forty years, have been thrown into the four northern counties of Lancaster, York, Stafford, and Warwick, must contain at this moment *a hundred thousand widows*. The usual average of a family is two and a half children—call it two only. There will thus be found to be 200,000 children belonging to these 100,000 widows. It is hardly necessary to say, that the great majority, probably four-fifths of this immense body, must be in a state of destitution. We know in what state the fatherless and widows are in their affliction, and who has commanded us to visit them. On the most moderate calculation, 250,000, or an eighth of the whole population, must be in a state of poverty and privation. And in Scotland, where, during the same period of forty years, 350,000 strangers have been suddenly huddled together on the banks of the Clyde, the proportion may be presumed to be the same; or, in other words, *thirty thousand* widows and orphans are constantly there in a state deserving of pity, and requiring support, hardly any of whom receive more from the parish funds than *a shilling a-week*, even for the maintenance of a whole family.

The proportion of widows and orphans to the entire population, though without doubt in some degree aggravated by the early marriages and unhealthy employments incident to manufacturing districts, may be supposed to be not materially different in one age, or part of the country, from another. The

widow and the orphan, as well as the poor, will be always with us; but the peculiar circumstance which renders their condition so deplorable in the dense and suddenly peopled manufacturing districts is, that the poor have been brought together in such prodigious numbers that all the ordinary means of providing for the relief of such casualties fails; while the causes of mortality among them are periodically so fearful, as to produce a vast and sudden increase of the most destitute classes altogether outstripping all possible means of local or voluntary relief. During the late typhus fever in Glasgow, in the years 1836 and 1837, above 30,000 of the poor took the epidemic, of whom 3300 died.⁸ In the first eight months of 1843 alone, 32,000 persons in Glasgow were seized with fever.⁹ Out of 1000 families, at a subsequent period, visited by the police, in conjunction with the visitors for the distribution of the great fund raised by subscription in 1841, 680 were found to be widows, who, with their families, amounted to above 2000 persons all in the most abject state of wretchedness and want.¹⁰ On so vast a scale do the causes of human destruction and demoralization act, when men are torn up from their native seats by the irresistible magnet of commercial wealth, and congregated together in masses, resembling rather the armies of Timour and Napoleon

⁸ Fever patients, Glasgow, 1836, 37.—COWAN'S *Vital Statistics of Glasgow*, 1388, p 8, the work of a most able and meritorious medical gentleman now no more.

⁹ Dr Alison on the Epidemic of 1843, p. 67.

¹⁰ Captain Millar's Report, 1841, p. 8.

than any thing else ever witnessed in the transactions of men.

Here, then, is the great source of demoralization, destitution, and crime in the manufacturing districts. It arises from the sudden congregation of human beings in such fearful multitudes together, that all the usual alleviations of human suffering, or modes of providing for human indigence, entirely fail. We wonder at the rapid increase of crime in the manufacturing districts, forgetting that a squalid mass of two or three hundred thousand human beings are constantly precipitated to the bottom of society in a few counties, in such circumstances of destitution that recklessness and crime arise naturally, it may almost be said unavoidably, amongst them. And it is in the midst of such gigantic causes of evil—of causes arising from the extraordinary and unparalleled influx of mankind into the manufacturing districts during the last forty years, which can bear a comparison to nothing but the collection of the host with which Napoleon invaded Russia, or Timour and Genghis Khan desolated Asia—that we are gravely told that it is to be arrested by education and moral training; by infant schools and shortened hours of labour; by multiplication of ministers and solitary imprisonment! All these are very good things; each in its way is calculated to do a certain amount of good; and their united action upon the whole will doubtless, in process of time, produce some impression upon the aspect of society, even in the densely peopled manufacturing districts. As to their producing any immediate effect, or in any sensible degree arresting the prodigious amount of misery,

destitution, and crime which pervades them, you might as well have tried, by the schoolmaster, to arrest the horrors of the Moscow retreat.

That the causes which have now been mentioned are the true sources of the rapid progress of crime and general demoralization of our manufacturing and mining districts, must be evident to all from this circumstance, well known to all who are practically conversant with the subject, but to a great degree unattended to by the majority of men, and that is,—that the prodigious stream of depravity and corruption which prevails, is far from being equally and generally diffused through society, even in the densely peopled districts where it is most alarming, but is in a great degree confined to the *very lowest class*. It is from that lowest class that nine-tenths of the crime, and nearly all the professional crime, which is felt as so great an evil in society, flows. Doubtless in all classes there are some wicked, many selfish and inhumane men; and a beneficent Deity, in the final allotment of rewards and punishments, will take largely into account both the opportunities of doing well which the better classes have abused, and the almost invincible causes which so often chain, as it were, the destitute to recklessness and crime. But still, in examining the classes of society on which the greater part of the crime comes, it will be found that at least three-fourths, probably nine-tenths, comes from the very lowest and the most destitute. It is incorrect to say crime is common among them; in truth, among the young at least, a tendency to it is there

all but universal. If we examine who it is that compose this dismal substratum, this hideous *black band of society*, we shall find that it is not made up of any one class more than another—not of factory workers more than labourers, carters, or miners—but is formed by an aggregate of the most unfortunate or improvident of *all classes*, who, variously struck down from better ways by disease, vice, or sensuality, are now of necessity huddled together by tens of thousands in the dens of poverty, and held by the firm bond of necessity in the precincts of contagion and crime. Society in such circumstances resembles the successive bands of which the imagination of Dante has framed the infernal regions, which contain one concentric circle of horrors and punishments within another, until, when you arrive at the bottom, you find one uniform mass of crime, blasphemy and suffering. We are persuaded there is no person practically acquainted with the causes of immorality and crime in the manufacturing districts, who will not admit that these are the true ones; and that the others, about which so much is said by theorists and philanthropists, though not without influence, are nevertheless trifling in the balance. And what we particularly call the public attention to is this—Suppose all the remedies which theoretical writers or practical legislators have put forth and recommended, as singly adequate to remove the evils of the manufacturing classes, were to be in *united* operation, they would still leave these gigantic causes of evil untouched. Let Lord Ashley obtain from a reluctant legislature his ten-hours' bill, and Dr Chalmers have

a clergyman established for every 700 inhabitants; let church extension be pushed till there is a chapel in every village, and education till there is a school in every street; let the separate system be universal in prisons, and every criminal be entirely secluded from vicious contamination; still the great fountains of evil will remain unclosed; still 300,000 widows and orphans will exist in a few counties of England amidst a newly collected and strange population, steeped in misery themselves, and of necessity breeding up their children in habits of destitution and depravity; still the poor will be deprived, from the suddenness of their collection, and the density of their numbers, of any effective control, either from private character or the opinion of neighbourhood; still individual passion will be inflamed, and individual responsibility lost amidst multitudes; still strikes will spread their compulsory idleness amidst tens of thousands, and periodically array the whole working classes under the banners of sedition, despotism, and murder; still precocious female labour will at once tempt parents into idleness in middle life, and disqualify children, in youth, for household or domestic duties. We wish well to the philanthropists: we are far from undervaluing either the importance or the utility of their labours; but as we have hitherto seen no diminution of crime whatever from their efforts, so we anticipate a very slow and almost imperceptible improvement in society from their exertions.

Strong, and in many respects just, pictures of the state of the working classes in the manufacturing districts, have been

lately put forth, and the *Perils of the Nation* have, with reason, been thought to be seriously increased by them. Those writers, however, how observant and benevolent soever, give a partial, and in many respects fallacious view, of the *general* aspect of society. After reading their doleful accounts of the general wretchedness, profligacy, and licentiousness of the working classes, the stranger is astonished, on travelling through England, to behold green fields and smiling cottages on all sides; to see in every village signs of increasing comfort, in every town marks of augmented wealth, and the aspect of poverty almost banished from the land. Nay, what is still more gratifying, the returns of the sanitary condition of the whole population, though still exhibiting a painful difference between the health and chances of life in the rural and manufacturing districts, present unequivocal proof of a general amelioration of the chances of life, and, consequently, of the general wellbeing of the whole community.

