

Letters from the South and West / by Arthur Singleton.

LETTERS FROM THE SOUTH AND WEST;

BY ARTHUR SINGLETON, ESQ.

Knight, Henry Cogswell

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JOHN W. DAVIS, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

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LETTER FROM PHILADELPHIA. MDCCCXIV.

DEAR BROTHER,

THIS city, which is the great metropolis of Penn's Woodland, and which was eulogized by Him of Tarsus, 'H ###æ#e##### µ#e##; *Philadelphia forever!* a Greek compound, you perceive, signifying brotherly-love; is as level as a Quaker's broad brim. The day after my arrival, I ascended the almost only eminence in the city, one of the two shot-towers, to spy down upon it. It appears not unlike a horizontal Brodingnagian brick-kiln; long never-ending blocks of brick, with little holes at bottom to creep in at; and little holes at top to peep out at. At this altitude, the eager currents of human beings appear diminished into a small folk, like Lilliputians; all, like the armies of the grandson of Cyrus, in a hundred years, to be no more. The city, which is six score of miles from the sea by the channel, is

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spread upon the isthmus between the Delaware, and the Schuylkill, half a score of miles above their confluence. These two rivers, east and west of the city, are the one grand, the other picturesque; and the 26 elegant light broad-spanned arch thrown over the latter by our townsman Palmer, recalls agreeable associations. The Delaware waters were, last winter, so consolidated, opposite the city, that a festive ox was roasted whole upon the ice. Although this river is now floating ships to and fro from all nations, once was the time, when, if a ship arrived from Europe, the citizens used to chime Christ-church bells. As this city is, in many respects, the metropolis of the states, I confess I was disappointed in its externals. The streets running south and north were, in olden prime, called after the trees in the vicinity:—cedar, mulberry, sassafras, vine; chesnut, walnut, spruce, and pine. The streets crossing east and west are numbered; and the whole, being divided into wards and squares spreads into an immense chequer-board. There is but one crooked street in the city; and that, which is crooked, cannot be made straight. After you have walked one square, you have seen the whole. Indeed, the houses are so thick, there is no room for land. No spires, no domes, few bells, few promenades; no any thing to relieve the eye, or arrest the fancy. There is nothing like the long marble-fronted, but too finical, City-Hall; or the irregular, but beautifully verdant Battery, of New-York. Every view is quakerfied. No marvel, that Paine said, though rather irreverently, if a Quaker had been consulted at the Creation, what a drab-coloured world we should have had. Still, it is a noble city; wealthy, 7 substantial, convenient; with extending blocks of massy private tenements; and a very few publick edifices of simple Doric grandeur, as, in particular, the marble bank. Christ-church is rather of the Gothic structure, and elegant; the bricks of this, and also of many other ancient buildings in the city, are, one red, another black glazed, in alternation. The six stately Corinthian columns, which support the roof in front of the first Presbyterian Church, look majestically. The national mint, or money-mine, is in this city; and was formerly under the supervision of Rittenhouse. Central in the city, is a spacious mansion-house, which was erected for the President, when Congress, in by-gone years, sat in this metropolis. The water-works, whose hydrants supply the city with water inducted for three miles in subterranean conduits, with their ponderous

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steam-enginery, are proofs of the resistless submission of vast mechanical power to human ingenuity. In the circular mall, which enclosed the former nucleus of these works, is a small *jet d'eau*, where the fluid is spouted upwards through the long snipe-bill of a sculptured water-fowl, which stands upon the shoulder of a water-nymph; and after rising about twenty feet into the air, spreads and falls in spray into a grassy-fringed fountain beneath. In the western part of the city, are Vauxhall-Gardens, included, with a Rotundo in the centre; and about four miles out of the city, on the border of the Schuylkill, are the beautiful botanical gardens of the Bartrams; the first ever in the 8 country; and where once loved to stroll, and where first germinated the splendid idea of Wilson, the Ornithologist. From Market-street wharf, upon which Franklin first landed, one has a fine view of Jersey-shore opposite; and of the Mariner's Hotel, fitted from the hull of a large ship, with an ensign for a sign, and moored on the middle of the river. The Delaware is daily crossed by steam-boats, with their broad dusky pennons of steam trailing behind; and by team-boats, which wheel along the water, propelled by horses on board in circular motion. About four miles above the city, on the west banks of the river, are the almost forgotten ruins of the mansion of William, Penn, upon whose top was once, it is said, a leaden fish-pond. It is a curious fact in Natural History, that the environs of this city, and of Jersey, are visited, once in *seventeen* years, with locusts in Egyptian multitudes. Most places this way,, even if small, are chartered with their mayor, recorder, aldermen and common council; and I trust that Boston will soon persuade its honest township into a lordly city; inasmuch as green-turtles are plenty. Soon after my arrival, a report of peace convulsed the whole city into ecstacies. Illumination! illumination! Briareus, with his hundred hands, was wanted to light the flambeaux of rejoicing. Soon, however, a counter-report palsied the spirits, and extinguished the tapers.

The Philadelphian Hospital, the Franklin Library, the Academy of Arts, and Peale's Museum, are 9 noble and munificent institutions. The Hospital is like a palace, and in its elegant garden-like front yard stands upon a cubic pedestal, with a golden-lettered scroll in his hand, a portly bronze statue of Penn. In the anatomical theatre, over the circular

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table, is pendent a human skeleton; that the dead may instruct the living. Before I viewed the interior of the Hospital, made some inquiries of an alderman, who, although he had for many years lived near, had never found leisure to visit it. This reminded me of a dame, who had lived next door to St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, for above thirty years, and yet, although she had thus purposed almost every day, had never entered it; she knew that she might go in at any time, and therefore had as yet been in at no time. A stranger, who has but a few weeks in which to visit all London, will visit Paul's during the first days. I was told of an affecting reply made by a son of a late famed physician of this city, a navy lieutenant, who now suffers an alienation of mind, in consequence of having shot his friend in a duel. Since his residence in the Hospital, the tonsor once, noticing that his hair was becoming very gray for a young man, remarked:—"Sir, your hairs are turning quite gray; but gray hairs are honourable." "Yes," he replied with a sigh, "honour has made my hairs gray." In a niche over the entrance into the Library stands, in a contemplative attitude, a marble statue of Franklin sculptured in Italy. Into this library even more freely than into an Athenæum, 10 any stranger may daily enter, and call for any book, or folio of prints, for perusal; until the closing hour is announced by Oliver Cromwell's clock. This alone would make us proud to remember Franklin. Although the English affect to sneer at American genius, yet, who has heretofore conquered their conquerors? Who has disarmed their forky lightning of its fangs? Who was the inventor of their quadrant? Who their philosopher for the poor? Who their steam-instructor? Who could make honest men of their counterfeiters? Who is their royal president of painters? Who their most authoritative grammarian? Whence originated one of their most revered London bishops? and one of their poets? However, after this self-gnathonism, we confess that, in literature, we have not above half a score of authors worth recollecting; but it doth not yet appear, what we shall have. In Peale's "School of Wisdom" is an entire skeleton, chiefly of the real bones, of the huge mastodon; and different species of the superbly beautiful birds of Paradise; with about two hundred portraits, among which, I sought for the mind in the faces of Priestly, and of Paine. The painted man beckoning you to follow him up stairs, deceives almost every one; the stairs are so natural, that I could not be undeceived, until

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I had stooped down, and imprinted my nail upon the canvass. In the Academy of Arts are two large early dramatic paintings by West; Lear and Cordelia, and Hamlet and Ophelia; purchased in 11 London by his friend Fulton, for about four hundred guineas. West's great picture of "Christ healing the sick in the Temple," is to be placed in a brick edifice planned, as to the favourable disposition of light, for this purpose. The prize painting of Alston's, the Miracle of Elisha's bones, is expected to be purchased for the Academy. Alston's pictures have, I think, more of an antique cast in the colouring than West's. Among the paintings here, is a cartoon well done with the finger's end, and the snuff of a candle. The Witch of Endor, with her chocolate cheek, her outspread leathern ears, and her yellow jutting teeth; is finely contrasted with the portrait of the Albiness, with her beautiful luxuriance of white silky glossy hair spread over her shoulders and arms, and eye of a delicate pink iris. Here are also, among the busts, two of those pound, but perverted geniuses, Voltaire and Rousseau.

The Roman Catholics have four or five churches in this city, as those of St. Augustine, St. Mary, and other saints; which form an extreme contrast to the quakers. I know not whether you ever entered the Church of the Holy Cross in Boston. A Catholic church is usually known by a metallic cross on the dome, or a marble one wrought into the front wall. The ceremonies, at first view, are quite imposing, and somewhat ludicrously solemn. On the back wall, behind the altar, is commonly a superb painting, on a broad scale, of Christ upon the cross, and in the distance a view of Jerusalem as it was darkened at the 12 crucifixion. Around, and upon the altar, stand the pyx, and a hundred little gewgaws, or symbols, in picture frames. In front of the painting, along the altar, and around the pulpit, are kept burning, during the services, rows of magnificently tall wax-tapers; some a yard and a half erect, and as stout as a batoon; and lighted by a man with a high lifted rod, whose unlighted point ignites them at a touch. Tapers are in commemoration of the primitive converts, who were obliged to meet in dark subterranean caverns; or a relic of those gothic abbeys, where religious awe was inspired by the dimly admitted light through their richly painted windows. The first duty of a catholic, on entering the church,

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is to bend a passing knee to the figure of Christ on the cross before mentioned; and then to hasten and dip his finger-tips in the holy-water, in the marble fonts near the doors, and to cross himself; that is, to touch the forehead, the lower body, and each breast; which is done in a twinkling as by instinct; the above movement of the arm forming a cross upon the body. Not a catholic finger, white or black, pure or impure, passes this vase without a dip; and even the infants are assisted to cross their little breasts in the arms of their nurses. There is something rather pleasing in this memorial of the Saviour's sufferings. After this, the worshippers enter their pews, except the discoloured ones, who remain bowed down in the aisle, and, dropping on their knees, repeat their pater-nosters, credos, and ave-marias; and count along the beads 13 of their rosaries, which represent so many saints and saintesses; and when they come to one they need, they stop and keep rolling that bead over and over between finger and thumb, until they have addressed their petition unto him. This praying by proxy must presuppose in the saints one of the attributes of Deity, an auricular ubiquity, the being every where present. Among the catholic ecclesiasticks, the tonsure of the crown of the head, which is done with prayers and benedictions, is the mark, and basis, of all the orders; and the circle of tonsure is enlarged as they rise to higher degrees in the holy mother church. The bishop, when ducking to and fro in his conical cap, with his tall gilded crosier in his hand, is attended by four, or half a dozen, small handsome boys, in scarlet and white costume, to skip about behind him, gingle the bell, and uplift the skirt of his gorgeous cope, as he moves. But nothing can be more grateful, or purifying, than the odoriferous incense steaming from the waving censer. When the priest, within the chancel, chants the masses in Latin, which not one in twenty understands, he makes sweet musick, without intending any irreverence in the comparison, not unlike the cut-cut-dar-cutting, that dame partlet makes after laying her eggs. When the priest turns his countenance towards the congregation, holding up before his breast the sacred host, or one of his glittering crucifixes, and muttering solemnly over it; it unavoidably reminds me of a toy-man in his shop, recommending one of 3 14 his toys. In some countries, the bell tolls in such a manner, as to inform those without, what part of the service is commencing. The ignorant believe, that after an image is

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consecrated, then the god resides in it. There is, however, great appearance of devotion in the worshippers; and, I doubt not, that there are many, who are what they appear. But the catholic worship seems calculated to affect rather the senses, than the heart. The idea of auricular confession, and absolution from sin, must have a very demoralizing tendency. I was informed of a fine lady of this city, who fell in love with one of the young catholic priests; and, although she knew that the priests are not allowed to marry, professed catholicism, so as to have opportunities to manifest her affection to him in private. The priests do not approve of the laity attempting to understand the bible for themselves, without the explanation of the clergy. A short time ago, the catholics lost a Bishop in this city. He was laid in state in rich pomp for some days, decorated with his pontificalia, tiara, and white satin sandals. His face and hands were rouged like a waxen figure to represent life—shocking counterfeit! Around him, all day and all night, burned wax-tapers; and stood the priests fanning, and perfuming the air with incense, and chanting masses for his soul. I thought of the whited sepulchre. Although the universal Father, who holds the keys of St. Peter, resides at Rome; yet can the echoes of the thunders of the Vatican verberate 15 across the Atlantic. However the ignorant may be deluded by ceremonies, the intelligent view them only as the earthly medium, through which the mind rises to the heavenly essences. Some think, that the mind, while allied to matter, cannot identify ideas without symbols to assist its operations; that spirit is too abstracted for common intellects. One cannot reach the top of a tower, without the intervention of steps. Nothing more liberalizes the heart, than visiting, on proper occasions, the associations of opposite sects. Most often, we discover that the differences lie more in manner, than in matter. We should remember that, for many hundred years, we were all Roman Catholics; nor can I ever forget, that the great author of the admired Telemachus was a Roman Catholic.

The Quakers, the worthy descendants of the colonists of the admirable William Penn, of patriarchal simplicity, were long dominant in this city. The term quaker is now an inappropriate appellation, for most quaker men are stark as statues. There are at present various species of this sect; the starch primitives in faith and practice; and the hickory,

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or half-blooded by intermarriages with the world's people. Their largest meeting-house is a plain, but neat, and very capacious brick edifice, without any paint; which, with the adjoining yard, where lie the dead buried in white deal coffins, is encompassed by a high brick wall; back from the noise of the streets, as all churches should be in populous cities. 16 Indeed, the annoyance to worship is too often but partially prevented, by the iron chains hung across the pavements on the sabbath. In public worship, the men with their broad hats on, sit on one side, and the women on the other side, of the house; not in pews, but upon long benches. The quakers here seem to sit ruminating; and the wonder is, that, in 'Friends'-Meeting,' wherein women may exhort, any female can allow any holiday to her tongue. The quakers are a sage sect, to imagine that Inspiration would prompt such incoherent sing-song ejaculations, as we sometimes hear in their assemblies; and how happens it, if individually inspirited, that, more than once, *two* approved preachers have unbonneted, and uprisen together, and attuned their shrill organ-pipes for exhortation? This sect uses neither of the two visible Seals of other christians, except by spiritual acceptance. There is, however, an august feeling of the Divine Presence in this stillness of the spirit, often superior to any worship manifested by the bodily organs. As a signal when the meeting is done, two elders upon the upper high seat shake hands. Notwithstanding Pope's 'quaker sly,' they are a quite industrious, beneficent, amiable folk. They have, in common, plain useful educations; but, with some liberal exceptions, are more deficient than others in elegant literature, and embellishments. They have but little poetry, or romance, in their natures. They labour to make no proselytes. In their internal government, they have wise regularity, 17 and simplicity. In lieu of the lawyer, and the judge, they settle all disputations by impartial referees. Appeals may be made from their monthly, to their quarterly, and finally to their yearly meetings; at which times, the quakeresses hold separate meetings, in which to chatter over their own feminine matters. They do not suffer a stranger of their persuasion to lodge at a hotel, but welcome him to their homes. They are enemies to every unnecessary form, in gospel, or in law; and, as they refuse to swear, they are ineligible to any office of trust under government. Indeed, their *affirmation* , or

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signature , is deemed sufficient for all secular obligations amongst themselves. Instead of the “Know all men by these presents,” they once had their quaint and honest:—

“Warranted, “From me and mine, “To thee and thine, “Forever.”

As to their not warring, and not voluntarily paying for warring, as it is a matter of conscience, I have only to remark that, if all nations were to become quakers, there would be no more wars. The quakers, emphatically, and to their unfading honour, have ever been the foremost against slavery. Their phraseology is peculiar. They, very properly, call the months, and days of the week, by first, second, third, and the other ordinals; as simpler, and discarding Pagan derivation. They address a man “Friend such a one,” if they beshrew him ever so deeply, or know him to be an enemy; and they generally adopt Bible appellations, using the diminutives, even to adults, as more endearing. They refuse to use Mr., because they will call no man master, save the Saviour; nor will they sign themselves any one's “humble, or obedient servant;” which they rightly say is an unmeaning form, or hypocrisy. They do not say *you* , because it is flattery to pluralize a person; but many say *thee* for *thou* and *thy*; as, “wilt *thee* go with me?” “a mote is on *thee*'s face.” Their *just so* garb, which, when adopted, was the court costume of the time, makes them appear like antediluvians. This drab dress changes not, whether for a wedding, or a funeral. They tell you a cape is unnecessary; but they wear three inches more of brim of beaver than is necessary. The quaker lads look like little old men; and the quaker maids like little old women; unless you glance under their small dove-coloured bonnets, and espy their bonny round faces. Some of the young lasses, however, tastefully refine upon too absolute simplicity. At the yearly-meeting, I saw one of their matrons in Israel. On her small brown shrivelled head was a man's broad out-flapping white hat, the brim at least ten inches, with a sugar-loaf crown. She wore a white stiff lawn apron, a nice three-cornered white 'kerchief down her breast and back in peaks, and had a plump pin-ball, and scissors, dangling down her right side. She walked in tall-heeled, blunt-toed brown prunello shoes, and leaned her veiny, skinny right palm firmly upon a 19 smooth oaken staff; her face, and the back of her hands being puckered, like unto a nutmeg cantaleupe,

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with age. However, she looked as if she covered a kind old-fashioned heart; and would ere long bloom into heavenly beauty. There is a rather singular custom among some of the friends, in their manner of courting. As the young wooer is expected to stay all night, the parents of the damsel place two separate beds in the room, upon which the lovers lie down, in their dress, and court across the interval. This does not quite rival a mode of the Welch peasantry, who innocently woo between two blankets. If a quaker love a lady out of the society, he must ask liberty, and pardon for the sin of loving one of the world's people. Being published is called *passing-meeting*; and the quakers marry themselves, in presence of witnesses. In general, the quakers disapprove both of singing, dancing, and painting. But why, in the name of nature, if these things be wrong, doth the Creator beautify the fields with variegated dyes; why make the innocent lambs to skip upon the hills; and the birds to swell their little throats in the fulness of praises?

On a Saturday, the Jews' sabbath, you may, if introduced, go and mourn in the Synagogue. Here you may hear the Rabbi, in his ephod, chant, or rather ululate a portion of the Levitical Law, from his unrolled parchment scroll, and expound in Hebrew from the Targum. Here you see the deluded Jews, in their scarfs and fringes, turn their faces to the east, and imitate their march to their expected Canaan. The Jews here sit in their seats below, the Jewesses in the galleries. From the Synagogue, you may walk to their burial-ground; where, as with us, the dead are laid with their heads to the west; so as to be upon their feet as the earth revolves on its axis; or, to face the Messiah as he appears in the east. In token of mourning; the Jews, who in this country do not wear long beards, walk unshaven for some weeks. The Jews lose two secular days in each week, by their sabbath, and our's. Among most nations, the Jews are oppressed, and peeled, and hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, by the government; and as they have not become so accustomed to persecution, as to like it, many fly to this country of refuge. Yet the richest banker in England, if not in the world, Rothschild, whose wand can call within the circle of his control half a centenary of millions, is a Jew. The Jews in this city are not in general excluded from civil privileges. There is a kind of dusky, hawkeyed, aquiline something very

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peculiar in the physiognomy of most of these unbelieving Israelites; unto whom we are still indebted for the scrupulous transmission of the ancient Oracles of Truth.

At two extremes of the city, worship two churches extreme in one point of doctrine; the Humanitarians, and the Swedenborgians. The latter mystical, metaphysical sect believe the Saviour to have been, not only the Son, but the Father, the absolute God, who visited the earth in person for good. In their doctrine 21 of correspondences, they also believe in the communion of angels and men; and that heaven is like unto this earth, with animals and trees, only uninvested in matter, existing in pure spirit. In Sweden, the priests of the New Jerusalem Temples wear scarlet robes. In Philadelphia, the morning, and not the evening, as with country worshippers, is the half of the sabbath, when the churches are most filled, and when you hear the best sermon. After dinner, the gentility quaff wine, court slumber, or ride out to their villas. A practice here obtains among most churches, excepting the quakers, who disclaim any alliance of money and preaching, which I do not commend. I mean that of the sabbath money-dippers. As soon as, or even before, divine service is closed, out start these dippers, with their long lithe rods and green or black caps at the end, and go traversing the aisles, scooping into each pew, as a fisher scoops fishes, for charity's spare coins. The close-net, however, is more liberal than the open-charger; because conscience, rather than pride, may be consulted. But I may not approve this commingling of the sacred and secular offices. It often occasions mortification to a stranger, if unprepared; and much reiterated trouble, and many money-gingling thoughts, to the waiting assembly. It degrades religion to a level with the exhibitions of a mountebank; who, when he has done, waits impatiently until his change come. There are quarterly, or yearly opportunities for beneficence; and each 4 22 society ought to support its own contingencies, by a more independent method. But *sui cuique mos*, says Terence.

Some days since, and I saw, in Chesnut street, what would surprise you; the funeral of a youth of about ten years, whose bier was borne in the hands of four young females, of fair seventeen, dressed all in virgin white, with their curls of long hair dropping aloose down the shoulders. There was an agreeable melancholy about it, which interested me. It is

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a relick of an ancient custom, now rare, that the deceased youths should be supported to their graves by the opposite sex. I wish that beautiful custom were more common, in the summer, of strewing fresh flowers upon the sods of those we love. In some parts of Wales, the graves are bordered and beautified with boxthrift, and other evergreens. The snow-drop, violet, and primrose bloom over the infant dust; middle age is marked by the rocket, the rose, and the woodbine; while the tansy, rue, and starwort mourn over old age. These little evergreens are fond emblems of that state, where is no more change. It is usual here to have the funeral in the morning; and for the porters to wear long white scarfs of lawn twisted round the hat crown, and streaming to the ground behind; which lawn is their perquisite. I have never seen here a *black* coffin, nor a flat-topped one; all are mahogany, or cherry, or stained reddish, with a somewhat gable-roof, and pentagonal ends; they are frequently 23 costly, and do not look so dismal as ours; although, perhaps, the habiliments of death ought to look gloomy. There is one green square in the city, which is about to be rolled into gravel walks, and set with trees, for a promenade, called now the Potter's Field. In this field, were the dead buried out of the sight of the living, when, near thirty years ago, the yellow plague swallowed above five thousand in three months. I may here relate two affecting events, which occurred at that time of sackcloth. One poor man, who was left almost dead a few hours before, when the car called to take away his corpse, the undertakers thinking of course that he was quite dead now, crawled with great effort to the window, and, in a low hollow voice, told them:—"He was not quite dead yet, but to call on the next day." They did call, and took his corpse for burial. The other account, was of an aged woman, who thirsted for drink; and an old servant, who was afraid to venture into the chamber, took a vessel of water, and pushed it in with a long stick. The poor woman crawled out of bed to get it, and was found dead, with her pale thin arm stretched out towards the water, almost to touch it. A frequent sign here, over the work-shop of a cabinet-maker, is— *a cradle and a coffin*. This leads to meditation. There stands a man, equally ready to accommodate one into the world, or to accommodate one out of the world.