How are these opposite statements and appearances to be reconciled? Both are true—the reconciliation is easy. The misery, recklessness, and vice exist chiefly in one class—the industry, sobriety, and comfort in another. Each observer tells truly what he sees in his own circle of attention; he does not tell what, nevertheless, exists, and exercises a powerful influence on society, of the good which exists in the other classes. If the evils detailed in Lord Ashley's speeches, and painted with so much force in the *Perils of the Nation*, were universal, or even general, society could not hold together for a week. But though these evils

are great, sometimes overwhelming in particular districts, they are far from being general. Nothing effectual has yet been done to arrest them in the localities or communities where they arise; but they do not spread much beyond them. The persons engaged in the factories are stated by Lord Ashley to be between four and five hundred thousand: the population of the British islands is above 27,000,000. It is in the steadiness, industry, and good conduct of a large proportion of this immense majority that the security is to be found. Observe that industrious and well-doing majority; you would suppose there is no danger:—observe the profligate and squalid minority; you would suppose there is no hope.

At present about 60,000 persons are annually committed, in the British islands, for serious offences¹¹ worthy of deliberate trial, and above double that number for summary or police offences. A hundred and eighty thousand persons annually fall under the lash of the criminal law, and are committed for longer or shorter periods to places of confinement for punishment. The number is prodigious—it is frightful. Yet it is in all only about 1 in 120 of the population; and from the great number who are repeatedly committed during the same year, the individuals punished are not 1 in 200. Such as they are, it may safely be affirmed that four-fifths of this 180,000 comes out of two or three millions of the community. We are quite sure that

¹¹ Viz., in round numbers— England, 30,000 Ireland, 26,000 Scotland, 4,000 60,000

150,000 come from 3,000,000 of the lowest and most squalid of the empire, and not 30,000 from the remaining 24,000,000 who live in comparative comfort. This consideration is fitted both to encourage hope and awaken shame—hope, as showing from how small a class in society the greater part of the crime comes, and to how limited a sphere the remedies require to be applied; shame, as demonstrating how disgraceful has been the apathy, selfishness, and supineness in the other more numerous and better classes, around whom the evil has arisen, but who seldom interfere, except to RESIST all measures calculated for its removal.

It is to this subject—the ease with which the extraordinary and unprecedented increase of crime in the empire might be arrested by proper means and the total inefficiency of all the remedies hitherto attempted, from the want of practical knowledge on the part of those at the head of affairs, and an entirely false view of human nature in society generally, that we shall direct the attention of our readers in a future Number.

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE

A BALLAD

It was upon an April morn
While yet the frost lay hoar,
We heard Lord James's bugle-horn
Sound by the rocky shore.

Then down we went, a hundred knights,
All in our dark array,
And flung our armour in the ships
That rode within the bay.

We spoke not as the shore grew less,
But gazed in silence back,
Where the long billows swept away
The foam behind our track.

And aye the purple hues decay'd
Upon the fading hill,
And but one heart in all that ship

Was tranquil, cold, and still.

The good Earl Douglas walk'd the deck,
And oh, his brow was wan!
Unlike the flush it used to wear
When in the battle van.—

"Come hither, come hither, my trusty knight,
Sir Simon of the Lee;
There is a freit lies near my soul
I fain would tell to thee.

"Thou knowest the words King Robert spoke
Upon his dying day,
How he bade me take his noble heart
And carry it far away:

"And lay it in the holy soil
Where once the Saviour trod,
Since he might not bear the blessed Cross,
Nor strike one blow for God.

"Last night as in my bed I lay,
I dream'd a dreary dream:—

Methought I saw a Pilgrim stand
In the moonlight's quivering beam.

"His robe was of the azure dye,
Snow-white his scatter'd hairs,
And even such a cross he bore
As good Saint Andrew bears.

"'Why go ye forth, Lord James,' he said,
'With spear and belted brand?
Why do ye take its dearest pledge
From this our Scottish land?

"'The sultry breeze of Galilee
Creeps through its groves of palm,
The olives on the Holy Mount
Stand glittering in the calm.

"'But 'tis not there that Scotland's heart
Shall rest by God's decree,
Till the great angel calls the dead
To rise from earth and sea!

"'Lord James of Douglas, mark my rede

That heart shall pass once more
In fiery fight against the foe,
As it was wont of yore.

"And it shall pass beneath the Cross,
And save King Robert's vow,
But other hands shall bear it back,
Not, James of Douglas, thou!"

"Now, by thy knightly faith, I pray,
Sir Simon of the Lee—
For truer friend had never man
Than thou hast been to me—

"If ne'er upon the Holy Land
'Tis mine in life to tread,
Bear thou to Scotland's kindly earth
The relics of her dead."

The tear was in Sir Simon's eye
As he wrung the warrior's hand—
"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
I'll hold by thy command.

"But if in battle front, Lord James,
'Tis ours once more to ride,
Nor force of man, nor craft of fiend,
Shall cleave me from thy side!"

And aye we sail'd, and aye we sail'd,
Across the weary sea,
Until one morn the coast of Spain
Rose grimly on our lee.

And as we rounded to the port,
Beneath the watch-tower's wall,
We heard the clash of the atabals,
And the trumpet's wavering call.

"Why sounds yon Eastern music here
So wantonly and long,
And whose the crowd of armed men
That round yon standard throng?"

"The Moors have come from Africa
To spoil and waste and slay,
And Pedro, King of Arragon,
Must fight with them to-day."

"Now shame it were," cried good Lord James,
"Shall never be said of me,
That I and mine have turn'd aside,
From the Cross in jeopardie!

"Have down, have down my merry men all—
Have down unto the plain;
We'll let the Scottish lion loose
Within the fields of Spain!"—

"Now welcome to me, noble lord,
Thou and thy stalwart power;
Dear is the sight of a Christian knight
Who comes in such an hour!

"Is it for bond or faith ye come,
Or yet for golden fee?
Or bring ye France's lilies here,
Or the flower of Burgundie?"

"God greet thee well, thou valiant King,
Thee and thy belted peers—
Sir James of Douglas am I call'd,
And these are Scottish spears.

"We do not fight for bond or plight,
Nor yet for golden fee;
But for the sake of our blessed Lord,
That died Upon the tree.

"We bring our great King Robert's heart
Across the weltering wave,
To lay it in the holy soil
Hard by the Saviour's grave.

"True pilgrims we, by land or sea,
Where danger bars the way;
And therefore are we here, Lord King,
To ride with thee this day!"

The King has bent his stately head,
And the tears were in his eyne—
"God's blessing on thee, noble knight,
For this brave thought of thine!

"I know thy name full well, Lord James,
And honour'd may I be,
That those who fought beside the Bruce

Should fight this day for me!

"Take thou the leading of the van,
And charge the Moors amain;
There is not such a lance as thine
In all the host of Spain!"

The Douglas turned towards us then,
Oh, but his glance was high!—
"There is not one of all my men
But is as bold as I.

"There is not one of all my knights
But bears as true a spear—
Then onwards! Scottish gentlemen,
And think—King Robert's here!"

The trumpets blew, the cross-bolts flew,
The arrows flash'd like flame,
As spur in side, and spear in rest,
Against the foe we came.

And many a bearded Saracen
Went down, both horse and man;

For through their ranks we rode like corn,
So furiously we ran!

But in behind our path they closed,
Though fain to let us through,
For they were forty thousand men,
And we were wondrous few.

We might not see a lance's length,
So dense was their array,
But the long fell sweep of the Scottish blade
Still held them hard at bay.

"Make in! make in!" Lord Douglas cried,
"Make in, my brethren dear!
Sir William of St Clair is down,
We may not leave him here!"

But thicker, thicker, grew the swarm,
And sharper shot the rain,
And the horses rear'd amid the press,
But they would not charge again.

"Now Jesu help thee," said Lord James,

"Thou kind and true St Clair!
An' if I may not bring thee off,
I'll die beside thee there!"

Then in his stirrups up he stood,
So lionlike and bold,
And held the precious heart aloft
All in its case of gold.