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There is always some new curiosity to be seen in a large city. A few years ago, perhaps you saw, in 24 Boston, a modern Greek, from the Morea. Whilst now sitting, there is moving by a crowd of small boys, buzzing after a Chinese mandarin. His tall figure, little eye elliptical at the end next the nose, high cheek bones, pointed chin, skin of the colour of a new cent, long lank dark hair braided down his back from the top of his shaven poll, leaving his head shaped like an inverted cone; together with his novel costume, his rich knobbed velvet cap, his shirt of thin silk, his tight-buttoned jerkin of purple plush, with its wide expanding sleeves, his yellow quilted philibeg or short petticoat, over his white cotton swollen bag-drawers closed about the ankle, his black satin boots, and his perfumed pipe; are quite a sight to the little mischievous urchins, that compose his train. Immediately after eating, he lies down to sleep. He eats with his pair of mottled porcupine quills; and, in China, his richest luxury is the edible nest of the Indian swallow. He wishes for a travelling companion, who is able to interpret our language into his hieroglyphicks. Such is a picture of this one of the higher ranks of that ancientest, most peculiar, and most self-complacent of people.

There are not so many men of letters in Philadelphia, nor in New York, in ratio of population, as in Boston. Boston is the Edinburgh of literature in America. Philadelphia and New York are the London and Liverpool of commerce. The Philadelphians, in reverse to the New Yorkers, are called 25 a cold, cautious, calculating, hard-to-be-acquainted-with people; especially to one of still, withdrawing habitudes. Although a mottled mass of heterogeneous citizens, of all tongues and kindreds, yet they appear, to use a phrase of one of their own late nondescript pamphleteers, to unite into a peaceable "reciprocity of commutuality." There are here fewer distinctions of *caste*, than in other cities; owing probably to the equalizing doctrines of the quakers. As Philadelphia is the great patroness of the fine arts, a stranger of curiosity is tastefully treated with the varied specimens of designing and etching, at the artists' bay-windows; and one who is not opinion-bound, in this free country, where knowledge is to be attained, for taste improved, may pause gloating upon them as long as he pleases. But a New England visiter is confounded at

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the frequent pedantick and obtrusive “Franklin Academies,” “Newtonian Seminaries,” “Pestalozzian Lyceums,” “Columbian Colleges;” painted over some obscure-alleyed Abedarian nurseries, where little is taught, or perhaps known, beyond the sublime mysteries of the alphabet, and the simple copulation of digits and ciphers. The draymen in this city have a method of arranging their draught-horses, which are of enormous bone and thewes, *in extenso*; four, five, and six, one preceding the other; and not two abreast, as is usual with us when the number exceeds three or four. These chains of horses they control, and turn, at a full trot, on any curve or angle, 26 without guiding reins, with astonishing facility. Whether this tandem custom economize the conjunction of power is a query. The Philadelphians are a neat folk. Come Saturday evening, and every besom in the city is alive; every servant astir, out before the front-door, to sweep the flag-stones, and bricked sidewalks, for the sabbath. Better had one not adventure along on that evening, as he would eschew suffocation, or demolition by the whirligig besoms. However, that one madam is not exactly as neat as another madam here, more than in other cities, I denote from the varying degrees of lustre upon the brazen knockers, and bell-knobs. How such trivial differences prejudice the taste towards the indwellers. As you elbow along the lower, and more mercenary squares, every citizen seems bandying cent per cent, discount, advance sterling, invoices; all as uncongenial as hellebore to me; who would rather see a gallant book launch from the press, than a gallant ship loom into port. In traversing populous cities, how convenient were it to have four faces, to avoid the collision of the crowd; but there appears to be no prospect of there being any immediate improvements in the species. An annoyance in most cities is the populace of little curtail yelpers; not altogether, whether free or in vassalage, worth one groat to any one person. If a dog have a real value, then is there an excuse for keeping him; but *one* case of hydrophobia, of late so frequent, is a powerful reason for collaring and taxing the whole canine family. 27 As you muse along up out of these lower regions, into the central wards, the heart is frequently refreshed by the sight of airy young misses sitting at the open front doors, and windows. A few days after I came here, as I went expatiating along the sidewalks, near Chesnut and Fourth, I was startled by a sudden snapping noise

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behind me, and stared about for some varlet's whip. It was only two loving young ladies kissing each other upon meeting; a not uncommon, and a very sweet custom, if also the gentlemen might partake with them. As you approach towards the market-house, which is supported by about three hundred brick pillars, and extends up and down for half a mile, in its various departments of flesh, fish, and fruit, and is one of the most abundant and choice in the world, and under an excellent police; the ear is regaled with cries of:—"pepper pot, right hot;" "hot corn, hot corn;" "oys, oys, poor Jack wants his money for selling pickled oysters;" softening the discordant gutturals:—"uch, uch, uch, oaruch;" of the half naked sweeps. When will a lady Montague arise, in this country, who will honour herself, by giving a welcome festival to these half famished wretches, on the return of each annual May-day? Monopolizers sometimes endeavour to circumvent the market, and thus speculate upon the poor. It is an unfair sight, to see women guiding their carry-alls to pamper the city with their luscious melons, without a man; although, far in Maine, I once saw red-armed women 28 plying the oar for a score of miles to market in an open boat. The women of the city, and not the men, do the chief chaffering, going with the sun to the mart, with a servant behind elbowing the basket. Here every article goes by *fi'p's*, so many *fi'p's* (about five pennies) a piece, or dozen. On one side of the market, has sojourned for many years a dwarf, as he is called, for exhibition; but he is what I call an imperfect man; since his head and body are stout as Samson's, his lower extremities dwindled and twined into the fish-shape of a merman. Now I comprehend a dwarf to be a minikin, a biped humanly symmetrical, but in miniature. His ushering cicerone looked like Death in the Primer. At first view, the pygmean giant appeared to be so full of health, as to be almost sick. But, indeed, he had such a power of infirmities, each opposing the other, that, to save his life, he could not die, until he got the better of them. When I visit any such object of commiseration, my rule is, to look sharp, but take no notice. If he had lived in the days, and country, of Scarron, he might have applied to be second valetudinarian to her majesty. Near the lower market, at a shop door, in a cage has long hung a dusky mocking-bird, which imitates the everchanging noises, and cries, in the street, with wonderful accuracy. I thought of Sterne's pathetic starling:—"I can't get out;" "I can't get out." It is difficult, for

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some time, for a rural stranger to sleep in a city, on account of the rumbling, and rattling, in the 29 streets; but, after a while, if half the city were to crash down, he would esteem it a matter of course, and not awake. It is very agreeable to repose in bed, and to hear the lanterned watchmen, as they perambulate the wards, which in a dark evening are lighted with near a thousand lamps, sing out:—"past eleven o'clock, and a cloudy night;" "three o'clock, and a bright star-light;" and thus to strike the slow-passing note of time, through all the weary watches of their walks.

I notice, in this city, the Eastern habit of balancing back upon the chair's hind legs; a posture in which Burns tells us he used to sit in his ruminating mood; and also of vexing the living coals, although they glow never so fiercely. Until you leave home, you will not be aware how many provincial, and fatherless and motherless heathenisms, are used in daily parle by *some* New Englanders; although they justly take pride in being more literate than most other states. For ensample:—they use the word *conduct* as a neuter verb; the substantive *progress* as a verb; and stop short at the sign of the infinitive mood, as, she can sing if she chooses to; i. e. to sing. They say, flowers wilt for wither, thus used in Salmagundi; tip up for tilt up, so used in the Pilgrim's Progress; transmogrified, used by Smollet; heft, old Saxon, for weight; serious for religious; rungs for rounds of a ladder; sauce for vegetables; gunning for shooting; tackling for harness; notions for articles; birth for office; scrawls 5 30 for faggots; fix for fixure; spry for nimble; lengthy for lengthened; lick for strike; hang the horse; had not ought; to convene for to be convenient; complected for complexioned; slump; jounce for jolt; chunky for chubby; slushy for sloppy; smash for quash; and so on. And in pronunciation, they do not aspirate the *h* in many words, as wich for which, were for where, wen for when; and they flatten other words, as na-ter for nature, vir-too for virt-ue, with many more. All such backbiters of the king's English should be eschewed by every scholar, as he would eschew mean company. However, you need not hence conclude all the rest of the states to be perfect in phraseology. The Philadelphians, beside many of the above, have some peculiarities of their own, as:—like I used, for as I used; did not let on, for did not explain; get shut of a thing, for get rid of a thing; durst I go,

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for may I go? leave me do this, for permit me to do this; little bit of time; this is queer, for this is strange; the dear knows, for the demon knows; and the flat emphasis of a , as payer for pa'a; mayer for ma'a. But, at the South, and the West, there may you hear idiomatic vulgarisms rivalling the Eastern; and if I go thither, I will endeavour to turn the tables upon them in these matters. Thus, as you coveted notices, rather than sentiment, I have detailed some of those minute insignificancies, which arrest the observation of a stranger, but which, in a few weeks, become familiarized; and, I trust, a 31 livelier picture of the city is thus given, than would be given from more general traits; but, after all, compared with the country, a city, as our friend the doctor would say, is but a crucible of noxious gases. Now, *macte virtute, mî fratre, vale atque vive!*

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON CITY. MDCCCXVI.

dear brother,

AS Congress is now in session, I shall tarry here two or three weeks, to catch the manners living as they rise, before I proceed farther South. This little District, of ten miles square, whose name is an honour but too late paid to the great Columbus, is the proud jewel in the ample ring of the union. How ennobling to the feelings of an American President, to stand upon Capitol-Hill, and to cast his thoughts northward, and southward, and westward, over our vast and free continent, and to reflect that he is the chosen monarch of all he surveys, and whose right there is none to dispute. The Federal City is nearly equi-distant from the northern and southern extremities of the confederacy, from the cold Saint Croix, to the warm Sabine; and although, in the west, the huge Alleghanies upheave their broad bare backs between, yet is there but one vast expanse, one peopled tract, over which delegated parental domination extends, even across to the far Stony-Mountains, and down to the Oregon of the Pacific. 34 As the President's meditations circulate, his prophetic eye views the opening canal, from the chain of northern lakes, to the head waters of the western rivers, and his far-spreading republic of states becomes an immense island. He beholds, in the clear surrounding distance, the intelligent yeomen and dauntless mariners

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of the East, the slave-lording nabobs of the South, and the pioneering colonists of the West. Is not the union of the states somewhat like the rich necklace of Pocahontas? If we append too many upon the same tie, is there not danger lest the tie, unless its texture be very compacted, may divide? If not, will not the far-off delegates want their seven mile boots, to arrive and return within the year? It is but too apparent, at the Federal-City, that our republican simplicity is gradually changing. The first time that General Washington met Congress, it is said, he went on foot, in a plain domestic suit; the second year, he went in a costly foreign velvet dress, and in a carriage. The first year, he delivered his speech in person; the next year, he sent it by his secretary. This aping of European courtliness may, ere half a century, mortify honest republicanism. I was told of a trait of Mr. Jefferson, however, that when Mr. Madison was inducted into the presidency, there stood, at his side, the philosophic ex-president, in a home-wrought brown great coat, scarce vieing with that of a thrifty overseer. Was this true republican plainness and equality; a rare pattern of modesty and economy; 35 the way to encourage domestic manufactures? It were ill-natured, to ask whether pride, or humility, winked through the threads? It is projected to publish a splendid fac-simile of the Declaration of Independence, with the autograph of the signers, and allegorical designs, and portraits; but who does not feel humbled, that its projector is not an American, but a naturalized son of Erin? Did you ever hear of the witticisms of Jeffrey, the Edinburgh Reviewer, who, when lately in this country, where he had been apotheosized by our grandees, being asked, how President Madison appeared to him? replied:—"Why, quite a neat little trim looking man, dressed in black, with his hands behind him; like a country apothecary going to a funeral." And being asked his opinion of Mr. Secretary Monroe? "Not an ignorant man," said he; "somewhat galled before and behind by the traces." He appears to have left his devotees low in the vocative. But great minds do not heed a pleasantry; especially from a critic, who, notwithstanding his quips and his quirks, is thought to hold this risen republic, in moral and physical pre-eminence, as: the envy and dread of monarchies. I should like to see his graduated scale of the *natural* talents of all our excellent presidents. I was informed, that, as a certain *state secretary* was formerly prime toddy-maker to General Stirling; so was a certain *speaker*

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of the house first egg-nog-maker at Ghent. I have heard of the Delphian oracle of Alberto Scipione to Sir Harry Wootton:— 36 “to keep your thoughts close, and your countenance loose, to go round the world;” and boast the neutrality of it. Therefore, instead of repeating evil of dignities, like Nym, “I say nothing; that's my humour.” I bless myself, that this country is not subject to Gynæcocracy; that, by our Salique law, no woman is eligible to our presidency. In truth, there have been a few queens of worthy memory, from Zenobia of Palmyra, to Bess of England, and Kate of Russia; but the Bible saith, that the woman should look to the man for counsel. Legislation, a cynic might say, is too weighty for the sensitive fibres of the female mind. He would not covet to be under cestus government, even at home. The lance should not yield to the distaff. His wish would echo the advice of the wise and dying Antipater to his successor. Yet I will that woman should rule, not indeed in civil jurisdiction, which would unsphere her, but in her vast natural province, the heart of man.

Washington-City is about three hundred miles from the sea, at the head of tide water, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, which flows by the city through the District. Its plan, by Pierre C. l'Enfant, is said to be improved upon that of every other city in the world. Its broad eccentric avenues, each called after a state; its transverse and conjugate intersections, alphabetically and numerically named; uniting the *utile dulce*; present a facility of communication, with extensive and beautiful prospects, and invite a 37 healthful and unopposed circulation of air. Wide areas, of different dimensions and shapes, are left for public squares, and future promenades. But although the famous metropolis of our country, and notwithstanding its boasted elevated centre, and diverging radii of perspective avenues, the Federal-City is now in semblance not unlike a rough chariot-wheel, horizontal on the ground, with nothing but the nave, and three or four spokes, yet apparent. As the basis of the city-plan, of which, with its environs, there is a beautiful engraving, a true meridional line was drawn by celestial observation. On American maps, longitude will hereafter be reckoned from this metropolis. What this city is to be, is matter of prophecy. The Capitol, of Corinthian order, its vast central rotundo and dome being yet

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unbuilt between the wings, is an enormous double-block of massive free-stone, scathed and smutched by the late war-fire, and scowling like desolation. The conflagration of the library was a specimen of Vandalism—a literary sacrilege. At this time, the English began to feel like Van Tromp, the heroic Dutch admiral, in 1600, who hoisted a broom at his mast head, to intimate that he could sweep clear the British channel. But soon did our slumbering spirit arouse, by sea and by land; and, like the fiery breath of the siroc, sweep them with the besom of destruction. I was told of an immigrant subaltern, who disguised his manhood in maiden's apparel, to escape the conflict. But Achilles hid himself in woman's attire, in the island 6 38 of Scyros, to avoid going to the war of Troy. Some think, that war is sent to punish and reform a people. But, in a moral view, does it not make ten worse, where it makes one better? In peace, says the melancholy history of ages, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons. The climate of this metropolis is called salutary, although, not far distant, are a few insalubrious swamps, whose exhaled miasmata sometimes create intermittents, and pleurisies. The Capitol square, of about twenty acres, is to be enclosed by a costly iron paling, and peopled with trees. Around the Capitol, instead of parks of deer, on the one side, it is said, you may see, up the summer hills, a few straggling flocks; not rivalling the sheep of Aleppo, whose broad and unctious tails are lumbered along on little wagons fastened behind them; but, small scraggy animals, like the Scythian moss-lambs, that would have puzzled the Sieur Dionis to dissect them. And, instead of attendant minstrels, on the other side, you may hear an evening meadow-concert; in which, ever and anon, that venerable gentleman, the paddock, closes in with the bass, to his treble choir, as they shrilly chime in the old-fashioned tune, of which the enamoured Aristophanes took notes:—"B#e#e# e#e[??] ###[??] ##[??]!" As Scipio and Lælius were wont to unbend their minds from the severer duties of the senate of Rome, and walk to gather pebbles on the sea-shore; so, it is said, will our honoured and grave legislators, at times, condescend to leave the debating hall, for the partridge covey in 39 the greenwoods. It has been disputed, whether the partridge be a partridge? It has been written, that the quail of New England is the partridge of the South; but that, in propriety, it is neither. The bird in dispute was thought peculiar to America. The

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partridge of New England was said to be the short-tailed pheasant of Pennsylvania, but to be miscalled in both places. It is a cousin-german of the grouse. Thus were pheasant, partridge, grouse, and quail obliged to disown their christian names in America; until later naturalists have restored them unto their own distinct, but neighbouring families. There has been a proposition, by a foreign citizen, to enclose, and plant an extensive vineyard near the Capitol, for the purpose of expressing wines; and he judges the climate to be sufficiently calorific. The President's Ionic mansion is a minor palace, and the domicils of the State Secretaries are suitably inferior. The opening vistas from the Capitol are very grand; or rather, as Doctor Syntax would say, are very picturesque. There runs a bridge, like a huge marine millepede, over the broad waters of the Potomac for a weary length. About nine miles down, below Alexandria, and almost in sight, on the west bank of the Potomac, is Mount Vernon; which, hereafter, a freeman will visit, and hold sacred, as a mussulman the shrine of his prophet at Mecca. It is worthy of note, that the three, soon four, presidential seats in Virginia, Mount Vernon, Monticello, pronounced Montichello, Ital. that is, little mountain, 40 Montpelier, are but about a half day's ride apart, and that two of them are near neighbours. I do not admire this adopting of foreign names, as if we had none appropriate at home. Mr. Secretary Monroe, the next heir apparent to the presidency, is the son of a brickmonger; and it is a beautiful feature in our constitution, that, not birth, but wisdom and integrity, in a superior degree, are the only enviable characteristics, sought out for a ruler of this already great, and powerful nation. Although many a wealthy denizen would gladly volunteer his entire fortune for the renown of being president, yet do freemen pride themselves in heaping, not only the renown, but an ample salary, upon the man, whom they delight to honour. As our government is at amity with our red tribes, the Great Father, or president, often has the complacency of eating succatras with his visiting Sagamores. There is here, on a parchment grant of land, a curious sign-manual of a sachem, who, being unskilled to write, drew out a grotesque figure of himself. It must be a healthy vocation, to be a President, if we may judge from the cheerful *otium cum dignitate* of those yet alive; although, we lament, that their sun is now sinking far back o' th' hills for this world. Federal-City is called a very dull place, except when Congress is

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in session. Then, it is dignified, and enlivened, by the thundering debates, the splendid equipages of foreign ambassadors, and the smiling beauty of the presidential levees.

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I went, for a number of days, into the galleries, of the Senate-Chamber, and of the Hall of Representatives, where strangers listen to the debates. The heart is impressed with an emotion of awe, and noble pride, when one beholds this venerable body, legislating for the good of their country. The silver is spread over many of their aged locks, like the hoar frost upon the thin dried winter grass. I heard but one senator speak, at emulous length; and his person was more remarkable than his eloquence. His spare sallow frame reminded me of Philætes, counsellor to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was so slender naturally, and so reduced by study, that, when he went abroad, he affixed leaden plates to his sandals, and put pieces of the same metal into his pockets, to prevent the wind from wafting him away. In the Hall, along the balustrade of the gallery, are seen rows of ladies sitting up, and bending over, like chalk-pipes in a box. In a picture gallery, I never before saw so many fine pictures. Down in the body of the House, you behold, from all points of compass, the converging bodies of diverging minds. I do not praise the modesty of the titles of these Honourable Esquires; for, since the greater includes the less, we may as well say, Counsellor A. B. Attorney, as Hon. A. B. Esq. But, perhaps, some could not bear a title equably, without both ends being balanced. I do not approve of long talks; nor do those, who are paid for listening to them, if we may judge from that endemic of the muscles, the yawning of some, as they stand, like Yahoos, rubbing their scorching thighs at the fires; and the apathy of others, in their seats, reading their newspapers with one eye, and going to sleep with the other. You may have heard, that to remedy this ennui, a member of congress from the mountains, some sessions ago, wished it to be voted a privilege for any representative to call, in the hall-lobby, for what cordials he needed, at the public charge; and when it was queried, under what article of contingencies it could be included? "O," said he, "charge it to *fuel*." I fear that some, who proffer their services for congress, are as quixotic as was Goldsmith, when he thought of decyphering the Arabic

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inscriptions on the *written mountains* , though he was ignorant of the language; but the temptation was three hundred pounds per annum. It is undignified, for the Hon. Speaker, sitting under his stately canopy, to call the house to order, like a parish-moderator, by a key rapped on his desk. Anon, on the floor, may you hear some, like descended sages, with lordly brows elate, in dignified and grave harangue; and others, like monkies, with foreheads villanous low, as Caliban says, moeing and chattering at each other. How they appear in the Hall; black, brown, and gray; nothing to identify them in their official capacity. I have ever thought, that the American, or English dress of men, was very undignified, and ungraceful. A small stiff round topped hat perched on the crown, with a long narrow straight-bodied coat, with its tapered skirts 43 jutting out behind, like the tail of an ape; and a heavy shapeless pair of boots, as if one's feet were in the stocks; these, surely, cannot bear competition with the ancient tunick, and toga; the high-plumed cap, and the tight-laced buskin about the well-turned ankle; or the modern oriental costume, the plaited turban, and the hanging mantle with its gathered folds. I do not hanker after stars and garters; but I do think, that the delegated representatives of a whole people, in congress, should have some badge, some dignified, and uniform, and ocular seal of their election. I do not wish to confound the disparity of manners, and costume, of different states; but only wish a member to be known in the streets of the capital; and to be admonished by this badge, not to be disregardful of his high constituted responsibility. But, after all we can no better judge of the mind by the costume, than of a clock by the case. The Southern delegates affect to despise the puritanical prejudices of the New Englanders. That our Eastern forefathers were, the most of them, book-learned, enterprising, and pious, none may doubt; but that they were also bigoted, and superstitious, and, on some points, narrow-minded, perhaps we may admit. They came to avoid persecution, and they began to persecute; they hung honest women for witches; and they enacted a *black and blue* code of *by-laws*. It is probable, that their posterity may inherit, with their virtues, some of their infirmities, If, however, there be any disparity between the north and the 44 south, we believe that impartiality would assign the preference to the north, But it is as reasonable for the features of minds, as for the features of faces, to differ. A patriot, however, will ever

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disdain to become a party minion; to lackey a demagogue's skirts through every thorn-hedge of opposition, and slough of disgrace; or to be coerced out of the way of honour, by a fiery threat levelled at his fortune; but, notwithstanding his enemies may thrust at him their forked tongues, he will hang on to his faith, civil and religious, like grim death. A tampering party-spirit is like two persons attempting to guide one steed; although they may at times between them keep him in the right road; yet, generally, they will divert him into jeopardy of their safety.

In reading Ancient, or Modern History, it appears, that most Governments have not shunned, less or more, to grind the face of the poor. Legislators seem to have a distinct interest; to look more to themselves, than to the numerous body for whom they legislate. It is not so in our Republic. Yet I wish that the debaters would think more, and speak less; or, at least, put their thoughts into a vice, and compress them; or, one member not repeat what another member has just spoken. If members of congress were charged with the price of their time, at the ratio of their pay; would they often speak, without something to say? Are most speeches from patriotism, or from selfism? straws to tickle constituents? counters to induce re-election? It is remarked 45 of the Eastern orators, that they ever hem, and clear their pipes, at the end of every sentence. Some congress arguers are always beating about the bush, but never close upon the game. Others clothe an idea in as many words, as a Dutchman wears breeches; abounding in what the lawyers call surplusage. Some speakers, as if to render confusion worse confounded, seem to begin in the middle, and to leave off at both ends. When auditors can tell what dress an orator has on, he is *not* truly eloquent; when the impression left is of the subject only, he *is* truly eloquent. After Cicero, it was exclaimed:—"What an elegant orator; what learning; what genius!" After Demosthenes, it was vociferated:—"Let us march against Philip!" Of our eloquent statesmen, speaker A. is now like the fawn, touching lightly on every part; and now like the elephant, making the earth to tremble. Of speaker B., his display is like the dress of a gala-lady; so bedizened in ornament, that we can with difficulty find the lady herself. B's eloquence is very brilliant and sometimes forcible; but it has no more effect

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on the depth and strength of A's, than the twilight dews on the Potomac. Heaven support the Speaker, to sit in state, two or three months, listening, or appearing to listen, to such drowsy, over-and-over-again prosings, as sometimes tantalize him. I have heard of a stupid member, who once had been stammering away for about four hours in the hall, on some trivial knap-worn topic, and who, noticing the Speaker to turn away 7 46 his head for a breath or two, stopped short, and growled out:—"I'll thank Mr. Speaker for his eye!" "I'll thank Mr. Speaker for his eye!" Heaven support the Speaker, and elongate his patience. It is a regret, that votes, upon an important question, cannot be taken by weight of character; and not an ignorant man's vote be as heavy as a wise man's vote. It has been a question, whether an elected representative should vote according to instructions from his constituents, as he attends as their servant, to act for the states confederated, and for his constituents in particular? Or whether he may exercise his own judgment, as he is the head placed by them on their shoulders; and which if they dislike, they can exchange at the next poll? I conceive that, as he goes to act, not for himself, but for them, his individual private judgment is merged in the majority of theirs, when known; and that thus he should vote or resign; and that, at such time, as not to leave his district unrepresented.

While here, I have heard John Randolph speak in the Hall twice. A slim, meagre, hollow-backed, round-shouldered figure, with his lemon skin, and little retreating nose, and sharp scooping chin, and his smooth light brown hair kemped back from his forehead, and gathered by a string aloose down his back, with his shrill feminine voice, which can swell to a wonderful compass, and his unabashable self-possession, and searching twinkling eye, and his long slender denoting finger. Although he boasts of 47 princely Indian blood, he has not much of Indian taciturnity. His querulous quality of mind, and eccentricity of dress, made me think of the paradoxical Rousseau, in his Armenian garb; indeed, in some particulars, there is a resemblance between the Genevan and American citizen; however the latter may be the better man. He has, perhaps, more genius, than judgment; ever vacillating, yet fixed; he is a party by himself. He is fitter to pull down, than to build up; a

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clog to both parties; to whom he is a kind of amusing, yet dreaded Menippus. Although his speeches want the *lucidus ordo* , yet he always draws attention by the pungency of his sarcasm, the raciness of his desultory matter, and the unique spell of his manner. He is a bachelor, a wealthy Virginian planter on the Roanoke, and said to be a man of a noble spirit a fine hunter, and a Christian.

When I become a member of the House, I intend to propose and advocate four great objects. First, a *National Observatory* , whose top, with a sublimer intent than that of ancient Babel, should look unto the sky; with complete astronomical apparatus, and resident professors, and salaries so liberal as to induce the most elevated intellects to devote their entire energies, during life, in tracing the marches and counter-marches of the planets, and decyphering the golden hieroglyphics of heaven. Now Rittenhouse is above the stars, let Doctor Bowditch sit up in the top-tower and be the first Herschel of America. 48 I would also bring under debate a *National University* , of which the President of the United States should be, *ex officio* , the Provost, or Chancellor; if such University would not become an oracle of divination—a catapulta of party. As a prime object of it should be to form statesmen, worthy of the name, the text-book of the political classics should be the Constitution of the United States; whereby might be demonstrated, from experience, the superiority of a republic, for an enlightened and virtuous people, to a monarchy, however limited; or an oligarchy, however wise. It might also tend to produce a uniform national character, as far as the different pursuits of the different states might allow. The next thing should be a *National Monument* over the remains of our temporal saviour, on a scale of amplitude, and grandeur, equal to that of Queen Artemisia for Mausolus. I would model it into the form of a Congressional Chapel, surmounted by a colossal statue of the hero in bronze; enshrining the ashes of the dead under the grand altar; over which the chaplains of both houses, hence catching a holy ardour, should reciprocally officiate. In front of the massive altar should be lettered in wrought gold, that trite, but matchless eulogium of him by General Harry Lee:—“First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.” This Chapel Mausolëum should be edified, not to honour his memory—it

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does not need it—but to honour ourselves. Finally, I would have instituted a *National 49 Literary Fund*. There are, in these states, very few, who can afford to be authors. Belles-Lettres, hitherto, need to quit the country, or to quit writing. This ought not any longer so to be; our republic is now out of her nonage. Most of the gifted authors of refined monarchies receive honorary, unexacting pensions. Pensions upon men of talents and taste, when they do not unworthily spread an opiate over exertion, create for them that elaborate leisure, without which no genius can perfect the beauty of its promise. Noah Webster should have a pension—although I am no proselyte to his shorthand system of orthography, thus obscuring the etymons, and consequently the prime significance of words; yet do his long and lonely sieges of toilsome logomachy for the public deserve a reward. I would have a Poet Laureate crowned in our Capitol, from the leaves of our own magnolia. The Muses are fair of face, and fair of fame; bright of eye, and bright of mind; lovely of lip, and lovely of heart; but poor of portion. If unprotected, they may sing, but they will be sad of soul; their airs will be by rote, and not by note; they must descend from their highest heaven of invention, to delve upon the barren surface of this visible diurnal sphere. The gallantry of the age should avert this.

The gravity of congressional debate is likely soon to be discomposed, by a bold Western projector, Captain John Cleves Symmes, now at Saint Louis; who, it is reported, intends to petition congress to order him two frigates in aid of his matchless expedition. He has publicly revived the idea, that our planet is composed internally of concentric spheres; that it is open, for a certain number of degrees, at the poles; and states that he needs one hundred able-bodied, and daring-minded men, to start with him, in the autumnal season, from Siberia. He has no doubt of being able to enter in at the north pole; to find a passage through these coats of the earth, which he supposes to be stocked with animals, and vegetables, if not with men; and to return in fifteen months out at the opposite pole. This theory is accompanied by diagrams, to shew how the reflected light of the sun is admitted. He has appointed Baron Humboldt of Germany, Sir Humphrey Davy of London, and Professor Mitchel of America, his protectors. This bold, and fanciful, if not original

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conception, of a world within a world, might furnish a vigorous imagination, like that of Swift, with a fabulous history, superior in interest to Burnet's sublime romance, his "Theory of the Earth." Let not Europe hereafter tax America with poverty of imagination. It is a regret, that Captain John Cleves Symmes did not live in the era of ancient Dædalus, or prelate Wilkins; that, if congress should be slow in manning his frigates, he might scale the everlasting icebergs on artificial wings. Upon entering the pole, what grand, what sublime discoveries, would he not make! Might he not trace along the roots of the 51 mountains, and disclose the sulphureous smithey of the thunder-forging Cyclops; and disturb the couch of the giant Atlas, who heaves the earthquakes? Might he not gather golden ingots in the mines, or penetrate even to the mount of magnet in the centre? Might he not pass by the prison of the Gnomes, or visit the palaces of the Genii, and Fairie Queene, or revel in the coral grottoes of the Water Nymphs? And, more than all, might he not discover a new race of men and women, and animals, and trees, of novel appearance and manners, but kindred to our own? I trust that no one will improve upon this hint, before the return of Captain John Cleves Symmes; from whose journal, I hope to compose a work of marvel, such as has not been read, since Gulliver.

One subject discussed in the House was manufactures. Would not the most eligible mode for Congress to encourage home manufactures be, for the Legislatures of each state to oblige each member to wear domestic wrought suits? When great men thus agreed, would not the little men soon follow suit? All congressional debates, which we read, appear very similar in style, and lose their individuality of phraseology, by their being reported by stenographers, who, too frequently, catch only the thought, and clothe it themselves in their own manner; except the speeches of those, who have more vanity, and incur pains to transcribe in full, and transmit their copies to the printers. I wish that 52 all editors were as assiduous, and impartial, as the National Reporters; and not too many of them the veriest misreporters under the type. I wish that newspapers would be, what they profess to be, *newspapers*, rather than commentators. Let editors print foreign and domestic, political and local events, and leave it to the good sense of the reader to understand them.

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From some states, nothing now comes, until it be distorted, or gangrened, or amputated. Each party strives which shall outbrave the other, in "paper quillets of the brain." Like two colliers, blacking not only themselves, but every thing they touch. I have heard of one southern editor, who avows himself to have two lobes to his brain; one for himself, and one for his party. Comment, when able and honest, is edifying; but as this, in our evil day, is warped by policy, I know not but it were judicious for Congress, totally, and peremptorily, to prohibit any public editor of a political paper, from annexing any paragraph of his own to the simple fact simply given. Then, each man, reading equally on each side, would give unbiassed suffrages according to his unprejudiced judgment. If this would be regarded as too close a restraint on the great palladium of our rights, a free press; let each writer be no longer anonymous, but append his name to his opinion; that the community may weigh it in the broad balance of disinterested polity.

The Heads of Departments, Supreme Judges, Chaplains of both Houses, Foreign Ambassadors, and 53 other Dignitaries, are admitted into the Hall of Legislation. I do not covet to have an ambassador become a speculator; receive the honour of the appointment, accept his nine thousand dollars outfit; perhaps, if he drops his congee at another court on his way, a *double* one; and demand his other thousands salary; when, after he has taken a pleasant voyage in a gallant frigate across the Atlantic; and viewed the foreign countries in his tour, and been honoured with a presentation to their majesties, and nobilities; suddenly, perchance, he has a headach or a homeach; or the climate does not suit his nerves; and he must sail back again, and have another appointment at home. This is all beginning and ending, and leaving no time, either to learn, or to execute his official duties; and money is expended to little purpose in new outfits, and infits. Ambassadors should stay, alive or dead, under a forfeiture of salary and reputation, until recalled. But these are high matters; and again, "I say nothing; that's my humour."

The Supreme Court was in session, and Chief Justice Marshall, the biographer of Washington, somewhat resembles the late Justice Parsons, of Massachusetts, but is of a less frame. There were three other judges on the bench; the Honourable Bushrod

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Washington, a very small man in person, with a colourless face, who now inherits the seat of his great relative, at Mount Vernon; Judge Johnson, of South Carolina, who is reported to be elaborating 8 54 a splendid life of General Greene; and, though last not least, the once poetical Judge Story, of our state. Lawyer Wirt, of Richmond, was in court; he is about publishing sketches of Patrick Henry. Was not Henry, as a statesman, what Whitfield was, as a preacher? Both nearly self-taught, of peculiar, and overwhelming magical eloquence, but whose speeches, when printed, are ordinary? Did Henry propose one new feature to the constitution, which he voted against? Could Henry any more compete with Franklin, in the steady light of reason, than a blazing meteor with a fixed star? I was told, but it is improbable, that the friends of Henry are endeavouring to recollect a portrait of his person, as no one was painted in his life time. Since I have been here, I have visited the late Jeffersonian, now Congressional Library. An undue proportion of the volumes are in French, and other foreign languages, and antiquated editions; and therefore are less useful to most members of Congress. I have walked down to the Navy Yard, where is mounted much huge earthquaking ordnance; and where is a decent Monument to those, who fell before Tripoli, dying in a good cause. I went into the Patent Office, and there saw a variety of curious, but impracticable inventions. Some are so old, it is believed, that they were never new; being made in the beginning. The most trivial ingenuity was a machine, with which to pare, quarter, and uncore quinces. As an instance of the facetiousness of the Doctor, who superintends 55 the office, it is said that he once, in company of the assembled grandees, remarked that he had found a cheap sustenance for the poor, but could not devise any method of cheapening, the winter fuel; and he proposed, therefore, to *freeze them up* during the cold season; and he thought it more than probable, that, by a certain chemical process of his, he could reanimate them in the spring. This more than rivals the catholicon to prolong life of Paracelsus (Aurelius-Philip-Theophrastus-Bombast de Hohenheim) of Einfidlen in Switzerland, 1493; notwithstanding his interminable name. The legislators here daily frank home huge piles of pamphlets; but I have not been able to ascertain, that they often frank home their linen to their laundress; or that the honest quaker member did actually, in former days, frank home his iron-gray

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mare. Did you ever hear of the derivation of the christian name of the present Postmaster-general Meigs? Then you know not how near we came of losing, or rather, of never having his services. His grandfather, it is said, went for many weeks to pay his addresses to a young quaker lady, and was for some time repulsed. At length, he resolved once more to try to win her affections. He went, and sued, and pleaded, and conjured, but without any visible effect; and was going away from the house, with a sinking heart; when she relented, and came to the door, and called out in her simple modest phrase—"Return, Jonathan." Her lover, out of the fulness of his joy, then vowed to call his first-born, 56 if a son—"Return Jonathan." Thus, you perceive, that our having our present honourable postmaster-general depended upon the capricious yea or nay of the fair young quakeress. I have not yet attended at the President's levee; which any citizen may do, upon an easy introduction. I had not time, nor was it the proper place, to render the president much advice; nor, perhaps, if I offered good counsels, would he remember to follow them. Besides, I am too proud, to enter a saloon of conspicuous personages, while myself am but a musing recluse. Many immigrants, guarded by poverty, and beckoned by hope, itinerate through this metropolis, for the western land of promise. They would save much travel, could they but push out a boat, hang upon a limb of the eastern sun at his rising, and, after his daily round, drop off at sunsetting in the west.

As it is the season of snow and sleet, and my stay is short, I shall defer more enlarged remarks, until my second visit, next year. *Rumpe moras; dic mihi, cras, cras, quid agis; æternumque salve.*

LETTER FROM VIRGINIA. MDCCCXVI.

DEAR BROTHER,

AS I have lately visited Richmond, and Petersburg, I will first give a slight sketch of those cities; and then date my remarks on this state, from a fine plantation on the banks of the Rappahannock.

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Richmond, on the river James, is an irregular city, populous with slaves, and mules; but has many beautifully picturesque seats in its environs, and along the river, which is winding and broken, but romantic in summer, when the midway rocks are covered with anglers. The atmosphere is impregnated with the dense murky effluvia of coal-smoke, which begrimes the pores of the skin, and affects respiration. The coal is brought down a canal in barges, and landed from a broad basin in the city. Could not the citizens contrive, like the English artisans, to consume the smoke? The mules in the streets, wheeling tobacco, are sometimes four abreast. I went to see where the awful fire appalled the Theatre, and crowded above three score of shrieking victims from the scenes of time, into the scenes of eternity; 58 and among them the governor, and a brave officer and his beloved. The new Monumental Church, over the ruins and ashes of the dead, is nearly completed, but is not to be compared with many churches at the north. Nor can the cities of the south bear a parallel, in architectural elegance, with the cities of the middle, and eastern states. The Capitol, on Capitol-hill, overlooking the city, is a noble, substantial, but cumbrous, heaving-looking edifice. In the inner-area of the Capitol, paled in by iron-railing, peers a full length marble statue of Washington, of Parisian sculpture. As he stands martially erect, there swells a small protuberance of body; and there depends a stout queue behind, very like, if it were not on Washington, as it is of white marble, a long lank taper. Is it congruous, in a war-like costume, to combine the sword and cane? In a side niche of the area, is, moreover, a body-bust of the gallant French Marquis de la Fayette, with his mild physiognomy, and retreating forehead; indeed, his forehead is very peculiar, and looks as if a person had put one palm on the lower part of the back of his head, and the other on his brow, and pressed the whole upper story of his poll backward. Between the Bowling-Green and Richmond, the houses are very few, mean, and scattered; and I passed one or two hippodromes. I also met, what would be a novelty to you, a slave rolling tobacco to market, to Norfolk; the hogsheads are enormously large, from ten to twenty hundred weight, and so screw-pressed, and 59 triple-hooped, that they are revolved along the road by an axle attached to a couple of mules. Petersburg is thirty miles south of Richmond, with some roofs covered like those near the Parthenon; and is in nothing remarkable,

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save that, it was in, or rather near, this city, where once dwelt the fair and courageous Indian princess, Pocahontas; the remote grandmother of John Randolph, the Bowlings, and other prominent characters. I have not yet walked a mile under ground, among the fairy stalactites, in the Blue Ridge Cavern; nor stood, poised in air, astride of the yawning ravine, on the Natural Bridge; both the sublime handywork of the sublime Creator. But still-life, however grateful to the senses, is rather dull in description.

This state, called after the virgin queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, appears like a new-settled, not an old one. You pass no stone-walls; but hedge, or *in-and-out* zig-zag cedar rails, or wattled fences, if indeed any, on the main roads. At the south, a few houses, though not incorporated, are called a town. If you visit a plantation, you strike off the main road, up or down the banks of the long rivers, that run from the western mountains to the sea-coast; or you mount into the ridge-forests. You feel a solitary emotion, as you find a house and out-buildings, on a spot cleared in the middle of the woods, and surrounded by broad wheat and corn fields; not fifteen or twenty acres of arable land, but from one to five hundred; not tilled by five or six hired men, but 60 by from thirty to one or two hundred slaves; and, in harvest time, are in motion, from twenty to fifty reapers, men, women, and children. They do not reap with a sickle, as on the New England small farms, and thresh with a flail; but mow with a scythe fitted into a wooden-cradle with five long curved fingers to ingather the stalks; and tread out the grain in a *wheat-ring*, by ten or twenty horses and mules. Although there is not, in this vicinity, a stone big enough to kill a quail; yet, it is said that, near the mountains, the soil is so plenteous with them, that one can hear their ploughs for three miles. The Virginians usually plant *twice*, and *pull and reset* their corn, which is left five feet apart, and but *one* stalk, instead of three or four, in a hill, as with us; but that one grows up like a tree. One gentleman, on this river, who is wealthy beyond all reason, sold, one fall, I am told, fifteen thousand bushels of grain. Colonel Taylor, near Port Royal, a scientific planter, and political author, who cultivates about eight hundred of unctuous acres annually, in *four shifts*, is a firm advocate for the use of gypsum; not so much as a manure, as a medium to draw manure from the atmosphere; so that one,

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he says, may include, fix, and divide, and bestow to his children, atmosphere to any enclosed extent. As the Virginians in common are called buckskins, so those, who live in poorer classes on the second-ridges from the river, are called foresters. Over these ridges are commonly 61 soaring large turkey-buzzards, which are never shot, as they gorge upon the carrion. Every thing here has a certain loose, uncompacted, unappropriated appearance. The ancient Episcopal churches, which were once so predominant, are mostly in a state of dilapidation. The rank reeds rustle round their doors; the fox looks out at their windows. But, as a new bishop has been lately consecrated for Virginia, it is hoped that the churches will soon be re-edified. Almost every gentleman's seat, even if not presidential, has some romantic appellation, as—Farmer's Hall, Hunter's Hill, Mount-Pleasant; but you need not suppose all these *swells* to be mountains. In walking round a plantation, you deviate into a hundred narrow Indian-like foot, or bridle-paths; and, in going from one plantation to another, you ride through an infinitude of swing-gates. Now, for me, rather less land, and better cultivated. *Hoc erat in votis, modus*. It is delightful, to stroll through the forests, and listen to the susurrations of the umbrageous branches, and to pause and admire at trees, infrequent, if found, at the colder East:—the dark glossy evergreen holly, with its scarlet berry; the broad-leafed, long-podded catalpa; the persimmon, with its tap-root, on which account it is often left for shade in the wheat-fields; the honey-locust; the chinquapin-bushes, which in the fall bear a nut little inferior to the filbert, and which fattens the gluttonous herds of swine, which run free; the gum-tree; the Dutch-elm, with its beautiful thick foliage, and blotchy corky excrescences of bark; the willow-oak; the superb fringe or snowdrop tree; and many others, of which I do not know the names. In autumn, the tall climbing wild vines, with their yellowy leaves, intermingled with the green of the forest oaks, look a pleasing melancholy. In the sultry months, the under-brushwood is powdered with *chiegoes*, minute insects, too minute to be inspected, but which get into the skin, and sting like nettles; and the tops of the trees are vociferous with sawyers, other larger insects of the locust tribe, called also *katy dids*; because one seems to say “katy did,” and the other to reply “katy didn't.” The plantation houses, in general, are of frame, and unexpensive; having the chimneystacks outside, and therefore

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no closets inside; and the roof-shingles *shelled* on the edges. The kitchen is usually detached a few rods from the house. Mine Honourable Landlord's mansion, however, is of brick, and one hundred feet in front. In his garden, and orchard, he has more fruits, than most gentlemen in Virginia:—the fig bush, the hard and soft shelled almond; among the varieties of cherries, the weeping-cherry, which bears blossoms when a part of the fruit is ripe, and the fruit, which grows at the *end* of the twig, having *fin*s on each side; peaches, white-blossomed, and double-rose-blossomed, from the cherry-peach, which ripens in June, to the late peach of October; some of these rareripes so rich and luscious, as to melt two inches before they reach your lips. He has an apricot, and a nectarine 63 from Pope's garden at Twickenham. Peach orchards, of from fifteen hundred to some thousands, are common here; for distillation into brandy. Pears, but not apples, are scarce. Most planters have a small patch of tobacco, and of cotton, for domestic use; the former plant being extensively cultivated in the southern borders of this state. The white vegetable wool of the cotton-plant is preferred to the nankin-coloured boll. The young Virginian ladies take pleasure in nurturing their hortulane shrubbery, and fostering their parlour pot-plants. Here are breathing beds of mignonette, “the Frenchman's darling,” and there the geranium “boasts her crimson honours;” and here vie, in their ranges, the orange-tree, the union or red and white York and Lancaster rose, the moss rose, the yellow rose, the undying globe amaranth, the Otaheite plant with its long-hanging filmy veiny tendrils, the coiling snake-plant, the sparkling ice or dewplant, the prickly pear or bear's paw, whose beauty consists in its ugliness, and the evervarying and superb hydrangea. Indeed, the smiling little damsels run about among their flowers, until they look as fresh and glowing, as their own rosebushes. Hitherto, the season has been tardy, and sleety; but now, nature begins to change; the cowslip, the jonquille, and the double-flowering almond, are putting forth:—*redeunt—arboribus comæ.*