He flung it from him, far ahead,
And never spake he more,
But—"Pass thee first, thou dauntless heart,
As thou were wont of yore!"

The roar of fight rose fiercer yet,
And heavier still the stour,
Till the spears of Spain came shivering in
And swept away the Moor.

"Now praised be God, the day is won!
They fly o'er flood and fell—
Why dost thou draw the rein so hard,
Good knight, that fought so well?"

"Oh, ride ye on, Lord King!" he said,
"And leave the dead to me,
For I must keep the dreariest watch
That ever I shall dree!

"There lies beside his master's heart
The Douglas, stark and grim;
And woe is me I should be here,
Not side by side with him!

"The world grows cold, my arm is old,
And thin my lyart hair,
And all that I loved best on earth
Is stretch'd before me there.

"O Bothwell banks! that bloom so bright,
Beneath the sun of May,
The heaviest cloud that ever blew
Is bound for you this day.

"And, Scotland, thou may'st veil thy head
In sorrow and in pain;
The sorest stroke upon thy brow
Hath fallen this day in Spain!

"We'll bear them back into our ship,
We'll bear them o'er the sea,
And lay them in the hallow'd earth,
Within our own countrie.

"And be thou strong of heart, Lord King,
For this I tell thee sure,
The sod that drank the Douglas' blood
Shall never bear the Moor!"

The King he lighted from his horse,
He flung his brand away,
And took the Douglas by the hand,
So stately as he lay.

"God give thee rest, thou valiant soul,
That fought so well for Spain;
I'd rather half my land were gone,
So thou wert here again!"

We bore the good Lord James away,
And the priceless heart he bore,
And heavily we steer'd our ship
Towards the Scottish shore.

No welcome greeted our return,
Nor clang of martial tread,
But all were dumb and hush'd as death
Before the mighty dead.

We laid the Earl in Douglas Kirk,
The heart in fair Melrose;
And woful men were we that day—
God grant their souls repose!

W.E.A.

MEMORANDUMS OF A MONTH'S TOUR IN SICILY

THE MUSEUM OF PALERMO

The museum of Palermo is a small but very interesting collection of statues and other sculpture, gathered chiefly, they say, from the ancient temples of Sicily, with a few objects bestowed out of the superfluities of Pompeii. In the lower room are some good bas-reliefs, to which a story is attached. They were discovered fifteen years ago at *Selinuntium* by some young Englishmen, the reward of four months' labour. Our guide, who had been also theirs, had warned them not to stay after the month of June, when malaria begins. They did stay. All (four) took the fever; one died of it in Palermo, and the survivors were deprived by the government—that is, by the king—of the spoils for which they had suffered so much and worked so hard. No one is permitted to excavate without royal license; *excavation* is, like *Domitian's fish*, *res fisci*. Even Mr Fagan, who was consul at Palermo, having made some interesting underground discoveries, was deprived of them. We saw here a fine Esculapius, in countenance and expression exceedingly like the *Ecce Homo* of Leonardo da Vinci, with all that god-

like compassion which the great painter had imparted without any sacrifice of dignity. He holds a poppy-head, which we do not recollect on his statue or gems, and the Epidaurian snake is at his side. Up-stairs we saw specimens of fruits from Pompeii, barley, beans, the carob pod, pine kernels, as well as bread, sponge, linen: and the sponge was obviously such, and so was the linen. A bronze Hercules treading on the back of a stag, which he has overtaken and subdued, is justly considered as one of the most perfect bronzes discovered at Pompeii. A head of our Saviour, by Corregio, is exquisite in conception, and such as none but a person long familiar with the physiognomy of suffering could have accomplished. These are exceptions rather than specimens. The pictures, in general, are poor in interest; and a long gallery of *casts* of the *chef-d'oeuvres* of antiquity possessed by the capitals of Italy, Germany, England, and France, looks oddly here, and shows the poverty of a country which had been to the predatory proconsuls of Rome an inexhaustible repertory of the highest treasures of art. A VERRES REDIVIVUS would now find little to carry off but toys made of amber, lava snuff-boxes, and WODEHOUSE'S MARSALA—one of which he certainly would not guess the *age* of, and the other of which he would not *drink*.

LUNATIC ASYLUM

We saw nothing in this house or its arrangements to make us think it superior, or very different from others we had visited elsewhere. The making a lunatic asylum a show-place for strangers is to be censured; indeed, we heard Esquirol observe, that nothing was so bad as the admission of many persons to see the patients at all; for that, although some few were better for the visits of friends, it was injurious as a general rule to give even friends admittance, and that it ought to be left discretionary with the physician, *when* to admit, and *whom*. Cleanliness, good fare, a garden, and the suppression of all violence—these have become immutable canons for the conduct of such institutions, and fortunately demand little more than ordinary good feeling and intelligence in the superintendent. But we could not fail to observe a sad want of suitable inducement to *occupation*, which was apparent throughout this asylum. That not above one in ten could read, may perhaps be thought a light matter, for few can be the resources of insanity in books; yet we saw at *Genoa* a case where it had taken that turn, and as it is occupation to read, with how much profit it matters not. Not one woman in four, as usually occurs in insanity, could be induced to *dress according to her sex*; they figured away in men's coats and hats! The dining-room was hung with portraits of some merit, by one of the lunatics; and we noticed that every face, if indeed all are *portraits*, had some

insanity in it. They have a dance every Sunday evening. What an exhibition it must be!

MISCELLANEA

That the vegetation of Palermo excels that of Naples, partly depends on the superior intelligence of the agriculturist, and partly upon soil and climate: the fruits here are not only more advanced, but finer in quality. We left a very meagre dessert of cherries beginning to ripen at Naples; the very next day, a superabundance of very fine and mature ones were to be had on all the stalls of Palermo. This must be the result of industry and care in a great measure; for on leaving that city, after a *séjour* of three weeks, for Messina, Catania, and Syracuse, although summer was much further advanced, we relapsed into miserably meagre supplies of what we had eaten in perfection in the capital; yet Syracuse and Catania are much warmer than Palermo.

The vegetables here are of immense growth. The fennel root (and there is no better test of your whereabouts in Italy) is nearly twice as large as at Naples, and weighs, accordingly, nearly double. The cauliflowers are quite colossal; and they have a blue cabbage so big that your arms will scarcely embrace it. We question, however, whether this hypertrophy of fruit or vegetables improves their flavour; give us *English vegetables*—ay, and *English fruit*. Though Smyrna's *fig* is eaten throughout Europe, and Roman *brocoli* be without a rival; though the *cherry* and the Japan *medlar* flourish only at Palermo, and the *cactus* of Catania can be eaten nowhere else; what country town in England

is not better off on the whole, if quality alone be considered? But we have one terrible drawback; for *whom* are these fruits of the earth produced? Our *prices* are enormous, and our supply scanty; could we *forget this*, and the artichoke, the asparagus, the peas and beans of London and Paris, are rarely elsewhere so fine. To our palates the *gooseberry* and the *black currant* are a sufficient indemnity to Britain for the *grape*, merely regarded as a fruit to *eat*. *Pine-apples*, those "illustrious foreigners," are so successfully *petted* at home, that they will scarcely condescend now to flourish out of England. *Nectarines* refuse to ripen, and *apricots* to have any taste elsewhere. Our *pears* and *apples* are better, and of more various excellence, than any in the world. And we really prefer our very figs, grown on a fine *prebendal* wall in the close of *Winchester*, or under *Pococke's* window in a canon's garden at *chilly Oxford*. Thus has the kitchen-garden refreshed our patriotism, and made us half ashamed of our long forgetfulness of home. But there are good things abroad too for poor men; the rich may live any where. An enormous salad, crisp, cold, white, and of delicious flavour, for a halfpenny; olive oil, for fourpence a pound, to dress it with; and wine for fourpence a gallon to make it disagree with you;¹² fuel for almost nothing, and bread for little, are not small advantages to frugal housekeepers; but, when dispensed by a despotic government, where one must read those revolting words *motu proprio* at the head of every edict, let us go back to our carrots and potatoes, our Peels and

¹² ———*Lactuca innatat acri*Post vinum stomacho.—HOR.

our income-tax, our fogs and our frost. The country mouse came to a right conclusion, and did not like the fragments of the feast with the cat in the cupboard—

Give me again my hollow tree,
My crust of bread, and liberty."