As to the *Manners* of the Virginians, they are a sallow, mercurial, liberal race; having much of the *suaviter in modo* , as well as the *fortiter in re*; 64 abroad, extravagant in dress; at home, slouching in homespun; the children of rich planters not disdaining to wear check

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not quite tartan. They ride fine horses; a wealthy landlord keeping his saddle, his racing, his carriage, and his plough horses, distinct. They teach the riding horses to pace over their smooth sands, and dislike trotters; ride without cruppers, and, about home, with *one* spur; thinking, with Sir Hudibras, that if they get one side along, the other will not hang ashank. Instead of a chaise, they use a chair, which is very light, but unsocial, as they are usually single; and which, moreover, being without top, exposes them to the weather. I here reprobate, as in other states, that, instead of stamping their initials into the hoofs of their horses, and horns of their kine, or upon the inner side of the shoe; some very savagely brand broad letters into their flanks or shoulders, which disfigures them for years, and answers only for one owner. Wherever the Virginians go, a slave or two moves behind as their shadow, to hold the horses, pull off their boots and pantaloons at bed time, and, if cold, to blow up the fire in their bed-rooms with their mouths; bellows being unknown in a slave state. All are fox-hunters, and duck-shooters; some keeping parks of deer, and others a ducker for the season. As game is plenteous near their enclosures, on a cloudy drizzly day, or a clear frosty night, when the hounds can scent the trail along the dew, out start young lads and bring home the partridge, the groundhog, the rabbit, 65 and the opossum with her offspring not bigger than a bean clinging to her teats in her false pouch. Formerly, there was a small bounty given for each crow's-scalp, and they were taken in part for county taxes. Accustomed from boyhood to athletic sports, in an infinite series, the Virginians are muscular and elastic in limb; and leaving draughts, whist, backgammon, and chess, for the evening; they are out at sling-fist, and sling-foot; or outjumping, or outrunning each other. I saw a young man betted upon, for five hundred dollars, at a foot race. Indeed, every thing is decided by a wager. Dr. and Maj. wagered, whether a serpent ejected his poison from the sac through a groove in the inner side of the tooth, or through a hollow up the middle of the tooth? Maj. lost a year's medical attendance upon his family, and Dr. won his gray poney. What would a northern man think, to see a father, and a sensible, and a respected one too, go out with a company, and play at marbles? At some cross-roads, or smooth-shaven greens, you may see a wooden-wall, high and broad as the side of a church, erected for men to play ball against. Now I have no part nor lot in

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these matters. Most young Virginians are too convivial for me; and not a few, however splendid in talents and fortune, if not open “votaries of the reeling god,” are too careless to “moderate the ardours of Bacchus, by a communication with the Naiads;” and become too boastful devotees “of the Paphian Dame.” But, among the lower classes, worse than this is sometimes met, the pandemonium of a whiskey-shop; where houseless, penniless, famished idlers endeavour to “keep their spirits up, by pouring spirits down.” The Virginians are fierce marksmen, and duelling is not discountenanced. They sometimes meet, and shoot at a target for a fish-fry. Fish-fries are held about once in a fortnight, during the fish season; when twenty or thirty men collect, to regale on whiskey, and fresh fish, and soft crabs just out of their sloughs, cooked under a spreading tree, near a running stream, by the slaves. Here you may see a forester upsnatch a perch by the gills, and, at one quick drawing through his teeth, strip it clean from the spine; then up with another, and so on to the end. At these fries, the talk is of slaves, crops, shooting-matches, and quaffing revels; their ideas ever in a muddy channel. A more genteel festival is the barbecue, expensive and elegant; where a numerous party of ladies and gentlemen assemble by invitation, or ticket, and feast, and dance, in beautiful decorum, under an artificial arbour. This, as the Virginians, living so isolated, are fond of company, produces a course of visiting for weeks afterwards. A Virginian visit is not an afternoon merely; but they go to week it, and to month it, and to summer it. Nothing is contracted about the Virginians. Although all classes are proverbially hospitable, yet there is a wide disparity between the different *castes* in this state. The haughty and purse-proud landlords form an aristocracy over the dependent democracy of the poorer planters. Their gymnastic education insures all to be bold riders, and brave fighters; but leaves a more than moiety surprisingly wanting in literature. Latin is not uncommon, but rare is any Greek. At William and Mary College, where the course is but *three*, instead of *four* years as with us, there is now no funded professorship of languages. They boast of their Virginian Presidents, but by whom were they educated? They care but little for belles-lettres. I heard a rich planter, who wished to sell a plantation near the Blowing Cave, and was asked, among other kinds of wood, if there were any laurel trees upon it, answer:—“Yes, but he had

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ordered them all to be cut down; the name was so associated with poverty, that he could not bear to see one." Orator Ogilvie once swayed the sceptre over urchins near mine Honourable Host's. The Virginians are all politicians, and look to elections. Parties at the south split perpendicularly; as, at the north, horizontally; equal sides in one; in the other, all head and tail. A federalist in Virginia is a medium between a federalist and a democrat at the eastward. If one wishes to be elected to the state, or confederate representation, he offers himself; and, instead of doing this by proxy, as in New-England, away he posts about the counties to visit each person, and to solicit his vote. But the voters are very capricious; as was instanced this season. A citizen had offered, and striven, purse and tongue, for three years to get elected, and the people would not elect 68 him. This year, he declined, and really did not wish for the honour; and the voters tore off his coat in their zeal of putting him on the bench, and would elect him. Another party ran, and snatched up their candidate, and trotted away with him, and hoisted him up into the air on their platted arms, as the Gauls used to elevate their newly elected monarch on the *pavois*, or large shield, to shew him to the people, and poured a bowl of punch into him, and—"huzza for Tobit!"—As to religion, the Virginians are less zealous, than were our Plymouth sires, who, on the flat roof of the first meeting-house they built, planted a battery of cannon for defence; but, being brought up without many churches, too few regard the sabbath, except as a holiday; or wherein to begin or end a journey. In some places, toward Norfolk, shops are kept open, only the buyer may walk round to the side door, to evade the law. Yet are the Virginians fast sticklers for orthodoxy. For example, Richmond is faith without works; Boston works without faith. Richmond Antinomian in principle; Boston Arminian in practice. But do not conclude, that there are no christians in Virginia. There are many; many, who will cheerfully ride twenty miles to hear one sermon. And I know individuals, who have proffered to pay fifty, or a hundred dollars a year, to encourage the procuring of a christian minister. As they reside so far apart, each plantation has its God's acre, or *corner of graves*; and the funeral service is not infrequently performed 69 a month after the deceased is buried; as they must send, perhaps, a score or two of miles for a clergyman. It is very common for rich planters to remain bachelors. In families, the mistress usually

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carries about a ponderous bunch of keys; as articles are kept under lock from the slaves, and doled out each day for use. Where there are children, each single babe, if there be a dozen, has its particular nurse, or black *mamma*; to spy it, and to *tote* it up and down all day upon her shoulder, until it is three or four years old. The matrons, in the upper classes, are industrious, affable, and accomplished, in a high degree. The young ladies—"O call them fair, not pale!"—with their pensive, but imaginative countenances, frequently dip into the heart. What is amiable, I have seen a little miss sit down at the side-table, on an evening, to instruct an aged house-slave to spell in the Bible. When out on the green terraces, or in the parterres, and orchards, the young girls run wild as the boys; wearing, to preserve their delicacy, broad sun-bonnets, deep enough for small cradles; so that they appear all head and feet. They will run up a tree like a squirrel.

The chief sickness, in this *ancientest dominion*, is in the autumn; when you may chance to shake, on one day, so that you cannot hold into your chair; and, on the next, to burn so as to scorch your clothes. In this vicinity, they do not often suffer from hydrophobia; although surrounded by families of hounds, pointers, and spaniels. They have a method of preventing 10 70 a dog from running rabid, by cutting out the *worm* under his tongue. Besides, near Loretto, they have a reputed remedy against canine rabiosity; *two mad-dog stones*, of long-extolled efficacy. They are a little similar to the cobra, or snake-stone; came from the East Indies, and were left in gratitude by a foreigner, many years ago, with directions how to be used, but were long neglected. At length, it was resolved to make trial of one, and it succeeded; and has since succeeded in very many cases; the patients coming from a far land. The stones are about an inch and an half cube; resemble a piece of hone, or hard soap; and are powerful astringents and absorbents. When put into warm water from the wound, they discolour it with matter drawn from the blood. One is owned by a company, who bought it for four hundred dollars, and deposited it with a physician, at Tappahannock, for the use of the proprietors. The other is owned by a private man, Mr. Sale; who derives from it a revenue; the patient boarding with him, and paying twenty dollars for the stone. All the danger is, lest there should be some little scratch not

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perceived in time; or too many wounds for the stone to be applied to in season, before the whole system be tainted. Although somewhat *incredulus odi* myself, I have been thus particular, because, relying on respectable and repeated testimonies, I deem it of the price of human life, that such, if possible, be procured and experimented in hospitals in populous cities.

71

As to the *Diet* of the Virginians, I may tell you what I observe. Once for all, they are plentiful livers. The first thing in the morning, with many, is the silver goblet of mint-julap. At breakfast, besides their wheaten rolls, they usually have, in their seasons, apple-bread, or hominy, with a relish of honey or herring; and, for which they laugh at the Yankees, I have seen some fond of treacle upon ham or fish. They have none of the rye-and-indian loaves, the rural *ater panis*, of New England.—At dinner, which is at about three o'clock, whatever other varieties they may have, a tureen of soup, and a chine, jole, or ham of bacon, imbedded with greens about it, are standing dishes. A meat-house is one of the first houses built; hung on all sides with chines, middlings, joles, and hams; perhaps finer flavoured for having run wild, and fed chiefly upon mast. One of the common petty larcenies of the slaves is, breaking into the smoke-house. It is remarked that, north of the Potomac, one may find good beef, and bad bacon; and south of the Potomac, good bacon and bad beef. They do not here eat the terrapin, which is esteemed a luxury at the north; but they highly relish the sturgeon, which is seldom eaten at the east. They never fail of having hominy, which is broken corn and beans mixed; coarse or fine ground; fried, baked, or boiled; and the dish is so popular in Virginia, that they have a river named Chicka *hominy*; and also an insect called the hominy-beater. It is a good substitute for 72 potatoes, which do not here keep sound throughout the winter, although fine in the summer; especially, the big *anguilla*, which will sometimes, it is said, grow so large, that you may sit on one end, and roast and eat the other. They also here cherish the salsify, or oyster-plant, so called from its flavour when fried. The Virginians think, that the most lamentable thing in eating is, that it palls the appetite; thus they frequently consume all

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the pickles, green, white, or yellow-bleached, off the table before dinner comes on, to provoke a relish; as if any necessity to eat, if one is not hungry. A philosopher eats that he may live; an epicure lives that he may eat. *Ventre nihil novi frugalior*, says Juvenal. They seldom have any puddings, or pastries; but have, for variety, six or eight kinds of meats, flesh, fowl, and fish; frequently, in its season, the exquisite canvass-back duck; with rich catsups, and anchovies. I doubt whether so unvaried living on animal food does not tend to deaden the sensibilities, and to sharpen the ferocities. They have no cider, perry, or common beverage for table-drink; but, instead, for the ladies, water unqualified, weak toddy, or *sangre*; and for the gentlemen, either whiskey, or apple or peach brandy, of their own distilling. Instead of a glass before the plate of each person, as with us, the decanters rest upon the sideboard until you call upon the waiter. Most planters have an ice-house, and contrive to keep the ice cool all summer. As the kitchens are some rods removed from the dining-hall, 73 at dinner-hours you may count long trains of slaves pacing to and fro, with the different viands, for a long time; for, although they have so much help, they are ever in getting a thing done; and thus the dinner is comfortably cool before you sit down to it. And one need not to be over-fastidious, since, however neat the mistress, good luck is it if the kitchen is not lined with little half-naked smutchy implings, rolling and clawing about, and listening with impatient delight to the slow revolutions of the spits, and the soft warblings of the caldrons. It is difficult to get over first prejudices against black servants.—As the Virginians expend all their strength upon dinner, their supper is a mere ceremony. They have not, as we have, a table, and toast, and pies, and cake; but, at about dusk, is sent around to each one, as he sits in the hall, or under the piazza, a cup of coffee, or tea, or both. Then follows round a plate of biscuits on a tray, hot, and about as large as a small letter-wafer; and perhaps a Virginian may sip a whole cup, and nibble a half or even a whole biscuit; but as frequently neither. Some epicures in gastronomie, after this apology, have a flesh, or crawfish supper, at ten o'clock, to sleep upon, and to accommodate them with the fashionable dyspepsy. But, in general, their maxim appears to be that of Psalmanazar:—

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Ut sis nocte levis, Sit tibi cæna brevis.

“To sleep easy at night, “Let your supper be light.”

74

You will expect me to say something of the *Slaves*. The plantations are blotched over, every twenty or forty rods, with slave-cabins. These cabins, as they are called, are built of small straight timbers, crossed four-square, and interlocked at the corners, very like children's cob-houses; and daubed at the interstices with clay, having a chimney of rough stones at one end outside, and a hard dry ground floor. They are cheap and mean, but healthy and comfortable. The industrious slaves have little garden-plats, and keep poultry. The tasteful slave makes, perchance, a martin-house, by erecting a high pole having a number of hollow calabashes hung around the top of it. The field-slaves are allowed a cap, shirt, and drawers, and a blanket in winter. Their winter shoes are made so huge and stout, that a pigmy might attempt to cross a creek in one. The field-slaves are the plebeians; the house-slaves the patricians. It is amusing that the blacks monopolize the most classical and romantic names; Cæsar, Plato, Pompey, Cato; Flora, Florilla, Rose and Lily; our cook is Minerva, and our waiting-boy Mc. Ivor, out of Waverly. On a plantation, is usually one of each trade; a coachman, a gardener, and a vulcan; and if one breaks off a leg, they make a tailor, or a shoemaker, out of him. In keeping accounts, the vulcans, when they do job-work for neighbours, tally a shop-board of hieroglyphics; as the policy is, to keep the slaves ignorant of every thing, but their own work. The house-servants and nurses, although 75 they do not work so hard as a labouring-slave, and live better, yet are they more stinted in leisure. The house slaves frequently sleep down before the embers, in a row, on rough rugs. With the field-slaves, Sunday is usually a holiday; wherein they deck themselves out for frolic, or for their unintelligible methodist meetings; where those, who are tender in spirit, are said to be “seeking.” Where they have kind masters, the slaves look cheerful, and happy; and do not labour harder than a free white labourer. The little ones, which in summer wear nothing more than a remnant

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of a shirt, and not infrequently go literally nude, and look like little imps, will yet be seen singing, and kicking, and wallowing about in the yellow sand right merrily. The slaves, being educated in ignorance, are therefore very superstitious; having their poison-doctors, and their conjurers. Some become wizards, by chewing live coals, first gathering the saliva. There was here, a few years ago, a cripple, who, for a trifling boon, would gladly snap any of the bones of his fingers, or small joints, which, like Pope's sylphs, would in a short time become reunited. The female slaves are fond of knic-knacs; and make for themselves knitting-sheaths of the very glossy and beautifully green and golden gorgets of wild-drakes. Being born smokers, they make pouches of the inner leaf-skin of a swine, peeled thin, which is soft, transparent, and tough; and they contrive a comfortable pipe, with an inch of corn-cob hollowed out; and 76 fitted on to the end of a joint of reed. In summer, all turn out into the fields to labour; and it is a novel sight to a New Englander, to see a negro *woman* ride standing up behind a carriage as out-tender; or delving on the highways; but more so, to see a woman holding plough, and, at the same time, and alone, to be guiding the mules by a line; and, in the other parts of the wide-extended plantation, a dozen of little black children, about waist-high, tottering over the furrows, and dropping seedgrain. They begin to plant in April, and continue it through May. As here the grazing lands are scarce, and there has, for some years, been a distemper among the cattle, their oxen are not smaller than large bull-dogs; although, beyond the Blue-Ridge, the inhabitants rear noble bullocks. This is a reason, why they here chiefly use horses and donkies. There is one advantage in the mules; that when they go towards the sun, their long broad ears cast a cool shadow over the driver. The toughest, and longest-lived field horses are said to be the Chickasaws, or small calico-coloured ponies; often serving for thirty years. In slave states, there is little economy of labour; and, although overrun with help, it seems as if nothing could ever be done in season. Although extravagant, and even princely, in many expenditures, the planters seldom have a well, or pump, near the house; but the slaves must go twenty or thirty rods, twenty or thirty times every day, to a spring-house, and *tote* up a tub, or huge stone-jar, 77 upon their heads, on which they sustain all weights. Instead of having a cheap apple-mill for cider, they scoop out a long trough,

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and into this empty the apples; and then may you see long rows of slaves, of both sexes, arranged up and down the sides, with ponderous pounders, and their shining black arms liked up and down in order, as they quash the pomace; and, as they drink what juice they please, they get merry, and sing lustily to the strokes of their tall weighty wooden pestles. Sometimes, you will see three or four slaves on each side of a long horizontal tree-body, cutting in a row; one axe playing up, as the other axe is playing down, in alternation; so that, when the logs are of equal diameter, they all get done at one time. When a slave dies, the master gives the rest a day, of their own choosing, to celebrate the funeral. This, perhaps a month after the corpse is interred, is a jovial day with them; they sing and dance and drink the dead to his new home, which some believe to be in old Guinea. Indeed, a wedding, and a funeral, are equally agreeable to those not personally interested in them, as then comes a holiday. It appears to be an instinct of these creatures to dance, to equivocate, and to pilfer; but, for the two latter propensities, ignorance and necessity plead loudly. The slaves have black tempers when affronted, and no white man is near by; they will jabber, and rave, and fight, like madmen. Sometimes, when I look and contemplate on one of these wretched shapeless beings, my pride 11 78 can hardly be willing to allow him to be a brother. He looks as if sun-scorched to a cinder; his shinbones bandy as ram's horns, his legs stuck into the feet like the helve into the middle of a pick-axe, or claw-hammer; and then his uncouth facial angle and pericranium, as anatomists say, more like an ape's, than a white man's. And then, to look at the fair sex, or wenches, as they are here civilly called, with their dark globose hanging fountains; and the shining white of their eye, which is always yellow. Yet, if they might only cast their skins, as a snake, and wash away the dark fragrant pigment underneath, and draw them on again, they would perhaps be as white as their masters. I wish they knew this. There was a piece of an Afric's skin tanned into kid, in Peale's Museum, Philadelphia; and, it is said, that they are used to make razor-strops, and saddle-cloths in the West-Indies. The treatment of the slaves is quite different under different masters, and overseers. It is certified, that a black overseer is always more domineering, and more of an eye-servant, in the bad sense of the word, than a white one. This is true also in their treatment of their own children, and dogs; which

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they frequently delight to abuse. What slaves I have seen, have fared coarsely, upon their hoe-cakes and ash-pone; but have been treated humanely, and not hard tasked. But in some counties, and especially in some states further south, they are trodden under foot; a man and woman manacled together, and thus sent in droves to market; 79 tied down upon a log, and their naked backs incarnadined, with a raw hide thong, into sanguine welts, into which nitre is rubbed to heal them; and divorced from their husbands and wives by auction. In Georgia, I have heard, they sometimes sell slaves by the pound; where one woman-slave was so gross, that they were obliged to weigh one side of her at a time. Some buyers inquire, whether a slave bolts, or chews? because those that bolt, i. e. throw down huge collops at a jerk without mastication, eat much more in a given time, than the others. A slave infant, in good health, and weaned, is worth from seventy to eighty dollars. I never yet have seen any of those facetious barbarisms exhibited, that I have smiled, and shuddered, at hearing related; such as grinding away their heels in winter, so as to prevent their wearing out their socks; slitting their ears as they mark sheep; sticking up black babies on a pole, tied fast, in a corn-field, for a screaming scarecrow; and what is the most ludicrous, but horrid, the cat-haul; that is, to fasten a slave down flatwise upon the ground, with stakes and cords, and then to take a huge fierce tom-cat by the tail backward, and haul him down along the screeching wretch's bare back, with his claws clinging into the quick all the way. No wonder, that the slaves often will elope, and hide for weeks in the swamps and bushes, and feed upon nuts and berries, till famished back to their cruel taskmasters again. It is common for the slaves to keep dogs. It 80 is said, they hate spaniels, which will fawn upon them when no white man is near; but when a white man comes up, will snap and show their white teeth at them. A slave's dog usually cowers down his ears, and slinks his tail, *caudam remulcens*, between his legs; as if ashamed of his master, seeing him so slavishly regarded. It often makes me feel disagreeably, when I pass a slave, to see him cringingly let off his hat, if he has any, and say—"sarvant, master;" and when he enters his master's door, to see him drop off his piece of a cap outside, and crouch along, as if he were in presence of his maker. We are only above them by comparison. I have felt my heart ache, when one of these poor creatures has

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come, and brought me a fine peach, or some plums, as all the little way he had to please; one, who is all his hard life slaving without a dime's reward, to make a present to one, who is faring plentifully every day upon his drudgery. The African slaves live the longest; sometimes to a very unprofitable age. There are many planters, who wish there never had been a slave brought into the country; and who would make great sacrifices to emancipate them, if it could be safely done. But this must be done gradually, and provision be made for them when free; or they would soon wish to be re-inthralled. The planters stand in dread of the free blacks in the state, who act as a kind of medium of intrigue between the slaves and the whites; and on this account they approve of a Colonization Society, in order to induce 81 the free negroes to quit the country. I heard a rich planter say, that if Capt. Paul Cuffee, the well known coloured shipmaster, would engage to export them to Sierra Leone, he would fit out his quota of three cargoes a year; but I suppose that he would accept a little *quid pro quo*, however, as his chief estate is in slaves. After all, although the planters talk of their slaves, as they do of their other stock; and the *hic niger est* of Horace seems to apologize for any species of contempt, and abuse; yet, I know not whether the slaves, in general, are not as happy as their masters. They have no thought of to-morrow for a whole life, and have provision for sickness, and for old age; whereas, a poor white, or black free labourer, if sick for a week, or when become infirm from age, perhaps breaks the hopes and dependance of a whole family, or casts them upon the county. In fine, although I certainly hold a high estimation of the Virginian character, in many respects; and of their thousand-and-one acre plantations; yet, I never should covet to live so secluded in the woods; and to have my eye offended, and my heart pained, by the degradation of so many of the human species.