Fish, though plentiful and various, is not fine in any part of the *Mediterranean*; and as to *thunny*, one surfeit would put it out of the bill of fare for life. On the whole, though at Palermo and Naples the pauper starves not in the streets, the gourmand would be sadly at a loss in his requisition of delicacies and variety. Inferior bread, at a penny a pound, is here considered palatable by the sprinkling over of the crust with a small rich seed (*jugulena*) which has a flavour like the almond; it is also strewn, like our caraway seeds in biscuits, *into* the paste, and is largely cultivated for that single use. The *capsici*, somewhat similar in flavour to the pea, are detached from the radicles of a plant with a flower strikingly like the potatoe, and is used for a similar purpose to the *jugulena*.

This island was the granary of Athens before it nourished Rome; and wheat appears to have been first raised in Europe on the plains of eastern Sicily. In Cicero's time it returned eightfold; and to this day one grain yields its eightfold of increase; which, however, is by a small fraction less than our own, as given by M'Culloch in his "Dictionary of Commerce." We plucked some

siligo, or bearded wheat, near Palermo, the beard of which was eight inches long, the ear contained sixty grains, eight being also in this instance the average increase; how many grains, then, must perish in the ground!

In Palermo, English gunpowder is sold by British sailors at the high price of from five to seven shillings per English pound; the "*Polvere nostrale*" of the Sicilians only fetches 1s. 8d.; yet such is the superiority of English gunpowder, that every one who has a passion for popping at sparrows, and other *Italian sports*, (complimented by the title of *La caccia*,) prefers the dear article. When they have killed off all the robins, and there is not a twitter in *the whole country*, they go to the river side and shoot *gudgeons*.

The Palermo donkey is the most obliging animal that ever wore long ears, and will carry you cheerfully four or five miles an hour without whip or other *encouragement*. The oxen, no longer white or cream-coloured, as in Tuscany, were originally importations from Barbary, (to which country the Sicilians are likewise indebted for the *mulberry* and *silk-worm*.) Their colour is brown. They rival the Umbrian breed in the herculean symmetry of their form, and in the possession of horns of more than Umbrian dimensions, rising more perpendicularly over the forehead than in that ancient race. The lizards here are such beautiful creatures, that it is worth while to bring one away, and, to *pervert* a quotation, "*UNIUS Dominum sese fecisse LACERTAE*." Some are all green, some mottled like a mosaic floor, others green and black on the upper side, and orange-

coloured or red underneath. Of snakes, there is a *Coluber niger* from four to five feet in length, with a shining coat, and an eye not pleasant to watch even through glass; yet the peasants here put them into their Phrygian bonnets, and handle them with as much *sang-froid* as one would a walking-stick.

The coarse earthen vessels, pitchers, urns, &c., used by the peasants, are of the most beautiful shapes, often that of the ancient *amphora*; and at every cottage door by the road-side you meet with this vestige of the ancient arts of the country.

The plague which visited Palermo in 1624 swept away 20,000 inhabitants; Messina, in 1743, lost 40,000. The cholera, in 1837, destroyed 69,253 persons. The present population of the whole island is 1,950,000; the female exceeds the male by about three per cent, which is contrary to the general rule. It is said that nearly one-half the children received into the foundling hospital of Palermo die within the first year.

Formerly the barons of Sicily were rich and independent, like our English gentlemen; but they say that, since 1812, the king's whole pleasure and business, as before our *Magna Charta* times, have been to lower their importance. In that year a revolt was the consequence of an income-tax even of two per cent, for they were yet unbroken to the yoke; but now that he has saddled property with a deduction, *said* to be eventually equal to fifteen per cent, if not more; now that he doubles the impost on the native sulphur, which is therefore checked in its sale; now that he keeps an army of 80,000 men to play at soldiers with; now

that he constitutes himself the only referee even in questions of commercial expediency, and *a fortiori* in all other cases, which he settles *arbitrarily*, or does not settle at all; now that he sees so little the signs of the times, that he will not let a professor go to a science-congress at Florence or Bologna without an express permission, and so ignorant as to have *refused* that permission for fear of a political bias; now that he diverts a nation's wealth from works of charity or usefulness, to keep a set of foreigners in his pay—they no doubt here remember in their prayers, with becoming gratitude, "the holy alliance," or, as we would call it, the *mutual insurance company of the kings of Europe*, of which Castlereagh and Metternich were the honorary secretaries.

In the midst of all the gloomy despotism, beautiful even as imagination can paint it, is Palermo beautiful! One eminent advantage it possesses over Naples itself—its vicinity presents more "drives;" and all the drives here might contest the name given to one of them, which is called "*Giro delle Grazie*," (the Ring or Mall of the Graces.) It has a *Marina* of unrivaled beauty, to which the noblesse and the citizens repair and form a promenade of elegant equipages. A fine pavement for foot passengers is considerably raised three or four feet above the carriage road; so that the walking population have nothing to annoy them. The sea is immediately below both, and you see the little rock-encircled bays animated with groups of those sturdy fishermen with bare legs; which you admire in Claude and Salvator, throwing before them, with admirable precision,

their *épervier* net, whose fine wrought meshes sometimes hang, veil-like, between you and the ruddy sunset, or plashing, as they fall nightly into the smooth sea, contribute the pleasure of an agreeable sound to the magic of the scenery. Some take the air on donkeys, which go at a great rate; some are mounted on Spanish mules, all mixed together freely amidst handsome and numerous equipages; and the whole is backed by a fine row of houses opposite the sea, built after the fashion of our terraces and crescents at watering-places. And finally, that blue *æquor*, as it now deserves to be termed, studded over with thunny boats and coasting craft with the haze latine sail, that we should be sorry to trust in British hands, is walled in by cliffs so bold, so rugged, and standing out so beautifully in relief, that for a moment we cannot choose but envy the citizen of *Panormus*. But we may not tarry even here; *we have more things* to see, and every day is getting hotter than the last.

JOURNEY TO SEGESTE

Leaving Palermo early, we pass *Monreale* in our way to the Doric columns of *Segeste*, and find ourselves, before the heat of day has reached its greatest intensity, at a considerable elevation above the plain on which the capital stands, amidst mountains which, except in the difference of their vegetation, remind us not a little of the configuration of certain wild parts of the Highlands, where Ben Croachin flings his dark shadow across Loch Awe. Indeed, we were thinking of this old and favourite fishing haunt with much complacency, when two men suddenly came forth from behind the bristly aloes and the impenetrable cactus—ill-looking fellows were they; but, moved by the kindest intentions for our safety, they offer to conduct us through the remainder of the defile. This service our hired attendant from Palermo declined, and we push on unmolested to Partenico, our halting-place during the heat of the day. It is a town of some extent, large enough to afford two fountains of a certain pretension, but execrably dirty within. Twelve thousand inhabitants has Partenico, and five churches. Out of its five locandas, who shall declare the worst? Of that in which we had first taken refuge, (as, in a snow-storm on the Alps, any *roof* is Paradise,) we were obliged to quit the shelter, and walk at *noon*, at *midsummer*, and in *Sicily*, a good mile *up* a main street, which, beginning in habitations of the dimensions of our almshouses, ends in a few

huts intolerably revolting, about which troops of naked children defy vermin, and encrust themselves in filth. At one door we could not help observing that worst form of *scabies*, the *gale à grosses bulles*; so we had got, it appeared, from *Scylla* into *Charybdis*, and were in the very preserves of Sicilian *itch*, and we prognosticate it will spread before the month expires wherever human skin is to be found for its entertainment. Partenico lies in a scorching plain full of malaria. Having passed the three stifling hours of the day here, we proceed on our journey to *Alcamo*, a town of considerable size, which looks remarkably well from the plain at the distance of four miles—an impression immediately removed on passing its high rampart gate. Glad to escape the miseries with which it threatens the *détenu*, we pass out at the other end, and zigzag down a hill of great beauty, and commanding such views of sea and land as it would be quite absurd to write about. Already a double row of aloë, planted at intervals, marks what is to be your course afar off, and is a faithful guide till it lands you in a Sicilian plain. This is the highest epithet with which any plain can be qualified. This is indeed the month for Sicily. The goddess of flowers now wears a morning dress of the newest spring fashion; beautifully *made up* is that dress, nor has she worn it long enough for it to be sullied ever so little, or to require the washing of a shower. A delicate pink and a rich red are the colours which prevail in the tasteful pattern of her voluminous drapery; and as she *advances* on you with a light and noiseless step, over a carpet which all the looms of Paris

or of Persia could not imitate, scattering bouquets of colours the most happily contrasted, and impregnating the air with the most grateful fragrance, we at once acknowledge her beautiful impersonation in that "*monument of Grecian art*," the *Farnese Flora*, of which we have brought the fresh recollection from the museum of Naples.