The Virginian *phraseology* sounds a little peculiar to a northern ear at times. There is the executive *belittle* for demean, which, however, being an expressive word, the ex-president hath rather *belarged* his fame by adding it to our vocabulary. As the New Englanders guess, so do the Virginians reckon. What in New England is called the husk 82 of corn, in Virginia is called the *shuck*; and what we call cob, they call husk; as also the external

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envelope of the kernel, which cannot be reduced to meal, and which makes the bran; they also call, what we call the spindle, the tassel. The Virginians use clever for intelligent; whereas we use it for a kind of negative character of weak intellect, but good disposition; the correct meaning is rather with them, than with us, as shrewd, cunning, dexterous. What they call chamber, is the room where the madam sleeps, and is usually *below* stairs; and what we call afternoon, they call evening, making no quarter divisions of the day. *Tote*, a slave word, is much used; implying both sustentation and locomotion, as a slave a log, or a nurse a babe. They say—to grow a crop, for, to raise a crop; he was raised, for, he was educated; mad for angry, as do the Irish; gear for harness; lines for reins; and madam and mistress, instead of our abbreviations. Children learn from the slaves some odd phrases; as, every which way; will you *all* do this? for, will *one* of you do this? and the epithet *mighty* is quite popular with old and young, as, for instance, mighty weak. Nor is their pronunciation without some slight peculiarities, as, stars for stairs, arr for air, bar for bear; and Talliaferro, a surname, of which they had a governor, is pronounced Tollifer.—
Adieu!

LETTER FROM KENTUCKY. MDCCCXVIII.

DEAR BROTHER,

ON the map, this country appears like a new world, divided from the Atlantic states by the everlasting Alleghanies, which seem to uplift an impassable separation wall between the east, and the west; and a ship would be as rare a novelty to a western inlander, as would a wild Indian to an eastern mariner. Of this state, and some other of the western states, the growth is almost a miracle. About thirty years ago, there were only one hundred and seventy returned militia, on the east side of Kentucky river. I was informed, by lawyer W. of Lexington, that, thirty years ago also, three thousand acres of prime land, but ten miles from the town, were sold by a young woman, for as little money as would buy her a *new silk gown* to attend a ball in. Patrick Henry, of Virginia, moreover, sold, to his brother-in-law, about fifty years since, two surveys, one of more than three thousand acres, and

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the other of more than two thousand acres of land, in this Scott county, for *two brood mares*. Olden Daniel Boone, the first settler 84 of this state, who, like a true pioneer, kept migrating farther west as settlers surrounded him, being unable to live in sight of houses; has thus just died in the prints:—"We are informed, by a gentleman direct from Boone's settlement on the Missouri, that, early in August, Col. Boone rode to a deer-lick, and seated himself within a blind raised to conceal him from the game. That while sitting thus concealed, with his old trusty rifle in his hand, pointed towards the lick, the muzzle resting on a log, his face to the breech of the gun, his rifle cocked, his finger on the trigger, one eye shut, the other along the barrel through the sights; in this position, without struggle or motion, and of course without pain, he breathed his last." However, we are pleased, that the above account is a characteristic anticipation; and that the intrepid settler had not then taken his last transmigration.

The larger towns in this state, as Lexington and Frankfort, and especially Cincinnati, in a neighbouring state, across the Ohio river, about eighty miles hence, are very city-like, and thriving; and in them, as also among many of the planters, is much of wealth, and gentility. Lexington was named from this circumstance; the settlers, having marked out the town, were seated on the ground in deliberation about a name; when they had news brought them of Lexington battle, in Massachusetts; in honour of which event, they immediately decided to call their new town Lexington. One indication of a new country is, that the shops are variety-shops; each one 85 keeping piece-goods, groceries, cutlery, porcelain, and stationary, in different corners; there not yet being that partition in trade, which we meet in older states. In Lexington is a college of a classic-sounding name, Transylvania, i. e. Backwoods College; which, as it is now to be under the presidency of the Rev. Horace Holley of Boston, and to be reorganized upon the model of Cambridge University, will soon invigorate new energies; when, like ancient Harvard, Learning and Liberality may exclaim:—" *Noster jam regnat Apollo!*" In Frankfort, the state-house vaulting is covered with little ruddy chubby cherubs. This country conceals strata of limestone, which spread about six feet below the surface, and render the fountains somewhat cathartic for a time

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to most strangers. In this vicinage, the champaign lands are undulating, which causes a wholesome ventilation of atmosphere. The western roads, from their rich loamy soil, after a rain, become very miry; but soon dry under a hot sun, or brisk air. In Kentucky, their east wind is our west wind; the eastern breezes, instead of being damp and threatening storms, being the most fair and refreshing. In traversing this state, you meet many names of places, indicative of the early history of the country; Great-Crossing, Blue-Licking, Blue-Spring, Stamping-Ground, Bears'-Wallow; around some of which, for miles, the hills are covered with large loose stones, almost impassable for wheels. Around the Blue-Licks, there is scarcely soil enough to hide 12 86 a mole at ten rods distance. This was done by the bisons, which used to resort thither for salt; and to root, and trample the soil off the hills, until it became washed down by rains into the creeks. Aged hunters can yet remember when they saw two thousand buffaloes there at a time. Along these rough roads, the mail-carrier rides upon one horse, with long reins and whip, guiding and driving another horse before him, which bears the mail-bag. Kentucky is a wonderful tree-country. On the banks of the Ohio river, the sycamore is president of the forest; and it is beautiful to behold them, in their full umbrage, when the outer gray bark shells off, and the moon rays shoot through their white limbs, as their towering shadows lie undulating on the waters. The trunks of the sycamores are sometimes almost incredibly large; and, it is said, that an apothecary once kept his shop in a hollow one. The tops of the sycamores are frequently ornamented with the evergreen tufts of mistletoe, which, in winter, look like so many large eagles' nests on the leafless branches. Of this mistletoe, or viscum, are near twenty species; it resembles boxwood, and bears a whitish viscous berry; and the seed is supposed to be scattered by the wind, or carried in the beaks of birds, where it roots into the bark, and robs the tree on which it flourishes of its sap. This parasitical plant, especially that upon the oak and silver fir, was held sacred by the ancient Druids; and is consecrated by its similitude to the golden bough of 87 the pious hero of Virgil. It is said to possess medicinale qualities, and to be used for female cattle. Further down this river, on the border of Illinois, the ground is strown with a gently falling white down, *canentia lana*, from the capsules of the tall cottonwood trees, which covers the snail-peopled grass

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like flakes of summer snow. The tops of these cottonwoods are all alive with loquacious, and gay-plumaged paroquets. The sweet maple is here a tree of profit; and it is very picturesque to spy the evening fires in the forests, and the hale youths and maidens, like gypsies, around their sugar-camps, on the green sward. The black-barked maple is said to yield the sweetest sap-water. As you range the woods, the eye is delighted with the novelty of strange trees; among others, the hackberry, whose berries are not distasteful; the papau, bearing a ponderous insipid pear-shaped fruit; the hickory, yielding nuts as large as an egg; the buck-eye, or horse-chesnut of Europe, with its fruit like a buck's eye, which swells cattle into the blind staggers, and whose wood is proverbial for making a dull fire; the honey-locust, with its long sharp interlocking spines, exemplifying the curse of Eden; the pecan-nut tree; the evergreen temple-wreathing laurel; the hawthorn of classic blossom; the beautiful red-bud, like a peach in bloom; and, in some counties, the mock-coffee, the umbrella-leafed, and the cucumber-podded trees. Up the branches of many of these woodland trees, without touching the trunks, are to be seen gigantic grape-vines, thick as a child's body, coiling, like enormous dark serpents, fifty feet from the ground, and their deep umbrage overhanging in a canopy. In the forests, the lover of rural sounds is entertained by the frequent small sap-suckers; and the great and varied wood-peckers, tapping the tall hollow beech trees; and by the gentler plainings of the mated turtle-doves, cooing from the low branches. In the southern parts of this state, there were, formerly, extensive cane-brakes, which were evergreen, when other herbage was sere and brown; and in which cattle were wont to browse during the winter. On this account, being able to subsist throughout the whole year in woods, and swamps, and therefore less dependant upon man; some domestic animals here were less docile, than in the middle states. The land for a circuit of ten or twelve miles radius around Lexington is called the heart of Kentucky. The Kentuckians need not to bury defunct fishes in their cornhills, nor to adopt Dr. Darwin's project of enriching land with the cast-off unctuous perukes of England. They plough with horse-teams their mellow loam, which, if left fallow, runs rank with inextricable weeds. The strength of the soil sometimes leads the planters to dispense with our precautionary maxim, that—"One year's good weeding will prevent seeding;

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but one year's seeding makes seven years' weeding." As there are in the western states no marshes, it is needful that the herds and flocks be seasoned every few weeks. The 89 woods are suffered to run peopled with swine, and, what is noticable in so impure a creature, a swine's breath is as sweet as new hay, as you pass between the wind and their nobility. In the autumn, the owners, with their dogs, collect them by scores and hundreds, and slay them by shooting them in the head. Kentucky is a good poor man's country; for, in truth, the clusters are clusters of Eshcol, the land foams with creamy milk, and the hollow trees trickle with wild honey. Nor, in this climate, do the lean months eat up the fat months. The rank luxuriance of the undershrubbery here is manifested in the tall mulleins and elder-stalks, which shoot upward like saplings. There are now growing, around springs, low-bushed ground-cherries, of a light transparent yellow when ripe, of a sweet flavour, eaten by children. Here also is met that curious, but illomened flower, called "cuckhold's horns;" leaving a large blackish seed-vessel, not smaller than a common hammer-head, with two long and strong horny claws. If I believed in the sensitive doctrine of the perceptivity of plants, how would humanity shudder at the pangs of every blade of grass, wherever a steed grazes; nor would conscience scarce permit me to trample over these bosky acres.

The plantation-mansions are in general mean; so that many a rich planter, were it not for his far-spreading fields, would, by a northern man, be accounted poor. It was this incongruity, that caused a Monsieur, who was travelling in the back country, 90 to remark that, if a Frenchman have ten acres of land, he has every thing; if an American have ten hundred acres, he has nothing. The houses are usually of hewn-timber, with stone chimnies outjutting from the end walls, and the out-doors opening directly into the parlours, so that in winter they are quite comfortless. Some few of the plantation-seats, however, are of brick, and accommodated with ample out-buildings. The egg-houses, for the laying and incubation of fowls, are as capacious as cots. There is commonly in the front yard a horse-rack, with bridle pins over head for a dozen of steeds; and upon one of which, from my casement, I now see a peacock perched on his long black legs, and screeching

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for joy; and now gracefully veering his ever-changeful neck, and outspreading his golden eyes to the sun. As men of New England, or the Middle States, would appear to a polished and learned Englishman, or Frenchman; so do our Western brethren appear to a New England, or Middle States visitor. There is more seeming, than real difference; and this rather in exterior, than in interior advantages; in acquirements, than in sense. The Southern and Western people do not think that Dr. Morse has flattered them in character, and impute to him local prejudices; but, I trust that he has set down naught in malice; but, like Griffith, wished to be an honest chronicler. This is not yet a country of books. Most professional gentlemen here, for want of early opportunities, have little taste for literature; but the lawyers 91 are well grounded in land-claims, the most general and lucrative part of their practice. In lieu of three or five years, as they have or have not received degrees, of laborious systematic study, as in our state; county pettifoggers here sometimes come forth to plead, and to counsel, after perhaps six months of desultory reading. As to Latin, ten years ago, very few were the youths, who advanced farther than the *licet recedere*; and, as to Greek, rare was the native minister, attorney, or physician, that ever dreamed in any language but English. Such are now entitled buck-eyes; yet often well succeed, by an undiverted application of their mental faculties, and an unabashed assurance. Most young men here are accurate land surveyors. The Hon. Speaker C. and the Hon. Col. R. M. J. of this state had little above English educations; but it is not to their dispraise, but honour, that their native vigour of intellect has risen so high above this early defect. In the lower counties, you may meet with young men, urbane, fashionable, and enterprising, who cannot indite a familiar epistle passably; and others, who cannot read nor write; as one of wealthy exterior said to me, when I offered him a state-trial, that I was perusing: —“He was not *scribe* enough to *read*.” This is not mentioned from marvel, but from regret; since the deficiency originated in the paucity of means in the early modes of a new country, and is a constant disquietude to them. In the towns, and among rich planters, no people are more liberal in support of public, and 92 private tutors. Indeed, there are, in this state, many individuals of rare worth; gentlemen of as highly liberal sentiments, and of as attaching qualities, as heart can wish; and maidens, who run among the wild-

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flowers, or ring the piano, with smiles made of sweetness, and dark eyes of love. If the young men cannot easily translate the Iliad of War, they can readily construe the Oeilaïd of Love. The Kentuckians frequently marry very young; men at eighteen or twenty; girls at fourteen or sixteen; and, on the day after the wedding, at the bridegroom's father's hall, is usually a sumptuous festival, called an *inn-fare*. The men of this state have iron-bound constitutions; they are a people of enterprise, and of bravery; none were braver in the last war. Military titles are here inflicted upon one; few escaping the honour of either captain, major, colonel, or general. A gun is a child's play-thing. Let a little Western lad espy but the velvet ear of a gray-squirrel, which he has *tree'd*, on the top bough of a hackberry, and he *downs him*, as he calls it. I have lately seen a couple of beautifully delicate ground-squirrels, which were caught here, of an ermine whiteness, and pink eyes. Instead of a lap-dog favourite, you may here meet, perchance, with a pet-bear; and there are, at this time, at my next door neighbour's, a pair of nearly grown cubs, which play like conies; come and rear on their shaggy hind legs, and peep in at your windows; and anon caper, and climb, and push each other off the limbs of oaks; 93 the victor backing his clumsy rugged self down the trunk, hugging like a boy, in pastime. These early habits of the youths lead to a venturousness of disposition, which is not found in more refined, and effeminate states, where sedentary philosophy and literature have prevailed. Among the lower classes of society, the Canaan richness of the land is productive, among better fruits, of much indolence. They attend rather to the *esse*, than to the *benè* or *melius esse*. Too many, instead of resting on one day in seven, work only on one day in six; and therefore ever remain poor. In some of the inferior hovels, are seen little once-white boys sitting at table in their long shirts; and running half the summer with nothing else on; which freedom renders them hardy. Some mothers here *hip* their infants; as do the Sumatrans. Men of this rank, if they cannot thrive in one occupation, often commute it for another; never distrusting their capabilities. Thus a creature of bombast, as prince Hal says, has recently bought one of the Eastern wooden and brazen grammar-machines; and, from overseeing a plantation, has descended into the Green-river country, to grind grammar. In their chaffering, as they never have essayed latinity, and the words are

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german in sound, some of them do not always accurately distinguish between the *meum* and *tuum*. Among this class, the riotous roisters, or, as they are here called, *rowdies*, will fight, not only from patriotism, but from mere love of fighting; it being one of their habitual amusements. 13 94 These merry Shamgars are said to have fifteen ribs upon each side. A pistol, and a dirk, are as familiar, as a watch, and a penknife. When maddened, like the savage, an affront is followed by a battery upon the bones; for as they cannot comprehend reason, their arguments are generally palpable. I have heard of more pugnacious affrays during the past year, than in all my life before. The impious, and senseless duel-murder is frequent in this state. About two months since, two blackamoors fought a duel, near Frankfort. Instead of two seconds, they had one *third*; and, as white gentlemen usually cross over the Ohio, so did they cross over the Kentucky river near by; and, it is reported, that they stood their ground quite Othello-like, and each eyed the other with unblanched cheek. One of them was honoured with a bullet in his teeth. As duellists fight for honour, ought they not previously to practise falling, so as to fall gracefully? For my part, I ever had a constitutional antipathy to being shot. Fines will never stop duelling; it must be made inglorious, as well as criminal; incarcerate duellists in the penitentiary; that will stop duelling. Whiskey slays many a strong man here; and too many of the groceries are grogeries. I lately saw an advertisement, in a neighbouring state, for a pedagogue; and, in a *nota bene*: —“One that is not addicted to ardent spirits would be preferred.” At elections, where they vote *viva voce*, not by ballot, you may see a barrel afloat, offered by the successful 95 candidates, and the vulgar portion of the voters crowding, and dipping up the spirit, if not in their hats and shoes, in their palms. At such times, they feel their freedom, and vociferate their propensities. At the polls, not an age since, as the candidates sat in the clerk's office, to thank each voter for his suffrage, according to custom one, voter cried out, as he obliquely eyed them:—“I vote for that little black man, over that huge yellow man.” The former was a smart small swarthy lawyer; the latter a tawny tall Eagle-Creek wagoner. Most wealthy planters, in this state, keep their coach and pair; their chaises are here called gigs. But, on account of the roughness of the roads in a lately settled country, the men, in general, travel on horseback, with their

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valise behind them, and no cruppers. To prevent the mire from dishonouring their legs, the horsemen wear short galligaskins, or long cherevalls; though they mar these words into uncouth sounds. The youths, from early practice, ride gracefully; not like clodhoppers, the rider in a gallop, the horse in a long trot. Like their progenitors, the Virginians, they are partial to pacers. Some of these are so natural pacers, that, it is said, they go pacing as they graze along the meadows. The little maidens here, of eight or ten years old, will pace, or canter off, on their side-saddles, like young huntress Dianas. You meet, in this country, with more renowned names, than a late wilderness might promise. Scarce a lad, or damsel, but is called after some redoubtable 96 scholar, philosopher, statesman, or warrior; some nymph of mythology, or maid of romance; Cyrus, Junius, Newton, Manlius Valerius, Euclid, Darwin, Napoleon; characters, which frequently were all "unknown to mam', or daddy O." Not far hence, is a young lady, just entering her teens, named *Edward Ann*. The Kentuckians in general have numerous families, the fruitfulness of the climate extending even to the wives; and, it is noticed, that brides, who were as Rachels in the Atlantic states, having migrated to the west, become as Leahs; and that they esteem it no unusual compliment to receive even the double blessing of Rebeccahs. From the poorer states, when there is a famine in the land, they are fain to send to this Egypt to buy corn. In this state, all are plentiful, and bountiful livers. Sugar is eaten by spoonfuls, the maple-sugar not cloying like the cane-sugar. Melons here oftentimes expand their cheeks to unedible compass. At table, is a huge pitcher of mantling milk, towering in the middle of a circle of glasses. Here is sometimes used frumenty, a pottage of wheat and milk seethed. Bonny-clabber, in its season, is with *some* a favourite cooling dish. If their coarse ash-pones irritate the palate as they descend, their soft waffles, with their hollow checks floating in honey, soothe all again. In fine, the rich Kentuckians live like lords.

Camp-meetings are common in Kentucky, and are doleful curiosities. The ministers are a species of without-method Methodists; happy compounds of 97 illiterateness and fanaticism. If the weather be rainy, and it be convenient, they enter a meeting-house; many of which are built with a door back of the pulpit, so that the preacher may turn,

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and exhort those, who choose to lie grouped out on the grass; and which houses have long parallel seats, instead of pews, which are deemed too aristocratical. But, in fine weather, the preachers, and their followers, encamp in the woods, or fields, for some days, or even weeks; migrating from one county to another. Many, who thus carry on the preaching business, are more pious, than wise, we doubt. Others, it is to be feared, are as degenerate, as were the ancient clergy of England; when the younger sons were not only born, but begotten, for the church. If they have any human acquirements, it is with their devotees a matter of regret, because their dehortations appear the less supernatural. They preach in parti-coloured suits, gray or drab, with yellow or white buttons; but a button doth not test the heart, would ask honest corporal Trim, doubtingly? With most of these apostles, the text is but a pitching of the tones to the nasal key; for, although they name a text when they commence, that is commonly the last you hear of it. Their long harangues are ludicrously solemn, and sometimes accidentally sensible. They draw after them very large motley concourses, by their obstreperousness, and their notable faculty of making you laugh, when they intend you shall cry. It is not uncharitable to surmise, that their ambitious 98 hope is, to touch a live coal to the passions, and the organs of sense. When the whole vast circumvened crowd lift up their voices, they outsing all music. Like preacher, like hearer. They not seldom, between sabbath services, do secular business; denounce intemperance, yet aid and abet in the means of it, by distilling into whiskey the staff of life; and restrain not their children from hunting, angling, and batting the ball, upon the sabbath. Although they do not profess to new-knead their old leaven, they appear to imagine an immersion into a creek an ablution of sin. Thus are the duties of the church too often lamentably divided between the induction, and ejection, of members. At a baptism, the shores are lined with the picturesque multitudes, and you would smile in sadness, at the blushing unhallowed mode of submerging the women. For, as they do not close gather the borders of their white flannel robes, nor sink them by leaden knobs, when a female wades into the stream, her robe opens, and spreads, like an umbrella. The gospel is indeed, in a too literal sense revealed unto babes and sucklings, if such have it; and truly, without a sacred irony, are they converted by the

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foolishness of preaching. However, although such zeal is not according to knowledge, there may be many sincere christians among the professors; nor need it to be supposed, that camp-meetings are more unapostolical in this, than in other states. I once saw, in the Academy of Arts, in Philadelphia, a ludicrous painting of a 99 camp-meeting, sketched with Hogarthian humour; but which was soon removed, as it gave offence to some, if we may accommodate an idea from Burns, to see themselves as others see them.

It is but about thirty years since the Kentuckians lived in fortified "stations," to avoid the lurking tomahawk of the Indian. In the last winter, mine Host, a brave Colonel, received an Indian visit from some of his red friends in the late war. There were two sanhops, two squaws, a young sanhop, and a pappoose. One squaw was widow of Logan, a friendly Shawanese chief, slain in the war; but since married to an Indian, called Capt. Perry. Speaking of the Indians not having so many children as the whites:—"Me too much warrior;" replied Capt. Perry. These copper-cheeked visitors rode upon small chubby hardy Indian ponies. There is an Indian-school about four miles from Great-Crossing. Although I deem it a prior duty to expend mission-money upon our own heathen Indians, to exporting it to the Eastern Indies; yet, how happens it, that philanthropists, so zealous to civilize the Indians, do not strive to ameliorate the condition of their own slaves at home? But better one good effected, than neither attempted; although, I fear that they will find it difficult to make chickens of partridges. We complain of the Indians, but have not they stronger reason to complain of us? Our fathers came over, and, by forced purchases, drove them from their hunting-grounds, that 100 God had given their progenitors; and we are yearly driving them farther, and farther westward, until, at last, they must cross the Stony-Mountains, and bury their wrongs in the Pacific Ocean. My heart has always leaned towards these mighty hunters before the Lord; these most-singular, red-skinned, straight-limbed, long-haired, half-clad people, whose origin is unknown. There is somewhat of fine romance in the lights of their council fires, and their burial mounds, in the wilderness; their rovings forth with their bows and arrows across this immense continent for game; and an elevation, and eloquence, in their high-toned spirit and speeches, which is rarely reached

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by our professed orators. I should lament to have them gone from the face of the earth. It would be the public loss of a species in the wonderful varieties of man.