The *Erba Bianca* is a plant like southernwood, presenting a curious hoar-frosted appearance as its leaves are stirred by the wind. The *Rozzolo a vento* is an ambitious plant, which grows beyond its strength, snaps short upon its overburdened stalk, and is borne away by any zephyr, however light. Large crops of *oats* are already cut; and oxen of the Barbary breed, brown and coal-black, are already dragging the simple aboriginal plough over the land. Some of these fine cattle (to whom we are strangers, as they are to us) stood gazing at us in the plain, their white horns glancing in the sun; others, recumbent and ruminating, exhibit antlers which, as we have said before, surpass the Umbrian cattle in their elk-like length and imposing majesty. Arrived at the bottom of our long hill, we pass a beautiful stream called *Fiume freddo*, whose source we track across the plain by banks crowned with *Cactus* and *Tamarisk*. Looking back with regret towards *Alcamo*, we see trains of mules, which still transact the internal commerce of the country, with large packsaddles on their backs; and when a halt takes place, these animals during their drivers' dinner obtain their own ready-found meal, and browse away on three courses of vegetables and a dessert.

SICILIAN INNS

"A beautiful place this *Segeste* must be! One could undergo any thing to see it!" Such would be the probable exclamation of more than one reader looking over some *landscape annual*, embellished with perhaps *a view* of the celebrated temple and its surrounding scenery; but find yourself at any of the inexpressibly horrid inns of *Alcamo* or *Calatafrini*, (and these are the two principal stations between Palermo and Segeste—one with its 12,000, the other with its 18,000 inhabitants;) let us walk you down the main street of either, and if you don't wish yourself at Cheltenham, or some other unclassical place which never had a Latin name, we are much mistaken! The "*Relievo dei Cavalli*" at Alcamo offers no *relief* for you! The *Magpie* may prate on her sign-post about *clean* beds, for magpies can be made to say any thing; but pray do not construe the "*Canova Divina*" Divine Canova! *He* never executed any thing for the *Red Lion* of Calatafrini, whose "*Canova*" is a low wine-shop, full of wrangling Sicilian boors. Or will you place yourself under the *Eagle's* wing, seduced by its *nuovi mobili e buon servizio*? Oh, we obtest those broken window-panes whether it be not *cruel* to expose *new furniture* to such perils! For us we put up at the "*Temple of Segeste*," attracted rather by its name than by any promise or decoy it offers. Crabbe has given to the inns at Aldborough each its character: here all are equal in immundicity,

and all equally without provisions. Some yellow beans lie soaking to soften them. There is salt-cod from the north, moist and putrid. There is no milk; eggs are few. The ham at the Pizzicarolo's is always bad, and the garlicked sausage repulsive. Nothing is painted or white-washed, let alone dusted, swept, or scoured. The walls have the appearance of having been *pawed* over by new relays of dirty fingers daily for ten years. This is a very peculiar appearance at many nasty places *out* of Sicily, and we really do not know its *pathology*. You tread loathingly an indescribable earthen floor, and your eye, on entering the apartment, is arrested by a nameless production of the fictile art, certainly not of *Etruscan* form, which is invariably placed on the *bolster* of the truck-bed destined presently for your devoted head. Oh! to do justice to a Sicilian *locanda* is plainly out of question, and the rest of our task may as well be sung as said, verse and prose being alike incapable of the hopeless reality:—

"Lodged for the night, O Muse! begin
To sing the true Sicilian inn,
Where the sad choice of six foul cells
The least exacting traveller quells
(Though crawling things, not yet in sight,
Are waiting for the shadowy night,
To issue forth when all is quiet,
And on your feverish pulses riot;)
Where one wood shutter scrapes the ground,
By crusts, stale-bones, and garbage bound;

Where unmolested spiders toil
Behind the mirror's mildew'd foil;
Where the cheap crucifix of lead
Hangs o'er the iron tressel'd bed;
Where the huge bolt will scarcely keep
Its promise to confiding sleep,
Till you have forced it to its goal
In the bored brick-work's crumbling hole;
Where, in loose flakes, the white-wash peeling
From the bare joints of rotten ceiling,
Give token sure of vermin's bower,
And swarms of bugs that bide their hour!
Though bands of fierce musquittos boom
Their threatening bugles round the room,
To bed! Ere wingless creatures crawl
Across your path from yonder wall,
And slipper'd feet unheeding tread
We know not what! To bed! to bed!
What can those horrid sounds portend?
Some waylaid traveller near his end,
From ghastly gash in mortal strife,
Or blow of bandit's blood-stained knife?
No! no! They're bawling to the *Virgin*,
Like victim under hands of surgeon!
From lamp-lit *daub*, proceeds the cry
Of that unearthly litany!
And now a train of mules goes by!

"One wretch comes whooping up the street
For whooping's sake! And now they beat
Drum after drum for market mass,
Each day's transactions on the *place!*
All things that go, or stay, or come,
They herald forth by tuck of drum.
Day dawns! a tinkling tuneless bell,
Whate'er it be, has news to tell.
Then twenty more begin to strike
In noisy discord, all alike;—
Convents and churches, chapels, shrines,
In quick succession break the lines.
Till every gong in town, at last
Its tongue hath loos'd, and sleep is past.
So much for nights! New days begin,
Which land you in another Inn.
O! he that means to see *Girgenti*
Or *Syracuse!*—needs patience plenty!"

Crossing a rustic bridge, we pass through a garden (for it is no less, though man has had no spade in it) of pinks, marigolds, cyclamens, and heart's-ease, &c. &c.; the moist meadow land below is a perfect jungle of lofty grasses, all fragrant and in flower, gemmed with the unevaporated morning dew, and colonized with the *Aphides*, *Alticae*, and swarms of the most beautiful butterflies clinging to their stalks. *Gramina laeta* after Virgil's own heart, were these. Their elegance and unusual variety were sufficient to throw a botanist into a perfect HAY fever,

and our own first paroxysm only went off, when, after an hour's hard collecting, we came to a place which demanded *another* sort of enthusiasm; for THERE stood without a veil the *Temple of Segeste*, with one or two glimpses of which we had been already astonished at a distance, in all its Dorian majesty! This almost unmutilated and glorious memorial of past ages here reigns alone—the only building far or near visible in the whole horizon; and what a position has its architect secured! In the midst of hills on a bit of table-land, apparently made such by smoothing down the summit of one of them, with a greensward in front, and set off behind by a mountain background, stands this eternal monument of the noblest of arts amidst the finest dispositions of nature. There is another antiquity of the place also to be visited at Segeste—its *theatre*; but we are too immediately below it to know any thing about it at present, and must leave it in a parenthesis. To our left, at the distance of eight miles, this hill country of harmonious and graceful undulation ends in beetling cliffs, beneath which the sea, now full in view, lies sparkling in the morning sunshine. We shall never, never forget the impressions made upon us on first getting sight of Segeste! *Pæstum* we had seen, and thought that it exhausted all that was possible to a temple, or the site of a temple. Awe-stricken had we surveyed those monuments of "immemorial antiquity" in that baleful region of wild-eyed buffaloes and birds of prey—temples to death in the midst of his undisputed domains! We had fully adopted Forsyth's sentiment, and held *Pæstum* to be probably the most impressive monument

on earth; but here at Segeste a nature less austere, and more RIANTE in its wildness, lent a quite different charm to a scene which could scarcely be represented by art, and for which a reader could certainly not be *prepared* by description. We gave an antiquarian's devoutest worship to this venerable survivor of 2000 years, and of many empires—we *felt* the vast masses of its time-tried Doric, and even the wild flowers within its precincts, its pink valerians; its *erba di vento*, its scented wallflower. The whole scene kept our admiration long tasked, but untired. A smart shower compelled us to seek shelter under the shoulder of one of the grey entablatures: it soon passed away, leaving us a legacy of the richest fragrance, while a number of wild birds of the hawk kind, called "chaoli" from their shrill note, issued from their hiding-places, and gave us wild music as they scudded by!