Although this is another of those states, which give the lie practical to the Preamble of our national Declaration of Rights, that "all men are created equal;" that they are endowed by the Creator with liberty, as one of their inalienable rights; yet, slaves live with tenses skins in Kentucky, than in Virginia. There is no marking of meat here, as they say. In "*shucking*" seasons, the slaves split the welkin with their boisterous glee. When a slave visits from home, he must carry "a pass" from his owner; or he is liable to be detained as a runaway. As copper coin is too weighty to be often transported hither, and much cut-silver is passed, a slave would spurn 101 at less than a dime. In slave states, the white conversation is apt to be darkened in its complexion; indeed, three quarters of sociable discourse is often engrossed by the topic of slaves. If a young widow be inquired of, it is asked, is she a good manager? and instead of the phrase, how rich? how many slaves has she? Although, south and west, men boast of being most democratic, yet what is more contradictory to their principles, than their tyranny over three fifths of their population? I saw one slave corded up to a tree, with his hands above his head, for wagging an evil tongue at a white man, and stripped, and knouted with a raw-hide thong, until his back was carbonadoed into ridges, and crimson. If two slaves are found quarrelling, it is customary to tie their left wrists together, and order them to lash each other, until one asks of the other pardon. A mistress is obliged often to wield the cowskin over her refractory young female house servants; and the practice is, when they scream aloud, to chastise them until they smother their sobs. Yet, in truth, as might be expected, almost every slave is an eye-servant, more easily governed by fear, than by affection; and, as the mansion, and yard, and plantation, are overrun with them, there could be, perhaps, no safety without severity. A dishonourable trait of character, not, however, peculiar to the Kentuckians, is, that here are some young men, who make fortunes by slave-trafficking. They purchase all they can obtain, thrust them into prison for safe-keeping, 14 102 drive them handcuffed through the country, like cattle, and boat them down the river to Natchez, New-Orleans, and other

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cotton and sugar climates. Such is the effect of custom, that church communicants are cordial with them; and, in other respects, these slave-jockies appear like humane, and amiable men. Far more honourable, and satisfactory, to a virtuous reflecting mind, were poverty, and its attendant reproach; than riches acquired by buying and selling human flesh.

In order to give you an idea of the fearful simplicity of a public execution in this state, I will detail, what I now lament to have ever witnessed. In August I rode down to Frankfort, to see Wharton Ransdale expiate with his own life, the taking of the life of another. He had ever been a notorious bully; being educated in ignorance, and defiance of the laws of God, and of man. I shuddered, and yet wished for once, to behold the end of the law. At about eleven, the light-horse, artillery, and infantry drew up before the brick prison; and, at about twelve, as if to mark his end with more ignominy, there moved up to the steps a low two-wheeled cart, with a little mean scraggy yellowish-white deathlike horse, which just before we had seen pass along with a load of loam; and in the cart were a shroud, and a coffin. After a little waiting, Ransdale walked down the steps, pale as a spectre, dressed in a clean white shirt, waistcoat, and pantaloons, with his collar open, so as to exhibit the fatal noose upon his neck. 103 He had on no coat, it being an intensely hot day; so hot as to parch my hands, as I sat upon my horse in the sun. He seated himself of his own accord on his coffin, alone in the cart. The guard having formed a hollow square around the vehicle, it was led along for half a mile, up a hill on the public road, overlooking the town. When the cart, surrounded by pale thousands, arrived up under the low cedar one-legged gallows-tree, it halted. The neighbouring hills were crowned with witnesses—all in breathless silence. Three ministers of religion attended, two of whom faithfully harangued the people, and prayed over the dying malefactor; who, for the last few days, had become penitent, and willing to die. They warned the youths, as his request, to shun bad company, and whiskey, which had brought him to that disgraceful end; bad company, and whiskey, which destroyed more souls than war, famine, and pestilence; yes, said he, if bad company has slain its thousands, whiskey has slain its ten thousands. The prisoner

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then stood erect on his coffin, his arms being pinioned above the elbows and addressed the witnesses of his shame; warning them by his example, forgiving his enemies, and craving their forgiveness; and shaking his former comrades by the hand, as they reached around the cart. He requested to be buried in a certain spot, and that the minister, who first spake, should preach a funeral sermon at his mother's, in three weeks from his death. He then took a long deep draught of cold water from a pail, which was handed up to him. Then he sat 104 down on his coffin, and sang a hymn aloud, and alone; and a melancholy sound it was, to hear a fellow mortal in full health, and strength, sing his own funeral dirge. After this, having signified that he was ready, although his glass had yet a few more sands, the deathsman mounted the cart, and, uncoiling the cord from his body, slipped the noose up tight about his neck—O what must have been the horror of his sensations!—and, having bandaged his eyes, and upper half of his face, with a white 'kerchief, he tossed the loose end of the cord over the gallows-arm above, and fastened it. Ransdale stood a moment with his hands upraised as high as he was able in prayer; and then, when he had ceased, and heard the tall grim black leader smite the horse, with a moral courage worthy of a better destiny, he ran and jumped forcibly into the air. For a little time, he swung to and fro without the slightest struggle; then drawing up and clinching his hands slowly, and stiffly spreading and raising his feet a little once, he gave up the ghost, seemingly without much pain; and every heart responded to his prayer:—May God have mercy on thy soul. He was spared three last indignities; that of being hung in a two-coloured cap; of being cut down at a jerk with a sword; and of being buried under the gibbet, and his body given to the surgeons for dissection. After about, twenty minutes, when his lips and chin were deeply empurpled, and no muscular motion remained, he was taken down, shrouded, and confined, and borne in a wagon 105 to his agonized mother's; whence he was, next morning, carried to the spot, which he had chosen, and there buried. His brothers kept watch by night, over his sod-wrapt grave, for a week, to protect his remains from the doctors. The low cedar one-legged gallows-tree, I regret, is to be left, on the death-spot, for some time; a standing satire on human nature. Thus awfully ended this human being his mortal life, “with edge of penny-cord, and vile reproach;” and I feel a recoiling of heart,

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that I went with the multitude to behold it, and have been able thus minutely to describe it. This wretched man charged all his crimes upon a bad education; and, as Dr. Paley, in his Moral Philosophy, says, a man is to be blamed for having contracted bad habits, rather than for the effects of them after they are contracted. If penitentiary incarceration for life were chosen, and would not weaken the salutary energy and majesty of the laws; my heart's desire would be, that another human being might never be hung—leave them to the Judge of judges.

Although we cross the mountain-barrier between distant states, yet do we not escape from needed sympathy at human suffering. Not long since, there died, in this county, aged about twenty years, a man so weak from his youth upward, that, in his latter years, his father had contrived for him an iron machine, to upstay his body. A long rod ran up his back, banded with side-rods, jointed at the hips, and knees; with a supporter of wire and leather, elastic, 106 coming over from the top of this rod to the front of him, to uphold his chin. Thus braced, he used to sit, and read, at a table fitted with wheels and pullies, wherewith he could trundle himself about the room. How ought such a living lesson to teach us the invaluable blessing of a sound mind in a sound body.

The Phraseology in this state is sometimes novel. When you arrive at a house, the first inquiry is, where is your plunder? as if you were a bandit; and out is sent a slave to bring in your plunder; i. e. your trunk, or valise. Instead of saying of a promised mother, with Shakspearean delicacy, that she is “nigh fainting under the pleasing punishment, that women bear;” the hint is quite Shaker-like, that she is “about to tumble in pieces.” I have often heard the word *human* used here as a noun. The word *great* is sometimes used to signify *little*; as, that lady has a great foot, meaning, without irony a little foot. Many from habit, like the Virginians, tuck a t at the end of such words as onct, twict, skiff. They here call a river a run; a lot, a section of land; they say to stall, i. e. overload, a horse; and cupping for milking. In the fields, a kind of foxtail grass here becomes timothy; and our black-and-yellow caterpillar is named fever-and-ague. In the garden, they cultivate their collards, i. e. probably coleworts, and kashaws; and, at the oven, children wait for

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their crablanterns, and cobble. Some words are used, even by genteel people, from their 107 imperfect educations, in a new sense; and others, by the lower classes in society, pronounced very uncouthly, as:—to eat a liquid, to quile for to quiet, to suspicion one, to legerize an account, to prize for to raise by lever, to fayz for to fix, offer for the candidacy, best book I ever read after, well liked of, steed too gayly, heap of times, did done do it, done done did it, painter for panther, varmont for vermin, contráry, hymn, br###hren, an oxen, I seen, I brung, exhibition, schrowd, yearth, yearn for earn, bresh, hommer, sketes, drap, fotch, mought, and so forth; which corruptions I have noted for Mr. Pickering's very useful "Vocabulary."— *Farewell!*

LETTER FROM NEW ORLEANS. MDCCCXIX.

DEAR BROTHER,

AFTER a steam-boat passage of fifteen hundred miles down the Ohio, and Mississippi, frequently interrupted, and delayed, by the low state of the two rivers at this season of the year, and a short call at Natchez, I arrived at this city, on Independent Day, it being also Sunday. Having now been here a few weeks, I can offer you a slight sketch of atmospherical and vegetable nature, and of men and manners, in this torrid and insalubrious region. As it is less common for an Eastern visitor to descend to New-Orleans by the western rivers, than to ascend to it from the Gulf; perhaps I had better commence my descriptions at Natchez, three hundred miles above this city, and thus have the gratification of picturing to you the extensive and luxuriant ranges of plantations, which enrich and beautify the opposite banks of the Mississippi; and which are seen to fine advantage, as you majestically glide down between them towards the city of New-Orleans.

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Natchez is a city set on a hill, and yet hid. It stands two hundred feet above the river, on a *bluff* of almost perpendicular ascent, back of a low landing place, which intervenes;

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thus it cannot be viewed from the river. The few mansions are open with windows, and doors, for ventilation. Near Natchez, are some Indian tumuli, not unlike many in the west. The *levee*, or *embankment*, commences, on one side, at Natchez. What flat lands are in New-England called *intervalles*, the Western planters call *bottoms*, or *prairies*; and the Southern, *natural meadows*, or *savannahs*. The intervalles between pine tracts and the savannahs, are called *hammocks*; and, except that they have wood, are similar to the latter. The plantations here are generally sold in form of a parallelogram; forty *arpents* (French acres) deep from front to rear. The river alluvion is the best arable soil. The western-side plantations are the most valuable; being less frost-bitten by north-winds; as the vapours from the river are warmer than the air. The plantation mansions are commonly of one story, light and airy, with surrounding piazzas, and delightfully fragrant orangeries. You can imagine nothing more grateful, than to walk among these orange groves. Not far from the mansions, may be seen immense sugar-houses; and long rows, or squares, like a fort, of slave-quarters; with a tall belfry in the midst, to summon the slaves from their repose to their tasks at day-break. It appears rather a paradox, that a 111 planter, although he may buy slaves, yet has an abhorrence of a slave-dealer. I learnt many particulars about the living, and punishment, of slaves. The planters, although kind and hospitable to visitors, are, perhaps more from custom and policy, than inhumanity, cruel task-masters to their slaves; or boys and wenches, as they call them, however old. A sugar planter is discouraged, if he cannot pay for his plantation in five or six years; and thinks, if he gets ten years labour from a slave, he does well, although the slave then die. The slaves have three distinct tasks on every day; the before-sun task, the day-task, and the evening-task. A planter is not rich, unless he owns a hundred slaves; and, in the cotton season, may be seen, sometimes, four or five hundred at once in a field, in their loose gabardines, picking the bolls. Little children can do this work; and small boys go entirely nude, in some places. Under some masters, the slaves, unless they raise poultry themselves, which they are permitted to do, receive flesh only three times a year, and this on holidays. Their usual fare is, a peck of corn in the ear a week, which they must break in their hand-mills; and the *grit*, or refuse, of rice, like the western *screenings* of wheat; and,

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for relish, a salt herring. I regret to say, that the slaves will frequently exchange even this their scanty unsavoury meal for whiskey, which is sometimes distilled from the Carolina potatoe; any expedient to aid them to forget themselves. When they proceed in droves 112 to their several tasks, a driver follows, with a huge long heavy stimulator. If a slave be slack in his labour, his feet are locked in the stocks, and his back answers it. A girl, for running out at nights, may wear, for a week, under her chin, an iron ruff, with a sharp-peaked border. My desire is not, that the Creator would have mercy on the masters, as they have mercy on their suffering slaves. Even female nature here sometimes loses its commiseration for the slave, as may be exemplified by the following unfeeling story. A rich planter's lady had long been in a consumption, and was now in the last stages of life; when, one day, one of her old slaves came to the gate, nearly blind, and bending down under the burthen of almost one hundred years of faithful service for herself, and her father, and her grandfather, before her. His remnants of clothing were so patched, that you could hardly tell what patch was ever of any colour, or substance. On his woolly head, all gray with age, was a cap of straw of his own twisting. He stood, weeping like a child, and said, that he had crept up once more from the cotton field, and had been three days coming, to see his sick mistress before she died. His mistress sent for him to come in, and spake kindly unto him; and when he was going to try to walk back again, he turned, and begged of his sick mistress to give him a little salt to put into his *grit*, or small hominy of rice. "Begone;" cried the almost dying mistress, flying into a deep rage; "Begone; out this instant, 113 you old white-woolled skeleton; out, out, I say; or I'll send you to the driver." No words can add to this. It is painful to reflect, that, from the sweat of the brows of these trampled wretches, do we receive many of the comforts, and luxuries, of life. This tropical climate is favourable to vegetable nature. As the productions of these immense, and lucrative fields, of cotton, rice, and sugar-cane, up and down the borders of lower Mississippi, do not grow in our latitude, perhaps you would like, in imagination, to ride out with me, and see how they appear, and are cultured.—The two principal kinds of *Cotton* are the yearly, and the West Indian perennial. The former, of which are several varieties, is low, the bolls large, the phlox long, strong, and very white; the latter is a tall, somewhat

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shrubby plant, the bolls not so large, the phlox delicately fine and silky. There is also a species from one of the Marquesas. The green-seed cotton, of which are two species, is said to be suited to the upper-country; and the black-seed to the sea-islands. The Louisiana cotton is planted in drills. At the age of four months, it is topped, to induce the sprouts to throw out lateral branches. The stalks of cotton, I think, much resemble the stout low-bush bean-vine; and the blossom the large white hollyhock. The capsule continues of the size of a pigeon's egg, until the ripening of the seeds, when its sutures open into three partitions, and expose a snow-white, or, sometimes, a nankin-coloured, fibrous, extensible, glossy 114 down. One pound of raw-cotton has been spun into a thread, which would have extended one hundred and sixty-nine miles. Kine and swine will eat the seeds, which yield a useful oil.—The *Rice* stalk loves a swampy ground. The planters suffer the waters to overflow it for six or ten days after hoeing; and when the ear is formed, they let the waters continue on it till ripe. It is then threshed, double-winnowed, and ground, or beaten in a hand-mortar. The whole rice is barrelled, the small serves for food, the flour for provender, the chaff for compost, and the straw for fodder. In growing, I think it looks like a field of oats; and the blade is said to be green and fresh, while the ear is ripe.—The *Sugar-Cane*, which thrives lower down the river, is a native of the East, and probably has been cultivated in India, and Arabia, from time immemorial. The cane is now about two feet high. It has a beautiful fresh appearance, somewhat like flags, when young; but when grown, is a tall jointed reed, terminating at top in a tuft of deep grass-green blades, with edges finely and sharply serrated. Its height is from three to seven feet, and the intermediate distance between the joints from one to three inches. Cane is cultivated by laying the stalk in furrows, and from the joints rise new stems, or suckers, which answer for two or three years. The cane is strong, but brittle; containing a soft substance, which affords a copious supply of uncloying saccharine juice, which is very nutritive. The season of 115 granulating the juice is a time of gladness, and festivity, to man and beast. From the molasses is distilled rum, and from the scummings, says Darby, a meaner spirit. The top of the canes, and the leaves of the joints, are salutary for cattle; and the macerated rind serves for fuel to seeth the fluid; so that no part is useless.—The *Tobacco-plant*, so prevailing here,

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you have seen in its stunted northern growth; it resembles the mullein in appearance, and is much less beautiful than the former productions.—The *Indigo* shrub is, of late years, neglected. Of this plant are three kinds; it will thrive on mean soil, but requires a tropical heat. It grows about two and an half feet high, and is cut, two or three times in a season, with reaping-hooks. The stems of the plant are steeped, precipitated, sun-dried, and cut into square pieces for use. The vapour of the fermented liquor is deleterious to the health of the slaves.—Much has been said about the cultivation of the olive in this climate; and the tea-plant has thriven in Savannah.—Having thus detained you, as long as possible, in the verdant plantations, and fresh air; let us now re-approach the sultry and dusty, but lively and wealthy, city of New-Orleans. At a little distance, as you draw nigh, the tall masts bordering along the levee, appear like a long grove, or avenue, of Lombardies, with their leaves off.

New-Orleans stands upon an island, called the Delta of the Mississippi; which, however, is not in 116 shape much like a delta. The city is in form of a crescent, the harbour being made by a curve in the river. It is protected on one side by the river; on the other by irreclaimable swamps; there being left no approach, but through a defile three quarters of a mile in breadth, which breastwork, manned by five thousand men, it is thought, would make it, however unlike in its site, impregnable as another Gibraltar. It is judged, that the greatest chain of inland navigation in the world might, and, in time, will be between New-York and this city; as in that vast northern route, there is now only twenty-seven miles of portage, and that may be opened by a canal. This city, with a community of about forty thousand, is laid out in squares. In front, is an embankment, called the Levee, along which are ranged hundreds of vessels, and steam-boats; not as at wharves, but in doubling files, prow to stern, and broadside to broadside, for half a mile. The river opposite is one mile and an half wide. Though one hundred miles from the sea, and a swift current, the Gulf tide perceptibly ebbs and flows up to the city. On the north, is the Fauxbourg St. Mary; on the South, the Fauxbourg Marigny; and, back of the city, near the swamp, is a Basin, whence sail steamboats for the Bay of St. Louis, and Mobile, through Lake Pontchartrain.

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The great western mail is about to be transported down the Mississippi, in steam-packets, to Natchez, and New-Orleans New-Orleans has been called the Alexandria of America. 117 Mr. Jefferson was no false prophet, when he foresaw, and foretold, the immense value to the country, of this vast reservoir, and outlet, of the West. Half a dozen miles below the city, on the left banks of the Mississippi, is the laurelled Battle-Ground.

New-Orleans appears less American, than any city I have visited. It reminded me of prints of French and Spanish cities. The citizens may be divided into four great classes; the European whites; the Creoles, or native whites; the Quarterons, of mixed blood; and free native mulattoes, and blacks; and the negroes in slavery. Also there are some immigrants, and Jews. The houses, which in general are of one story, with an airy piazza round three sides, are elevated on piles, with cellars above ground. You see here no gable roofs, or luthern windows; but in general flat roofs covered with tiles, or with rows of red semi-cylindrical interlocking shards; and the outer walls with a weather-proof, white, bloom-coloured, or yellow stucco. Their tall folding-doors, and broad casements, both open outwards; each being furnished with long white muslin curtains, for screens, and coolness. Most of the houses and yards are enclosed by high pickets. There is now finishing a superb Theatre, erected by a private gentleman, and expected to cost over a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. It contains four tiers of boxes, with balconies, and balustrades, like the Theatre Francaise, in Paris. French and English actors are engaged for it. Near 16 118 this, is a splendid Assembly-Hall, painted in landscape, walled with mirrors, and hung with a long row of starry cut-glass chandeliers. Here is also a Circus; where the trained animals often deserve more applause than their riders. Back of the city, with a flesh-coloured outside, is the Hospital. A new brick Presbyterian Meetinghouse has just been here dedicated; the materials of which were shipped from Boston. The minister also was imported from Massachusetts, and is promised a salary of three thousand dollars. The Episcopal Church is of brick, and elliptical; with a cenotaph to a late governor in the front yard. Although the Kentuckians and Louisianians decry the New-Englanders; yet, when they need a president of a college, or a clergyman, thither do they look for them.

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Notwithstanding the city is crowded with edifices of dwellers, and traders, yet have most of the houses small gardens, and yards, thickset with native and exotic evergreens, flowering shrubbery, and wickered espaliers, overhanging the gates, and pickets; and refreshing the heart with a breath of nature. In the yards, frequently spread their umbrage, the pride of China, and the broad-leafed catalpa. In almost every garden, you meet the sweet, the sour, and the small myrtle orange, and often lemons, and limes, with their white blossoms. "The scent of the orange flower," expatiates a lively French writer, Du Tour, "is regarded as a standard of perfection in its kind. It has not, like that of many flowers, 119 a deceitful sweetness, which pleases only to injure. It is not faint, like the scent of jasmine or reseda; it does not affect the head like narcissus or tuberose; it does not weaken the nerves, but rather strengthens them; it is a salutary odour, which refreshes the senses, and enlivens the brain. In fine, it has no rival, and is as salutary as it is delicious." Intermingled with these, grow the purple, and the yellow fig; and, more rarely, the pomegranate. The fig-trees, of which there are, in different countries, above one hundred species, bear no visible blossom, the flower being within the fruit; which, under their broad irregular-shaped leaves, resembles our early pears in form; but is of a sickening spiritless flavour, until preserved. They are, however, much liked by some, and sought after by a little bird, a kind of becacicoes. I took untiring pains to find a pomegranate tree with its fruit on. It is leafed like the peach tree, and bears a bell-shaped blossom, of a large size, and a bright scarlet; more rarely, white, striped, or double-blossomed. The fruit, which is not much esteemed, is somewhat like a large pear, with a long trumpet-mouthed snout, which it can rest upon. The inside is cellular, and full of seeds, inclosed in a pulp, which is the part eaten. A cleft pomegranate has a lovely tinge, like a virgin's blush. Most of the flower-yards are at the mansion of some French Madame; for, let them have a Monsieur living, or not, the house usually goes by the name of the Madame's. Here 120 range borders of boxwood, nine or ten feet high; and there rise the tomato, and castor, like trees. Among shrubs less familiar, you may see the althea, with its lilach small rose-like blossoms; the spreading smoke or cobweb Venetian shrub; the mock-pineapple, with its large white conical flower at top; the banane, from St. Domingo, where it bears a fruit, its leaf being a very long broad whitish-

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yellow transparent blade; and, among a curious variety of French shrubs, with delicate stems and catkins, I noticed a strange plant, called tricolour; having each of its broad blade-leaves of three unblended hues, green, scarlet, yellow; and no flower. These colours in the blade are dull at bottom, but keep brightening towards the top, until, at the head of the plant, they are of a most vivid hue.

Central in the city, stands the Spanish Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Louis. It is very spacious, and appears majestically grand at a distance, but does not bear scrutiny. The materials, which at first view appear marble, are a kind of stone, covered with a once white cement. The inner vault is supported by a dozen massive columns, of ten or twelve feet circumference. On the left, in a niche, stands an image of Saint Francis, in an old rent black cassock, like a true mendicant friar. On the right, in another niche, stands the Virgin Mary, with her blessed infant, arrayed like one of the tawdriest waxen-figures in museums. The officiating Spanish Father, whom I saw, had a long scraggy grizzly beard. At the street-entrance of the aisle, with his eye fixed steadily on the holy altar at some distance before him, stood, motionless and blank as dead, a catholic sentinel, in a blue coat with red cape and cuffs; a thick lank coal-black sleek shining queue ponderating down his back; a silver laced belt, and tall steel-headed glittering pontoon in his right hand erect.—In the catholic burial-ground, which is in a swampy enclosure, the tombs, obelisks, and gravestones, are each surmounted by an iron cross, and motto. The ground is so low, and overburied, that many discoloured bones, in monitory ghastliness, lie strown about the turf; and I saw a slave digging a grave, which kept half filling itself with offensive water. On a certain holy-day, in each year, the catholics dig up, and burn, the bones of the canonized dead, with solemn rites.—There were formerly, in this city, under pay of the crown, a few capouchins, and friars, of the Order of the Carmelites.

The Convent of Ursuline Nuns is at the lower part of the city. It was built by the French, and has extensive gardens, with high close walls. The edifice was once a white gray; but its whiteness is long since sullied by time into smut and gloominess. Attached to the convent is a small house, with three rooms divided longitudinally from each other by

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double gratings, or walls, about six inches apart, each having apertures of not more than two inches square, through which friends may converse with the nuns, and boarders, on urgent business. There are 122 valuable funds, as each nun, if able, on taking the final vow, or black veil, deposits fifteen hundred dollars; which, it is said, becomes inalienable common stock. Many young females resort hither for education. I went twice into the chapel, at vespers. In an inner apartment, stands, on a decorated table, or altar, a massy full length image of Virgin Mary, or Saint Ursula, richly molten, or graven, and gilded; for I could only glance at it through the latticed partition. The nuns of the black veil are not admitted to be seen on any occasion. A stranger can only hear the Abbess rapidly repeating mass, at matins, and vespers, after the chant of the superior, joined by the shriller voices of the nuns, and novices; and catch a glimmering of them, through the narrow checks of the double black bars, as they enter, and retire. Although thus in banishment from the world, the nuns are not useless; for they do fine needle-work. Neither are all faded, or uncomely; for some are said to be both rich, and young, and lovely. Since it is so uncommon in a female to be unwilling to be seen, had I been of susceptible heart, as I caught the eye of one of the novices through the lattice-work, I might have been half enamoured, merely from the workings of imagination.

The Levee is crowded all day with people of all kindreds, and tongues; and of all complexions, from dark black, to light white. Among the foreign pendants on the shipping, on the fourth of July, was seen waving the tri-coloured flag. Here are met hundreds 123 of West-country boatmen, who often, after selling their boats, rather than row up the never-returning current, walk back, with knapsacks on their shoulders, upwards of a thousand miles through the prairies, and wilderness. Quarrelling is their chief delight; despising the pacific overture of the two Eastern cravens, once in disputation on the levee; when one, on seeing opposite the sign of a justice of the peace, in French, *Juge de Paix*; "Here," said he, "let us leave it to Judge Pax." The levee is all bustle, and novelty. Here I saw a number of Creek, and Chickasaw Indians, strolling and idling; and, among these, I remarked two of uncommonly fine limb; both half naked; the chief with tall white feathers

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in his long coarse black hair, and his breast quite tattooed over in half circles; the squaw ornamented with rows of large loose brass armlets, and anklets. Here also I passed a drove of forty slaves, chained by the waist and leg, driven under the scourge to labour upon the flag-stones, as a punishment; and doomed, at night, to the calabose, whither all vagrants, taken after the nine o'clock signal gun is fired, are sent. As you walk up and down the levee, the eye and the ear are frequently arrested. Here you see huge bulging octagonal pitchers, that would contain half a barrel of punch; and there earthen water-jars, of a half-puncheon capacity. At short intervals, you pass domes and pyramids of the largest, and most luscious melons. It was upon the levee that I saw a crowd around a 124 foreign charlatan, holding high his rich articulating horologe, who proposed, for fifty dollars, to initiate any man into a secret of taming the wildest animals to future docility, in a quarter of an hour. Along the levee, hang cages of canary, and mocking birds, for sale. Here may you see the little Congoese parrots, not bigger than sparrows, of a fine shape, with their gaudy, but beautiful plumage. I saw here a China macaw, larger than a pheasant, with twelve inches of sweeping tail feathers, and a superb vivid plumage of red, yellow, green, blue, and their shades. It was said, that he could talk Chinese with his deep hooked ivory beak; but he spake not a word unto me. The owner asked thirty dollars for the bird, and would not abate above twenty-five. I also saw here, a curious animal from the south of Georgia, called sapajou, which suspends itself by its tail. The gentlemen carry sun-umbrellas. The levee is a fine evening promenade for the ladies. The ladies wear no head-dresses, in fair sky; but modest becoming white or black lace veils. There are some beautiful brunette girls here; and the French mademoiselles have a peculiar soft drawling, but rather insinuating tone of voice. The negresses wear checked turbans, of gay colours. This climate makes the aged women appear older than they are. I saw one unreasonably aged, and wealthy French Madame, too hideous to be described, waddle by, with a moon-sized jewelled repeater at her waist. How much grander, instead of the watch, if she had 125 ordered a tall oldfashioned eight day house-clock to be lumbered along behind her by a pair of stout black slaves, to tell her how much older she grew. The other evening, on the levee, I met a Highlander playing on his Scotch bagpipe; or bag of pipes, as the clown

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called it. He held the inflated bag aslant beneath his arms, as if a child; and, compressing, it, reached over to play the stop-notes; holding a short pipe in his lips, and letting the long pipe shoot backward over his left shoulder, like a firelock. This instrument has three pipes, besides the little portvent. The music is something between a flute and a violin, with a humdrum drone to it. When near, the sounds are powerful; and the player would lift high his legs, and briskly step backward and forward in fine enthusiasm.

As to the morals of this city, the word is obsolete. On the Sunday we arrived, a balloon, with a live lamb in the car, and aerial fireworks, were to be exhibited, by permission of the mayor. It is said, that there has never been an unpleasant day for Independence, which is a good omen for this country. This day, however, is not stately celebrated at the south, and west. All proclamations and newspapers here are printed with parallel sides, or columns, of English, French, and some of Spanish. Sunday is the busy holiday, when the theatre, and the circus, have most spectators, as then they least value the time. Duels are very fashionable, if they can contrive an affront; such as:—"How dared you to spit 17 126 as I was passing?"—"How dared you to pass as I was spitting?" or, "You shall not sneeze where I am!" This would make a pleasant duel. There is a corner called Cadiz, a rendezvous for assassins, and no inquiry made. As the good people of New England are scandalized by their travelling pedlers, so are the Kentuckians dreaded on account of their swaggering boatmen; and as the Western people call all the Eastern travellers Yankees, so do the citizens of New-Orleans call all the up-river boatmen Kentuckians. I would not, because it were unjust, entitle New-Orleans a pandemonium of devils, a limbo of vanity, or a paradise of fools. But is it not a thoroughfare of speculators, and brief sojourners, going and coming, whence and where, few know, and few care; a place in which, if a man is not fleeced, more or less, it is his own fault? In some streets, you can hardly pass a door, or corner, but you will see a party sitting at some game. The Museum Coffee-House, opposite the levee, is illuminated, and enlivened by a band of musicians, on every evening. It is a splendid resort, with a small, but choice collection of stuffed birds, and some minerals, in glass cases. As this is a coffee-house, you can here find all cordials,

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but coffee. Here meet, every night, on the balcony, or level roof of the piazza, in the open air, behind brilliant transparencies, hundreds of people, from the novice shop-boy, to the gray man in spectacles. And here, arranged round small square tables, each with a decanter and goblets, 127 do they speculate upon the doctrine of chances, from infamous billiards, down to childish domino. If it has been rumoured, it is not to be believed, much less repeated, that, to be a gentleman here, like foreign princes, and lords of the nobility, one must patronize a yellow miss, even if only for the name of the thing; and that if a young buck has one or two discarded lemans, his credit rises in proportion to the number. The wealthy planters, in this vicinity, can more easily bestow upon their daughters slaves, than educations; and the daughters too often are satisfied with the frivolous, instead of the solid accomplishments. It is common to ask a young gallant, who is about to marry:—"how much?" rather than:—"whom?" And too frequently do insolvent libertines come from the north to the south, to speculate into a lady's heritage. On sabbath evening, the African slaves meet on the green, by the swamp, and rock the city with their Congo dances. Near the green, is a horizontal fandango of four wooden horses, sorrel, white, bay, and black, each pendent by an iron rod, and affixed to stout wheel-machinery in the centre. Upon these, children canter and circulate for exercise, by paying a half-bit, here called a *pécune*. A *bit* is the Pennsylvanian *eleven-pence*, the New York *shilling*, and the New England *nine-pence*. In this city, are hundreds of Eastern merchants; and, notwithstanding the foregoing remarks, many lovers of morality, and reverers of religion. The southern natives marvel at the New England 128 visitors, for being so inquisitive. But this inquisitiveness is a trait indicative of an active mind; and is one reason, among others, why that people are generally better informed than, perhaps, any nation in the world.

There is more difference of climate between Natchez and New-Orleans, than would be expected from the difference of latitude. Though the atmospheric temperature here be high, there is less of the unfanned intensity of heat, and the process of respiration is less difficult, owing to the breezes from the sea, than in many healthier climes. The winter in New-Orleans is said to be delightful. Since I have been here, the breathless air has

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often been freshened and cooled, by “the sweet aspersions, which the heavens let fall.” The summer and autumnal sickness, which is so fatal, is generated from the effluvia of corrupting vegetable and animal matter, and the stagnant fenny lakes and swamps, which surround the city; and thus compose an atmosphere, “that eateth up the inhabitants.” At such crises, the physicians charge exorbitantly; but one moiety, perhaps, like a certain benevolent doctor, for anxiety of mind. In the yellow death-months, it is usual to dig graves beforehand. To avoid the disease, those, who are unacclimated, and have ways and means, commonly sail across the lake to the salubrious Bay of St. Louis; or backward up the Rouge, or Red River, to the Opelousas country. It is dangerous, to be exposed to the evening dews, which 129 are sometimes so profuse, as to be wrung from your hair; and to run in streams out of the ship-scuppers. Even the clergy adapt themselves to the climate, and walk the squares in their thin black short jerkins. That I had gotten into a sultry region, I soon discovered by my chin germinating so perplexingly fast; that scarcely could I get one side reaped, ere the other was ripe unto the harvest. A person does not here need being phlebotomized by a chirurgeon, for this is done gratuitously by the gnats, who absorb one's blood and patience all night long. I invented a moschetto-screen for street-use; it was to be suspended from a ring round the hat, and to droop adown the body to the ankles, and to be so thin, that the eye might see through it. But the moschetoes do not bite unanimously until evening; when they are in no wise mealy-mouthed, but steal upon the skin like the daughters of the horseleech. The beds are here guarded by a cobweb-gauze, or muslin barrier, which depends on all sides from a tester above, and shuts out the invaders. As you thus repose upon your moss-mattress, you behold the moschetoes play round the bar, but come not to the skin. In the morning, you may behold some of them hanging in the gauze-screen by the bill; when, perchance, up may come the steward, pick out two or three of the plump gallinippers, sling them against the bedposts by the hind legs, and pluck off the feathers, to make gumbo of them. Were it not for these screens, you might awake in the morning, and 130 find yourself gone; the tormentors may have consumed you. If Pharaoh had felt the New-Orleans' moschetoes, he surely would have let the Israelites go the first time. In New-Orleans, the hotel-masters

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are peculiarly ingenious in charging; you cannot turn round under a dollar. My opulent Boniface accepts eighteen guineas a month, if other cordials, beside water, are included. And if you come at six o'clock in the evening, he deducts five dimes for the first day; and if you leave after breakfast on your last day, he adds the whole day. This pleases one exceedingly; it is making both ends meet. The river-water, which is drunk here, is impure, until after filtration, or precipitation by alum; and lukewarm, unless frigerated in porous-jars. As this is not the oyster season, the epicures are content with a trencher of shrimps, a minim lobster, of a bright scarlet, not above two inches long. The crimson tomato, the dusky egg-plant, split and spiced, and the green fig, are common at table. A turbaned demoiselle trips by every morning early, singing out in her Babel tongue, what sounds like *pine-apple-tarts*; but which we found to mean *hot simnels*. But the dish of dishes in New-Orleans is a French dish, called *gumbo*. It is a kind of save-all, salmagundi soup, made of the refuse ends of every variety of flesh, mingled with rice, and seasoned with chopped sassafras, or with okra, a vegetable esculent. This soup will string from your lips down to your plate; and I should scarcely be credited, if I told, that a harlequin 131 once walked the slack-rope upon a strand of gumbo. At a belle-assemblage, the sultry saloon of the nabobs is cooled by iced-creams.

If you quit the city, and traverse the vicinity; or, more contrastedly, if you cross over towards the load-stone-veins of the Texas, or down towards the lagoons of the Floridas; you will meet many wonders of the tree-kind; and I doubt not, that you would gladly leave the dust of the city, to stroll on the green grass, under the green trees. Among the hortulane plants, rise artichokes fifteen feet high; and bean-stalks, which live several years; realizing the story of Jack and his Bean, whose vine he clomb, and found a giant's house in one of its blossoms. Among the proud strength of the wilderness, in low ground, tower the cypresses, the largest of American trees; of the trunks of which, southern Indians used to form canoes a hundred feet long. The stem of the cypress rises from the apex of a stout conical base; above which frequently eight or ten slaves erect a scaffold, upon which they cut, until they fell the tree. From the roots grow up conical excrescences,

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called cypress knees; which being large, and hollow, are used for beehives. Dry cypress roots are said to make fine hones. From the majestic evergreen tops of these cone-based trunks, depends, in thick festoons, the long Spanish moss, like the venerable gray beards of patriarchal times. This long hanging moss is seen, in vast quantities, hundreds of miles up the river, at the Spanish Moss Bend; and is there also gathered 132 for New-Orleans' mattresses. One root contains such trailing masses, that it appears to have no connection with the tree on which it hangs; but it is nurtured by rooting fibres, and will not live long on dead trees. This curious moss flowers yearly, of a yellow cup; it bears a delicate pod a short inch long, of the size of a darning-needle, full of almost invisible seeds. It is pulled from the trees with long hooks; put under water for a few days to rot the outer coat; then beaten, and a fine soft elastic black incorruptible fibre, like horse hair, with minute joints, is left. This moss does not grow hard so soon as hair; but will become dusty, and require often to be opened, and beaten. Another noble tree is the cottonwood, which sheds a soft snowy down, that whitens the luxuriant green grass beneath; and whose shafts are sometimes as immense as Herschel's telescope, in whose body king George III. and half a dozen of his plump daughters breakfasted. Here spread the vast invaluable live-oaks, with their almost incorruptible wood, and evergreen leaf. The form of this tree is peculiar; the lateral limbs diverging almost horizontally from the short enormous trunk; so that it were easy to build a cottage upon them, and live standing in the air. And here also, to name no more, bloom in their glory, the gay *liriodendron*, or tulip-tree, with its aromatic bark, its abruptly-obtuse elliptical leaves, and variegated, but scentless, flowers; and some of the richest species of the peerless amaranthine magnolia. The *magnolia grandiflora*, or 133 laurel-leaved magnolia, the superbest tree of the forest, rises in a fair attitude of, sometimes, a hundred feet, and swells its noble head into an obtuse cone. Its foliage is of a deep glossy green on the upper surface of the rigid, veiny, long leaf, and of a downy rust-colour on the under side. Its flowers grow on the extremity of the branches; are from six to nine inches in diameter, of a velvety white, and expanded like a rose, and are the largest and most complete yet known, and of a delicious fragrance, "like the flavour of cold lemonade." But I now forbear delineating the sublime and beautiful of southern nature, lest

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you should be tempted to come out to this region of dissipation and death; since you will find it far more grateful to be here in imagination only, than to experience the torments, and debilitation, of stinging myriads, and an almost tropical sun. As I have visited New-Orleans at an unadvisable season of the year, I intend speedily to double the Cape northwardly.— *Adieu!* 18

LETTER FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO. MDCCCXIX.

DEAR BROTHER,

I LEFT New-Orleans in the regular packet ship Orleans, to bound over the seas, and far away, from the land of oranges. In a few miles after leaving the Levee, we passed the deathless Battle-Ground. A ship draws more water, and a man sinks quicker, in a fresh river, than in the salt ocean; the specific gravities being disproportionate in the two elements. Near this, is the seat of the present Governor of Louisiana. Between this, and Fort Plaquemine, we passed the sugar plantations of Lawyer Batture Livingston, and of Colonel Sandusky Croghan. Below the Fort, we saw, looming on the right bank, where he is stationed, General Wilkinson. About three leagues further down, we saw, near the shore, three live alligators. As this river is the American Nile, so is the alligator the American crocodile. Some of these dangerous animals are long and lean, some fat and short, With black backs and white bellies; and, at times, they roar like bulls. 136 About fifty miles down, on the left bank, we espied a very large pelican, watching to fill his capacious hanging pouch with fishes. A passenger would have fired at him, but he stood so far distant, that he would have been obliged to shoot twice—one shot would not have reached him. As we veered down the trendings of the channel, it was not uncommon to see blue, or white cranes, or brandt, standing on one leg upon the swimming drift-wood, and looking at a distance like a Lilliputian fleet. As our ship in floating down this noble river—which, as Cowley might say, from the creation has flowed, and flowed, and as it flows, forever shall flow on—with the fellowship of the wind, outglided the current, it made the stream appear to run upwards. In the star-light of the evening, the prow of our ship was in

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a shower of spangles, and the wake was a foam of amber. After we moored until dawn, we were re-greeted by those minim humming-birds of the south, the moschetoos; while, from the right reed-mantled pools, was heard harmonious discord from “the green silken frogs, who, whistling forth their shrill notes, strove to bear a part in the music, not much unlike the Lancashire bagpipe, while in the mean time the larger sort were bellowing out their sackbut diapason.” Below Plaquemine, and between the many Nile-like mouths, that disgorge into the Gulf of Mexico, are no plantations, nor dwellers, save the remains of an old Spanish Fort, and a few block-houses for pilots and fishers. The land here is nothing but flat swampy 137 reedy prairies. The distance from the city to the mouth of the river is upwards of a hundred miles. On leaving the mouth of the Mississippi, by the Balise (*beacon* or *mast*), which, on a small new formed island, is the useless Fort, named St. Carlos; there are no boat-shaped, or huge demijohn-buoys, to guide the ship; but the adventurous pilot steers her through a rapid deep channel, between immense mud-ranges walling the sides; while, on each gloomy turning of the eye, is seen nought but desolation; the masts of ships stranded and sunken, peering above the waters; and thousands of gigantic logs, and uprooted trees, that have been floated down, some of them thousands of miles, to lumber currents not their own. Well may one imagine himself to be passing the last verge of terrestrial existence. I thought of the times after the Deluge. I also moralized, of our going down the Mississippi of time, through the Gulf-straits of death, into the Atlantic of eternity.

After this “Meeting of the Waters,” it is many leagues before the muddy Colour of the river is lost in the green of the Gulf. The hue of the waves kept deepening as the sea deepened; from olive, to glass-green, to indigo-blue, to black. There is said to be but one flow and ebb of tides in twenty-four hours in the Gulf of Mexico. We are now between the two Americas. How inferior the natural grandeur of the old world, to that of the new. Where, cries the enthusiast, where shall we find, in the old world, a river so broad as the La Plata? where one 138 so swift as the Oronoko? where one so long as the Missouri? where a cataract like Niagara? where a mountain so high as Chimborazo? where a

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cavern so prodigious as in Virginia? Jefferson, and other philosophers, have marvelled, whether the whole bay of Mexico, from the cape of Florida, through Cuba, Hispaniola, and other islands of our Western Archipelago, were not once a champaign country, with a continued range of mountains to the opposite coast; broken through by some tremendous concussion of nature, and deluged till it reached the foot of the Andes? Who knows, but that the incessant abrasion of the waves, aided by some internal disruption of nature, may hereafter disjoin the northern and southern continents? As a canal across the isthmus is said to be practicable, by a junction of the lakes, and head waters; I have wondered, that the grandeur of the idea has not prompted its execution; and thus a ten thousand miles of doubling the cape been reduced to a short strait. I have often wished to expand, and to elevate my conceptions, by standing an hour upon the heaven-kissing hills, that ridge the long and narrow Isthmus of Darien; and there, with a world before me, and a world behind me; with the Atlantic on the right, and the Pacific on the left; rolling, and roaring their eternal weight of multitudinous waves in my view; to adore that stupendous Power, who said:—"Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

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For a steam-boat passage down the Mississippi, I paid sixty dollars; for a passage in this packet-ship, I pay one hundred dollars; both, I doubt, like King Stephen's breeches, sixpence all too dear, for one, who went only to spy the land. Our ship has the martial Maid of Orleans, Joan la Pucelle, on her prow, and, up her shrouds, spiring above the topmast, and pointing its guardian fingers to the clouds, one of Franklin's rods. We had on board about thirty souls, or, more evidently, bodies. Of cabin passengers we had seven; a Spaniard, a German, a Frenchman, an Englishman, an Irishman, a Missouri man from the lead mines, and myself a New Englander. The more the merrier, the fewer the better cheer. There were ten steerage-passengers; a yellow steward, and a black cook. We have, on the after deck, a broad white awning; and, above and below, five compasses, those mute mysterious Oracles of the ocean. On board, was a female swine, with her

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not quite Virgilian number of offspring; two dogs, half rabid with the heat; and four green-painted coops of crestfallen chanticleers with their partlets, and loquacious half-blooded mallards with their mates. We had no milch goat, as they are poor seaboys. Near the binnacle, stands a drop-stone font, to filtrate our lukewarm water. How often sighed I, that we could have taken a cool spring on board! On the first morn in the gulf, while some of our passengers of the cabin were clattering about the quarter-deck in their patent heels, shod like the mailhoofed reasoners of Swift, 140 or copper-fastened like our ship; and the little Monsieur sat aiding to quicken a dogvane, of cork-body and feather-wings; I stood with folded arms, wrapt in awe and contemplation, gazing abroad on the illimitable expanse of ocean; until my mind reeled with the "immensity of her own conceptions." Did it require so vast a saline surface to be sun-drawn, and freshened into wandering clouds, to fertilize the dusty and thirsty ground? Or was it necessary that nations, born from the same parents, should be thus unapproachably separated, to prevent their mutually quarrelling, and encroaching upon each other's rights? While admiring at the large ships in sight, those masterpieces of human art, which bring distant and unknown worlds together; the Captain ludicrously described the ungainly Chinese junks, that he had seen on India voyages; which are shaped somewhat like the wooden bowls, in which the three wise men of Gotham went to sea; and which they oftentimes navigate without a compass; heaven's moon being their lighthouse, and heaven's stars their charts.