A few bits of wall scattered over the corn-fields are all that now remains of the dwellings of the men who built this temple for their city, and who, by its splendour, deluded the Athenians into a belief of greater wealth than they possessed.

Our ascent to the theatre, the day after, proved to be a very steep one, of half an hour on mule-back; in making which, we scared two of those prodigious birds, the *ospreys*, who, having reconnoitred us, forthwith began to wheel in larger and larger sweeps, and at last made off for the sea. We found the interior of the theatre occupied by an audience ready for our arrival; it consisted of innumerable *hawks*, the chaoli just mentioned, which began to scream at our intrusion. The ospreys

soon returned, and were plainly only waiting our departure to subside upon their solitary domain. We would not be a soft-billed bird for something in this neighbourhood; no song would save them from the hawks' supper. Having luxuriated on the 24th of May for full four hours in this enchanting neighbourhood, we were sorry to return to our inn—and such an inn! We departed abruptly, and probably never to return; but we shall think of Segeste in Hyde Park, or as we pass the candlestick Corinthians of Whitehall. Thucydides¹³ relates that a prevailing notion in his time was, that the *Trojans* after losing *Troy* went first to *Sicily*, and founded there Egesta and Eryx. Now, as on the same authority the first *Greek* colony was *Naxos*, also in Sicily, Greeks and Trojans (strange coincidence!) must have *met again* on new ground after the *Iliad* was all acted and done with, like a tale that is told.

On our return towards Palermo, one of our party having a touch of ague, we crossed the street to the apothecary, (at Calatafrini, our night's halt,) and smelling about his musty galenicals, amidst a large supply of *malvas* which were drying on his counter, the only wholesome-looking thing amidst his stores, we asked if he had any *quinine*. "*Sicuro!*" and he presented us with a white powder having a slightly bitter taste, which, together with an ounce of green tea, to be dispensed in pinches of five grains on extraordinary occasions, comes, he says, from the East. On our observing that the quinine, if such at all, was adulterated,

¹³ *Vide* THUCYDIDES, Book iv. chap. 15.

and that this was too bad in a country of malaria, where it was the poor man's only protection, he looked angry; but we rose in the esteem of peasants in the shop, who said to each other—"Ed ha ragione il Signor." Wanting a little *soda*, we were presented with sub-carbonate of potash as the nearest approach to it—a substitution which suggested to us a classical recollection from Theocritus; namely, that in this same Sicily, 2000 years ago, a Syracusan husband is rated by his dame for sending her *soda* for her washing in place of potash, the very converse of what our old drug-vender intended to have washed our inside withal.

The Roman Catholic religion patronises painting oddly here; not a cart but is adorned with some sacred subject. Every wretched vehicle that totters under an unmerciful load, with one poor donkey to draw six men, has its picture of *Souls in Purgatory*, who seem putting their hands and heads out of the flames, and vainly calling on the ruffians inside to *stop*. We read *Viva la Divina Provvidenza*, in flaming characters on the front board of a carriole, while the whip is goading the poor starved brute who drags it; for these barbarians in the rear of European civilization, plainly are of opinion that a cart with a sacred device shall not *break down*, though its owner commit every species of cruelty.

The next day found us again installed at our old quarters in Palermo, where, during our brief remaining stay, we visit a conchologist, before which event we had no notion that Sicily was so rich in shells. Two sides of a moderately large room

are entirely devoted to his collection. Here we saw a piece of wood nearly destroyed by the *Teredo navalis*, or sailor's bore, who seems more active and industrious here than elsewhere, and seldom allows himself to be taken whole. Out of hundreds of specimens, three or four perfect ones were all that this collector could ever manage to extract, the molluscous wood-destroyer being very soft and fragile. His length is about three inches, his thickness that of a small quill; he lodges in a shell of extreme tenuity, and the secretion which he ejects is, it seems, the agent which destroys the wood, and pushes on bit by bit the winding tunnel. But his doings are nothing to the working of another wafer-shelled bivalve, whose tiny habitations are so thickly imbedded in the body of a nodule of *flint* as to render its exterior like a sieve, *diducit scopulos aceto*. What solvent can the chemist prepare in his laboratory comparable to one which, while it dissolves silex, neither harms the insect nor injures its shell. Amongst the *fossils* we notice cockles as big as ostrich eggs, clam-shells twice the size of the largest of our Sussex coast, and those of oysters which rival soup-plates. We had indeed once before met with them of equal size in the lime-beds at *Corneto*. Judging by the *oysters*, there must indeed have been *giants* in those days. But this collection was chiefly remarkable for its curious fossil remains of *animals* from *Monte Grifone*. In this same Monte Grifone, which we went to visit, is one of the largest of the caves of bones of which so many have been discovered—bones of various kinds, some of small, some of

very large animals, mixed together pell-mell, and constituting a fossil paste of scarcely any thing besides. None of the geologists, in attempting to explain these deposits, sufficiently enter into the question of the origin of the enormous *quantity*, and *close juxtaposition*, of such heterogeneous specimens.

By eight o'clock we are on board the *Palermo* steamer, which is to convey us hence to *Messina*. The baked deck, which has been saturated with the sun's heat all day, is now cooling to a more moderate warmth, and soothing would be the scene but for the noise of women and children. Large liquid stars twinkle here and there, like so many moons on a reduced scale, over the sea, and the night is wholly delightful! A bell rings, which diminishes our numbers, and somewhat clears our deck. The boats which carry off the last loiterers are gone, shaking phosphorus from their gills, and leaving a train of it in their tails; and the many-windowed Pharos of the harbour has all its panes lit up, and twinkles after its own fashion. Round the bay an interrupted crescent of flickering light is reflected in the water, strongest in the middle, where the town is thickest, and runs back; and far behind all lights comes the clear outline of the darkly defined mountain rising over the city. Our own lantern also is up, the authorities have disappeared, Monte Pellegrino begins to change its position, we are in motion, and a mighty light we are making under us, as our leviathan, turning round her head and *snuffing* the sea, begins to wind out of the harbour. A few minutes more, and the luminous tracery of the receding town becomes more

and more indistinct; but the sky is *all stars*, and the water, save where we break its smoothness, a perfect mirror. Wherever the paddles play, there the sea foams up into yellow light and *gerbes* of amber-coloured fireballs, caught up by the wheels, and flung off in our track, to float past with incredible rapidity. Men are talking the language of Babel in the cabin; there is amateur singing and a guitar on deck—*Orion* is on his dolphin—adieu, Palermo!

APPROACH TO MESSINA

The Italian morning presents a beautiful sight on deck to eyes weary and sore with night, as night passes on board steamers. We pass along a coast obviously of singular conformation, and to a geologist, we suppose, full of interest. We encounter a herd of classical dolphins out a-pleasuring. We ask about a pretty little town perched just above the sea, and called *Giocosa*. By its side lies *Tyndaris*—classical enough if we spell it right. The snow on Etna is as good as an inscription, and to be read at any distance; but what a deception! they tell us it is thirty miles off, and it seems to rise immediately from behind a ridge of hills close to the shore. The snow cone rises in the midst of other cones, which would appear equally high but for the difference of colour. *Patti* is a picturesque little *borgo*, on the hillside, celebrated in Sicily for its manufacture of hardware. In the bay of *Melazzo* are taken by far the largest supplies of thunny in the whole Mediterranean. From the embayed town so named you have the choice of a cross-road to Messina, (twenty-four miles;) but who would abridge distance and miss the celebrated straits towards which we are rapidly approaching, or lose one hour on land and miss the novelties of volcanic islands, and the first view of Scylla and Charybdis? It is but eight o'clock, but the awning has been stretched over our heads an hour ago. As to breakfast—the meal which is associated with

that particular hour of the four-and-twenty to all well regulated *minds* and *stomachs*—it consists here of thin *veneers* of old mahogany-coloured thunny, varnished with oil, and relieved by an incongruous abomination of capers and olives. The cold fowls are infamous. The wine were a disgrace to the sorriest tapster between this and the Alps, and also fiery, like every thing else in this district. Drink it, and doubt not the old result—*de conviva Corybanta videbis*. (Oh, for muffins and dry toast!) Never mind, we shall soon be at Messina. And now we approach a point from which the lofty Calabrian coast opposite, and the flinty wall of the formidable Scylla, first present themselves, but still as distant objects. In another half hour we are just opposite the redoubtable rock; and here we turn abruptly at right angles to our hitherto course, and find ourselves *within* the straits, from either side of which the English and the French so often tried the effect of cannon upon each other. It is now what it used to be—fishing ground. The Romans got their finest muræna from the whirlpools of *Charybdis*.¹⁴ The shark (*cane di mare*) abounding here, would make bathing dangerous were the water smooth; but the rapid whirlpools through which our steam-boat dashes on disdainfully, would, at the same time, make it impossible to any thing but a fish. A passenger assured us he had once seen a man lost in the Vistula, who, from being a great swimmer, trusted imprudently to his strength, and was sucked down by a vortex of

¹⁴ "Virroni muræna datur, quo maxima venit Gurgite de Siculo: nam dum se continet Auster, Contemnunt mediam tem eraria lina Charybdim." JUVENAL, Sat. v. 99.

far less impetuosity, he thought, than this through which we were moving. From this point till we arrived at Messina, as every body was ripe for bathing, the whole conversation turned naturally on the Messina shark, and his trick of snapping at people's legs carelessly left by the owners dangling over the boat's side. We steam up the straits to our anchorage in about three-fourths of an hour. The approach is fine, very fine. A certain Greek, (count, he called himself,) a great traveller, and we afterwards found not a small adventurer, increases the interest of the approach, by telling us that the hills before us, bubbling up like blisters on chalcedony, have a considerable resemblance, though inferior in character, to those which embellish the Bosphorus and the first view of Constantinople. Inferior, no doubt, in the imposing accessories of mosque and minaret, and of cypresses as big as obelisks, which, rising thickly on the heights, give to the city of Constantinople an altogether peculiar and inimitable charm. Messina is beautifully land-locked. The only possible winds that can affect its port are the north-west and south-east. In summer it is said to enjoy more sea breeze than any other place on the Mediterranean. Our Greek friend, however, says that Constantinople is in this respect not only superior to Messina, but to any other place in the seas of Europe. Pity that the fellows are Turks! We did not find much to interest us within the walls of Messina. There was, to be sure, a fine collection of Sicilian birds, amongst which we were surprised to see several of very exotic shape and plumage. One long-legged

fellow, dressed in a dirty white Austrian uniform, with large web-feet, on which he seemed to rest with great complacency, particularly arrested our attention. He stood as high as the *Venus di Medici*, but by no means so gracefully, and thrust his thick carved beak unceremoniously in your face. His card of address was *Phoenicopterus antiquorum*. The ancients ate him, and he looked as if he would break your nose if you disputed with him. A very large finch, which we have seen for sale about the streets here and elsewhere in Sicily, rejoices in the imposing name of *Fringilla cocco thraustis*. He wears his black cravat like a bird of pretension, as he evidently is. The puffin (*Puffinus Anglorum*) also frequents these rocks, though a very long way from the Isle of Wight. No! Messina, though very fine, is not equal to *Palermo*, with its unrivaled *Marina*, compared to which Messina is poorly off indeed, in her straggling dirty commerce-doing quay. We went out to see a little garden, which contains half a dozen zaretrees and as many beautiful birds in cages. We are disappointed at the poverty of our dessert in this region of fruitfulness—a few bad oranges, some miserable cherries, and that abomination the green almond. We observe, for the first time, to-day folks eating in the streets the crude contents of a little oval pod, which contains one or two very large peas, twice the size of any others. These are the true *cicer*, the proper Italian pea. Little bundles of them are tied up for sale at all the fruit stalls, and men are seen all the day long eating these raw peas, and offering them to each other as sugar-plums.

In the Corso we see a kind of temporary theatre, the deal sides of which are gaudily lined with Catania silk, and on its stage a whole *dramatis personæ* of sacred puppets. It is lighted by tapers of very taper dimensions, and its *stalle* are to be let for a humble consideration to the faithful or the curious. It turns out to be a religious spectacle, supported on the voluntary system—but there is something for your money. A vast quantity of light framework, to which fireworks, chiefly of the detonating kind, are attached, are already going off, and folk are watching till it be completed. Then the evening's entertainment will begin, and a miser indeed must he be, or beyond measure resourceless, who refuses halfpence for such choice festivities. Desirous to make out the particular representation, we get over the fence in order to examine the figures of the drama on a nearer view. A smartly dressed saint in a court suit, but whom mitre and crosier determine to be a bishop, kneels to a figure in spangles, a virgin as fond of fine clothes as the Greek Panageia; while on the other side, with one or two priests in his train, is seen a crowd in civil costume. A paper cloud above, surrounded by glories of glass and tinsel, is supported by two solid cherubs equal to the occasion, and presents to the intelligent a representation of—we know not what! Fire-works here divide the public with the drum—to one or other all advertisement in Sicily is committed. A sale of fish and flesh, theatric entertainments, processions, and church invitations, are all by tuck of drum, or by squib and cracker. How did they get on before the invention of gunpowder?

If a new coffeehouse is established, a couple of drums start it advantageously, and beat like a recruiting party up and down the street, to the dismay of all *Forestieri*. The drum tells you when the thunny is at a discount, and *fire-works* are let off at *fish stalls* when customers are slack.

An old tower, five miles off, is called the telegraph. People go there for the panorama at the expense of three horses and two hours; but you are repaid by two sea views, either of which had been sufficient. Messina, its harbour, the straits, the opposite coast of Calabria, Scylla, and *Rhegium*, (famed for its bergamot,) are on the immediate shore, and a most striking chain of hills for the background, which, at a greater distance, have for their background the imposing range of the *Abruzzi*. The *Æolian* islands rise out of the sea in the happiest positions for effect. *Stromboli* on the extreme right detaches his grey wreath of smoke, which seems as if it proceeded out of the water, (for *Stromboli* is very low,) staining for a moment the clear firmament, which rivals it in depth of colour. Some of the volcanic group are so nearly on a level with the water, that they look like the backs of so many leviathans at a halt. The sea itself lies, a waveless mirror, smooth, shining, slippery, and treacherous as a serpent's back—"miseri quibus intentata *nites*," say we.

JOURNEY TO TAORMINA

We left Messina under a sky which no painter would or could attempt; indeed, it would not have looked well on paper, or out of reality. There are certain unusual, yet magnificent appearances in nature, from which the artist conventionally abstains, not so much from the impotence of art, as that the nearer his approach to success the worse the picture. At one time the colours were like shot or clouded silk, or the beautiful uncertainty of the Palamida of these shores, or the matrix of opal; at another, the Pacific Ocean above, of which the continuity is often for whole months *entire*, was broken into gigantic continents and a Polynesia of rose-coloured islands that no ships might approach; while in this nether world the middle of the Calabro-Sicilian strait was occupied by a condensation of vapour, (one could never profane them by the term of *sea-mist* or *fog*,) the most subtile and attenuated which ever came from the realms of cloud-compelling Jove. This fleecy tissue pursued its deliberate progress from coast to coast, like a cortege of cobwebs carrying a deputation from the power-looms of *Arachne* in *Italy* to the rival silk-looms at Catania. We pass the dry beds of mountain torrents at every half mile, ugly gashes on a smooth road; and requiring too much caution to leave one's attention to be engaged by many objects altogether new and beautiful. The rich yellow of the *Cactus*, and the red of the *Pomegranate*, and the most tender of all

vegetable greens, that of the young *mulberry*, together with a sweet wilderness of unfamiliar plants, are not to be perfectly enjoyed on a fourfooted animal that stumbles, or on a road full of pitfalls. We shall only say that the *Cynara cardunculus*, (a singularly fine thistle or *wild artichoke*;) the prickly uncultivated *love-apple*, (a beautiful variety of the *Solanum*,) of which the decoction is not infrequently employed in nephritic complaints; the *Ferula*, sighing for occupation all along the sea-shore, and shaking its scourge as the wind blows; the *Rhododendron*, in full blossom, planted amongst the shingles; the *Thapsia gargarica*, with its silver umbel, looking at a short distance like mica, (an appearance caused by the shining white fringe of the capsule encasing its seed,) and many other strange and beautiful things, were the constant attendants of our march. We counted six or seven varieties of the spurge, (*Euphorbium*,) each on its milky stem, and in passing through the villages had *Carnations* as large as *Dahlias* flung at us by sunburnt urchins posted at their several doors. The sandy shore for many miles is beautifully notched in upon by tiny bays like basins, on which boats lie motionless and baking in the sun, or oscillate under a picturesque rock, immersed up to its shoulders in a green *hyaloid*, which reflects their forms from a depth of many fathoms. On more open stretches of the shore, long-drawn ripples of waves of tiny dimension are overrunning and treading on one another's heels for miles a-head, and tapping the anchored boat "with gentle blow." The long-horned oxen already spoken of, toil along the

seaside road like the horses on our canal banks, and tug the heavy felucca towards Messina—a service, however, sometimes executed by men harnessed to the towing-cord, who, as they go, offend the Sicilian muses by sounds and by words that have little indeed of the Δωριζ αοιδα. The gable ends of cottages often exhibit a very primitive windmill for sawing wood within doors. It is a large wheel, to the spokes of which flappers are adjusted, made of coarse matting, and so placed as to profit by the ordinary sea breeze; and, while the *wind* is thus *sawing* his planks for him, the carpenter, at his door, carries on his craft. We pass below not a few fortresses abutting over the sea, or perched on the mountain tops. Many of these are of English construction, and date from the occupation of the island during the French war: in a word, the whole of this Sicilian road is so variously lovely, that if we did not know the *cornice* between *Nice* and *Genoa*, we should say it was quite unrivaled, being at once in lavish possession of all the grand, and most of the milder elements of landscape composition. It is long since it became no wonder to us that the greatest and in fact the only, real pastoral poet should have been a Sicilian; but it is a marvel indeed, that, having forgotten to bring his *Eclogues* with us, we cannot, through the whole of Sicily, find a copy of Theocitus for sale, though there is a *Sicilian* translation of him to be had at Palermo. As he progresses thus delightfully, a long-wished for moment awaits the traveller approaching towards *Giardini*—turning round a far projecting neck of land, *Etna* is at last before

him! A disappointment, however, on the whole is Etna himself, thus introduced. He looks far below his stature, and seems so *near*, that we would have wagered to get upon his shoulders and pull his ears, and return to the little town to dine; the ascent also, to the eye, seems any thing but steep; nor can you easily be brought to believe that such an expedition is from Giardini a three days' affair, except, indeed, that yonder belt of snow in the midst of this roasting sunshine, has its own interpretation, and cannot be mistaken. Alas! In the midst of all our flowers there was, as there always is, the *amari aliquid*—it was occasioned here by the *flies*. They had tasked our *improved* capacity for bearing annoyances ever since we first set foot in Sicily; but *here* they are perfectly incontrollable, stinging and buzzing at us without mercy or truce, not to be driven off for a second, nor persuaded to drown themselves on any consideration. Verily, the honey-pots of Hybla itself seem to please these troublesome insects less than the *flesh*-pots of Egypt.

The next day begins inauspiciously for our ascent to Taormina; but the attendants of the excursion are already making a great noise, without which nothing can be done in either of the two Sicilies. A supply of shabby donkeys are brought and mounted, and, once astride, we begin to ascend, the poor beasts tottering under our weight, and by their constant stumbling affording us little inclination to look about. It takes about three-fourths of an hour of this donkey-riding to reach the old notched wall of the town. Two Taorminian citizens at this moment issue from under

its arch, in their way down, and guessing what we are, offer some indifferent coins which do not suit us, but enable us to enter into conversation. We demand and obtain a *cicerone*, of whom we are glad to get rid after three hours' infliction of his stupidity and endurance of his ignorance, without acquiring one idea, Greek, Roman, Norman, or Saracen, out of all his erudition. After going through the whole tour with such a fellow for a Hermes, we come at last upon the far-famed theatre, where we did not want him. Here, however, a very intelligent attendant, supported by the king of Naples on a suitable pension of five baiocchi a-day, takes us out of the hands of the Philistine, and with a plan of the ground to aid us, proceeds to give an intelligible, and, as appears to us, a true explanation of the different parts of the huge construction, in the area of which we stand delighted. He directed our attention to a large arched tunnel, under and at right angles to the pulpita, and we did not want direction to the thirty-six niches placed at equal distances all round the ellipse, and just over the lowest range of the CUNEI. All niches were, no doubt, for statues; but these might also have been, it pleases some to suppose, for the reverberation of applause; and they quote something about "*Resonantia Vasa*" from Macrobius, adding, that such niches were once probably lined with brass. Of bolder speculatists, some believe the *kennel* to have been made with a similar intention. Others hold that it may have been a concealed way for introducing lions and tigers to the arena! Now, what if it were a *drain* for the waters, which, in bad weather, soon collect

to a formidable height in such a situation? Whether for voice, or wild beasts, or drainage, or none of these objects, there it is. As to the first, we cannot help being sceptical. Did it ever occur to an audience to wish the noise they make *greater*, and contrive expedients for *making it so*?

We are here high up amidst the mountains, where, we are to remember, as the ancients came not to spend, like ourselves, an idle hour, but to consume most of the day, *shelter* would be wanted. Two large lateral spaces, or as it were, side chambers, have received this destination at the hands of the antiquary, and have been supposed lobbies for foul weather or for shade at noon. We were made to notice by our guide, what we should else have overlooked, how the main passage described above communicates with several smaller ones in its progress, and that a small stair was a subsequent contrivance or afterthought meant to relieve, on emergency, the overcharged large one; its workmanship and style showed it plainly to have been added when the edifice had already become *an antiquity*. This altogether peculiar and most interesting building has also suffered still later interpolations: a Saracenic frieze runs round the wall; so that the hands of three widely different nations have been busy on the mountain theatre, which received its *first audience* twenty-five centuries ago! The view obtained from this spot has often been celebrated, and deserves to be. Such mountains we had often seen before; such a sky is the usual privilege of Sicily; these indented *bays*, which break so

beautifully the line of the coast, had been an object of our daily admiration; the hoary side of the majestic Etna, and Naxos with its castellated isthmus, might be seen from *other* elevated situations; and the acuminated tops of Mola, with its Saracenic tower, were commanded by neighbouring sites—Taormina *alone*, and for its *own* sake, was the great and paramount object in our eyes, and possessed us wholly! We had been following *Lyell* half the day in antediluvian remains; but what are the bones of *Ichthyosauri* or *Megalotheria* to this gigantic skeleton of Doric antiquity, round which lie scattered the sepulchres of its ancient audiences, Greek, Roman, and Oriental—tombs which had become already an object of speculation, and been rifled for arms, vases, or gold rings, before Great Britain had made the first steps beyond painted barbarism!

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