Our ship began now, in a calm, to rock like a cradle; and now, in a breeze, to bound into a curvet; and now began my brain to rock, and to curvet, with it. The broad gentle sidewise swell is more dizzying, than the strong straightforward ridges of ocean. I was the only one in the cabin, who had not before been on the great deep, and who had not an "undergoing stomach." The imagination ran on cascades, 141 and cataracts. Thus was my lot, day after day, moping and musing through the watches of the night; while others were supine in their crimson-curtained births, which to me were deaths, sleeping and purring in feline quietude. Franklin's drops of oil might assuage the fury of the waves; but the captain's oil of vitriol would not appease the tumult in my breast. Sea-qualms, though effecting an

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earthquake of ribs, and threatening the parting of soul and body, like the hypochondria, meet little sympathy. It is, however, some vain self-condolence, that bosoms of the finest sensibility are most predisposed to them. When one asked of the son of green Erin, who had purposely sickened his breast to dispossess it of acrid humours, how he felt? he replied:—"I am sick very well." To counteract the effects of the saline atmosphere, take agreeable prunes to sea with you; they are a friendly fruit. The captain had two cages of gray mocking-birds, to which, if taken sea-sick, he was directed by the bird-seller to administer a spider to cure them.

Before entering the Gulf, the passengers had loaded their rifles, carabines, and pistols; as, on the week preceding, two vessels had been boarded and plundered, even in the mouth of the river, by corsairs. The Bluebeard of these unprincipled adventurers was quite courtly in his *splendidum furtum*, as king James used to call it:—"Good day, my friends; hard times; we request a few of your light articles, if you please (presenting arms); take care 19 142 of your helm, steersman; pray, captain, what o'clock is it?" and thus conversing, he adroitly borrowed their trunks, watches, and specie. They did not molest the lady passengers. Formerly, buccaneers in this Gulf, and also in the Caribbean sea, used to teach a captive to *walk the plank*; that was, they propped a narrow plank over the side of the pickaroon, and then very gracefully led him, blindfolded, until he walked into the sea. Others, to extort money, they would bind, back to back, and set them to diving, until nearly drowned. On the sixth day out, we saw a brig, like a man-of-war, bearing down upon us. She had black port-holes, a bell striking, a drum beating to quarters, and shewed no ensign. Then, like Gonzalo, would I have given a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, any thing. We entrusted our money to our yellow steward to secrete in his latent *noli me tangere*. When within hailing distance, the imagined man-of-war hoisted the Albion red-cross; and, after a few sarcastic salutations from our captain's speaking-trumpet, we sailed in company for some leagues. She told not her name. How incongruous to call ships feminine in gender, and yet to give them masculine names; they are of common gender. Speaking of names, some of

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our early colonists were visited by a vessel presumptuously named the “Angel Gabriel;” which tutelar angel, however, did not, for the compliment, interpose to rescue her from dashing upon the rocks. Does our national 143 star-spangled banner show as noble as most other banners? The stripes are so narrow, and the stars so small, that it does not discover its appropriateness in distance. However, I approve of the retaining the thirteen stripes, in allusion to the thirteen original states; and of adding a new star for every new state. When the sun is over the yard-arm of the ship, is the *nunc est bibendum*; in which the mariners too often prefer the pure alcohol, to the elementary lymph of the potation. The aquatic phraseology is as strange to a landsman, as legal technology would be to a mariner; helm-a-lee, abaft, belay, loofe, avast, careen, capsize, logboard, deadeyes, reefed, rowse, and other barbarisms, which it would require the nautical muse of a Falconer to explain. Among all the complicated interlacing tackle and braces, on board of the bravest ships, there is but *one rope*; that is, but one, which has not an appropriated name. When otherwise unemployed, the mariners are ordered to calking the hatchseams, paying the masts, and trimming the ship's gear. Interchangeably, every two hours, they are called to stand watch, day and night, in their water-proof tarpawlings. One day, when the watch was called to heave the leaded logline, and count the speedknots, a middle-aged bushy-faced mariner, whose turn it was, was missing for about half an hour, and was conjectured to have toppled overboard; and meanwhile a strange mariner appeared to do his duty, like an apparition:—the swarthy bristly-cheeked Portuguese 144 had shaved himself. Most mariners have a custom of needling India-ink figures into their skin. One of ours has his brawny arm purpled over with a flag, an eagle, an anchor, and, what is less characteristic in a son of ocean, a tall tree of knowledge, with an open-lipped serpent coiling down its trunk, and a long haired Eve uplistening under it. I was informed of one of our naval officers, who has a whole line of battle-ships thus tattooed around his body. A passenger mentioned, that Admiral Cochrane, when his war-ship was trending along our coast, had sent, to him from England, by a lady, a haunch of a-la-mode venison preserved, rivalling that sent by Lord Clare to Goldsmith; and, in the centre, some vials of cordials, and a silver-enchased box with a chain-edged billet-doux in it, and a hope that, when he

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tasted and perused her compliment, he would not forget the vows of *auld lang syne*. Such love has some substance in it. As this story was in telling, at dinner, our ship on tacking suddenly heaved, and careened; and dance went the eggs as if quilled with quicksilver; and slide went the barricado-table, that is, one having circular orifices to receive the bases of all the trenchers; and lo! the wreck of pullets, and the crash of plates! We daily espied some white spots, like swans with outspread pinions, afar on the dark waters, which were vessels proudly riding over the ocean waves; going to do business on the mighty main. I marvel, that any woman will marry a ship-commander, “whose house is on the 145 mountain waves, whose home is on the deep;” thus so often, and so long, widowing his solicitous wife. It requires practice, to be able to walk the deck at sea. For myself, the bounding of the surges at first occasioned such incessant ludicrous vacillations from a central basis, that I misstepped as one maudled. The ocean boys step wide, and firm, and sway the body to the motion of the ship. All my short ambulation has been, first from the cabin-door on one side of the quarter-deck to the tiller-rope; then, from the cabin-door on the other side of the quarter-deck to the tiller-rope again; so that, if I could walk from the cabin-door on both sides of the deck at once, I should meet myself at the tiller-rope.

The uniformity on the ocean is tedious even for one well; we seem to be always in one place. A rich merchant of Boston used to say, that he could not have an ill wind; he had so many Ophir-men going out, and coming in, that, blow whatever wind might, it was favourable for some one of them. But we, every day, were doomed to beat in an *in* direct *direct* ion; or had a breeze that blew a calm; or a puff of empty air, so ethereal, that it required a spyglass to see which way it did blow. We reckon our leagues long or short, according as we have a brisk breeze, or a breathless calm; a short league is under the former, a long league is under the latter; time counted with progress. How often, in such a breathless pause, did I sigh:—shall we ever get *any* wheres? O! sighed I again, O for Ulysses' bag of 146 winds! O for Neptune to give us a shove with his trident; or his Tritons to blow us a blast with their conchs! But I anticipate the time, when steam-balloons, with their elastic radiation of paddles, will wait for neither winds, nor tides. The tripartite

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recreation of our rich Potosi Spaniard has been, to muse along the quarter-deck under the shadow of his broad yellow vegetable hat; now glancing at the small compass in his watch-seal, now chiming his musical segar-box, and now drawing and poisoning his stiletto-cane with a spy-glass in it; or to order his habitual lemon-syrup from his Sancho Panza of a servant; and to indulge in his daily siesta. Since we left the land for the ocean, what with the season, and what with the latitude, we have but little cooled our heat, which has scarcely been mitigated by the shadows of evening. *Sol occubuit—nullum frigus sequitur*. The Briton and Missouri man, of our cabin-comrades, have daily buoyed down their bodies by cords from the prow, and bathed in the salt waves. Every one, who sails upon the sea, ought to be skilled to swim. Our jovial Falstaff of a captain told us of three fair sisters, he was sure the two eldest, who could swim like mermaids. They lived near the Schuylkill, in a retired spot, and were accustomed to swim in every summer day. It was a healthy beauty-heightening practice; and one of our gallant passengers would have liked to learn from them. The German had with him two musical instruments; one unnamed, and unopened, in a long black case like an infant coffin; the other a clarionet, with which he could blow the air into any shape he pleased. As he often applied his moistened lips, I could realize what was meant by liquid sound, as I saw it ooze in dew-drops from the open end of the tube. As he breathed, and the airs floated over the waters, in reverie I could fancy the boisterous ocean to be a calm inland lake, softened by the yellow full-orbed twilight; and our high ship, and hardy crew, to be a gay pleasure-yatch, graced with a bright bevy of maidens; whose fair hair in the breeze would spread like the moon-beams, as they gleamed up their blue eyes most meltingly, and their songs and their vows fell balmily upon the waters. Anon, at the boat-swain's whistle, long and shrill—a fog would creep over the lake, the barge and the maidens would fade from my vision, and I find myself in the middle of the wide sea.

We had not been in the Gulf long, before the commander found that he had shipped Death among his steerage passengers. The yellow plague was on board. At the moon's first quarter, and within three hours of each other, two died. When a man dies at sea, a couple

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of mariners roll up the dead body in a sheet, or blanket; and, with their stout steel three-edged marline-needles, seam it tight, so as to shape it to the head and trunk. A plank is laid from the head of a barrel to the leeward side of the ship, upon which the corpse is extended, having an iron fifty-six appended to the feet. Then, while the officers, 148 and the blue-jerkined shipmen, all stand solemnly round, with their heads uncovered, the burial-service is read at the head of the dead, and the corse is slowly, and sacredly launched overboard, and sinks standing, and floating, at a certain number of fathoms deep, in the ocean; there to remain, until the sea shall give up her dead. Mariners are contradictory beings; these bibulous hearts of oak would feelingly render any, the most menial, service to the sick; and sometimes would their rough hands dash a tear from their weather-beaten cheeks; and yet would they, perhaps, jest on the body as they were seaming up the corse. In about a week after the first two, and again within a few hours of each other, in the morning, died two more, and were buried in the sea. A day after, a fifth steerage passenger died also on deck, and followed his four dead messmates into the overwhelming abysses. Thus, within ten days, died, of this most repelling and fatal disease, five men, being one half of the steerage passengers; leaving two others sick. One that died was a lusty pillar of strength, and portrait of health; and yet he fell, and faded, in *one day*. These sad deaths will quarantine us, for a half month or more, at Tinicum Island. These unhappy men seemed little affected at their fate; and why was it, that I myself was more affected at the death of the first, than of the last one; when, assuredly, my grief ought to have increased with the increased cause for sorrow. I repeated the sublime and solemn burial-service over the dead 149 bodies of the two last; as we committed “the bodies to their place, their souls to heaven's grace, and the rest in God's own time.” Every packet-ship should be required to carry a physician, in the sickly season; or the commander to be an apothecary in the knowledge of his medicine-chest. Every commander ought, also, to read, or cause to be read, on board of his ship, in a chaplain-like manner, the church-service, on every sabbath on the ocean.

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We had been in the Gulf above two weeks, waiting for the moving of the waters, and the winds; and often spying in vain for the Tortugas, and the white foam over the dreaded Martyrs' Reef; when, at last, we gained the straits between the Florida Cape, and the Island of Cuba; nearly in sight of Moro Castle at the Havannah, which lay under the yellow plague. To pass through this Gulf, and round this Cape, demands more of nautical skill, and is fuller of open and lurking perils, than a voyage to Europe. These straits are about twenty leagues wide. A bark once got over on the Bahama banks, by having a nail under her compass. A ship is kept in the current of the Gulf by a thermometer; as there is a difference of temperature between the water and air in and out of the stream. We beat the latitude as far South as $23^{\circ} 26'$; just upon the Tropic of Cancer. When a fresh-water novice, for the first time, crosses the equatorial *line*, or sometimes the tropics, the ocean boys aspire to become particularly inebriated. For the two last days, clouds and haze had been round about us, but now the "bridgroom of the earth" and ocean burst forth in his glory. Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. On this day, at meridian, as the commander and mate were each taking the sun's declination, there arose a mutual wager between three of us about the degree of latitude; and as the Spaniard came the least near being right; and as we were now almost within the fragrance of the tropical fruits of Cuba; our Don brought out to us his remainder pineapple, which had been sent to him from the Matanzas, and was nearly decayed. This West Indian fruit (*ananas*) in its perfection contains the quintessence of all delightful flavours. It is regaling, to imagine oneself off the water, and to taste them even in description. The forms of the pineapples differ as much as the cones of the fir tribe. It is an herbaceous plant, perennial, and bearing leaves about two feet long, upright, or curled backwards; for the most part saw-edged; and sometimes purple-striped on the inside of the light-green blades. The different varieties have different names, as the king, the queen, the large sugarloaf, and the Montserrat. The two principal sorts are the red, and the yellow pineapple. Each knob on the fruit bears a long purplish, or bluish blossom; the bottom ring of knobs beginning first to bloom. When fully ripe, the edible part is about the size of a tennis-ball, and if you impress the knobs softly with your finger and thumb, they will return

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again. The rind is yellow, and the flesh firm and fibrous. To be perfect, they must attain a fine gold in colour, and be richly fragrant in smell; but if changing to brown, they are past excellence. The pineapple is cut from the plant with a long stalk, so as to sit upright in a pyramid of fruits. You first twist off the crown of leaves at top, and pare off the outside rind; then cut it cross-wise, and lay the slices on a plate singly; else, being of a gummy nature, they will stick together. Whoever, says a former English professor of Botany, if I recollect aright, once tastes the pineapple, will undoubtedly allow, that, as well for its beautiful appearance, as for its delicious flavours, it deserves a place above all other fruits.

Although canopied and bounded by the vast firmamental concave above, and the huge heavy-heaving convex, melting into the gray far-circling horizon, below; I can stand at the side of the after-deck, and behold fowl and fish after a kind, which are new to me. While the booby— *pelecanus sula* , Span. bobo, *foolish* , because they come and alight upon the ship's nettings, and are easily taken—will come and rest upon our boom; the tropic-bird — *phæton* , called by the mariners *boatswain* —with his long tail of two naked feathers, will fly over our heads, or sometimes, it is said, perch upon the backs of the porpoises. The mariners told many an omen of those tempest-loving 152 birds, Mother Carey's chickens. The specific name is the stormy-petrel, so called from its appearing to walk the wave, like St. Peter. It can spout oil from its bill, and is so unctuous, that the women of the Feroe islands draw a wick through the body, to make a light. They hover round the sterns of vessels, presaging storms. They are silent during the day, but pierce the ear of night with clamour. The mariners think they have no blood, that they lay and hatch upon the top of the waves, and, it is well for the poor birds, they are very superstitious about killing one. These sportive sea-birds sometimes adventure, like Noah's dove, to fly hundreds of leagues over the vexed abysses, before they find rest for the sole of their feet. As to ichthyology, it appears, to an unchemical mind, rather paradoxical, that a fresh animal should be taken out of a salsuginous element. We have seen two whales, or rather grampuses, those immense unwieldy leviathans of the deep, upspouting fountains of waters out of their huge heads. Also, shoals of clumsy porpoises, which flounder, and

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blow, and snort, like so many swine; they are very chubbed, and black with white bellies; are said to be a prognostic of wind; and are harpooned for their blubber. We have daily seen, and the mariners have caught, many blue-black sharks, with their long pointed noses. After the mariners have hauled them in, they will barbarously run a yard-arm, as they term it, through the thick skin 153 across their eyes, and then heave them out again. The captain, with the missile steel-barbed grains, has caught a number of dolphins, which chase the flying-fish, as we saw; and which last is taken by torchlight. The dolphin is a fish superb in its hues, which gleam vividly through the waves, in everchanging green, and silver, and ruby, and gold; but, like some other beauties, is more beautiful, than estimable. It is thought, that the first sail-barge ever modelled was after the curvy form of the dolphin. I saw one little nautilus, fearlessly navigating his scanty shallop, which was about the size of a sea-gull's egg-shell, or small barnacle. The mariners have sometimes multiplied life, by dividing that wonderful creature, the polype, which often attaches itself to the ship's bottom, each section of which would soon reproduce itself into a perfect animal. We have also passed numerous sea-nettles, *urticæ solutæ*, a kind of floating-jelly, supposed by the mariners to be formed by the sun. They are, however, zoophytes, or living plant-animals. They are of different forms, and hues, some beautifully banded, others spotted; and elevating, or dilating their convexity in swimming; and having long loose hanging feelers, which can eject an infinitude of exceedingly minute suckers, which are tenacious, and thus erroneously imagined to sting the tender parts of the flesh of persons in bathing. The sea-nettle feeds upon sea-snails and the young zoophyte is 154 born out of the central contractible and dilatible mouth of its mother. It possesses a phosphoric quality, and, in the night, shows like an unquenched fallen star. When it sinks to the bottom of the sea, it portends ill weather. Although a perfect animal, it will melt away in your hand. On the bottom of the sea, are sometimes found rolling about, those curious marine fungi, called Neptune's caps. Also, along many coasts, and extending for leagues under the sea, are found deep beds of corallines; those curiously beautiful sea-fans, and shrubs, of stony jointed cellular stems, and variegated net-work leaves, of white or vermillion. The stalks have a calcareous bark, and a cartilaginous and tubular internal structure. This sea-plant

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is made by minute animals, which live in the pores; in some species, the animals so small as to be invisible without a microscope. Some corallines, when first taken out of the sea, are covered with a richly tinged transparent jelly, which, in the sun and air, soon dissolves away. Corals and corallines are said to have the property of rendering sea water fresh, and giving it in mists to the clouds, whence it descends in rain. The broad expanse of the sea has sometimes a luminousness, which has been resolved by different theorists into different causes; by some, it has been attributed to electricity; by others, to the effluvia of insects, or luminous animalcules, which, being disturbed, suddenly expand their tiny fins, or phosphorent parts, like 155 glow-worms; by others, to the gelatinous spawn of the sea-blubber; but latterly, to the floating slime of putrescent substances. The sea has thus a splendid surface, and if the hand be let down, it comes up glittering over with little silvery globules. Manifold, and mysterious, are thy creations, thou uncreated Essence! in wisdom hast thou made them all. But I would willingly exchange the sublime and beautiful, but wearisome uniformity of a water-scape; for the more varied, and no less sublime and beautiful scenery of a landscape.

You would smile in sadness, to behold your buoyant brother, hour after hour, silent and motionless, sitting upon the long green-painted coop, leaning his back against the binnacle; his brow scorched by the blaze of the day, and his locks wet with the dews of the night. Here sit I, in moody humour, like Impatience on a capon-coop, scowling at a calm. Here recline I, spying up the shrouds at the small shipboy on the high and giddy mast; which, at that height from the centre, reels an increased arc of motion. But there's "a sweet little cherub, that sits up aloft, will look out for the soul of poor Jack." My heart often pants to outfly the ship, which, with her broad-spread white-woven wings, walks the waves like a gallant thing of life; and to repose itself on the cool green grass under the tall branching buttonwood at home, and to watch the coming of the golden-robin to her hanging-nest over head. 156 Now my eye stretches in the distance, and my imagination fancies some small dark ridge in the horizon to be a sleeping kraken, a floating Delos, or a desolate beach. Then I muse upon the unfortunate La Perouse; the solitary Selkirk and his

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faithful Man Friday, who never heard the sound of the churchgoing bell. Then I revolve the marvels of Quarles, and of Sinbad. And then I dream of Prospero, and Ariel, with the foul witch Sycorax, and the hag-seed Caliban, on the enchanted island; and delightedly listen to the brave prince Ferdinand, who plights his vows to the lovely Miranda, who, although the first she had ever beheld, desired not to see a goodlier man; and, at whose love, she called herself a fool to weep at what she was glad of; and even at the imaginary breeze wafted from such an island, and such a scene, "heaven's breath smells wooingly." Now I awake from my reverie, and turn my view opposite, and I spy afar the mast of "some great ammiral;" and the dark hulls of many rich and portly argosies. From these, I spread my gaze over the vast expanse of ocean, and the touching address of Keate comes with force to my mind:—"Hail, thou inexhaustible source of wonder, and contemplation! whose waves chase one another down, like the generations of men." If we might walk on the bottom of the ocean, depth beneath depth, unfathomable, as on dry land, what wonders, what riches, sublimities, what horrors, should we not find! "The ocean, with its forests 157 of coral, where the sea-wrack collects its moss, and the fucus its complicated threads; the ocean, which conceals a Flora in its deserts, and Zephyrs in its grottoes, possesses also its Philomelas." Who would not delight to range through the gardens of sea-flowers, and to pick up the drops of seed-pearl; to dally with the green-haired mermaidens, and to repose upon the beds of sponges? At noon, I lift my gaze unto the heavens, and apostrophize with lofty Ossian:—"O thou, that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! whence are thy beams, O sun! thy everlasting light? who can be a companion of thy course? The ocean shrinks, and grows again; but thou art forever the same. But thou art, perhaps, like me, for a season, and thy years will have an end." And after the open eye of day is quenched in the ocean, observing how sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the wave, I look again upward, and behold the broad round orb emerging from behind a dark cloud, like a barge from behind a wave; and I admire at her far off sombre lakes, and marvel if yet there be any steam-boats there? Now I recognize with awe the myriad stars, rolling, and shining in their unfading robes of glory; and glowing like living carbuncles in the waters below; and anon I trace the meteors, like rockets, shooting down the southern sky; and the paler

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reflexions darting under the billows. Now, perchance, I hear deep calling unto deep, at the noise of a water-spout, uprushing to 21 158 meet its counterpart from the clouds, and then loud bursting its perilous column of rainbow spray in the east; and now I point at the deceitful eddying of a whirling syrtis, tunnelling the glassy water. In the evening horizon, the west is streaked with shades of blue and saffron, blending into an intervening line of rare and beautiful green; while below, the still waters mingle the rose-tinge of pearl with the deepening glow of purple; dropped in the distance with spray from the light ridges, like flakes of falling melting snows. I love to gaze on the gorgeous and shifting scenery of the clouds; and stretch in fancy, with the poet, through the golden vistas into heaven. I love also to gaze in awe upon the dark dense masses, when the cloud-compeller is gathering in his wrath; when the vivid glance, and the “deep and dreadful organ-pipe” of the Almighty are abroad. At dim midnight, the ship seems struggling amid a foam of phosphoric fire, surging against her prow, and glaring in her wake. It is an august, yet a fearful thing, to be riding on the convex of the world; tossing over ships long sunken, and soulless bodies floating beneath us; afar from those we hold most dear; and separated from eternity, only by a few frail barriers. On this morn, from a haze, and a water of a lighter blue, we feared being too near the coast of Cuba; the little rising squall is not a windkiller; the horizon becomes more dim and circumscribed, and the vexed seas more convex; terror is 159 riding on the wings of mighty winds; the ship groans in every seam; no friendly pharos is near; and now the prow plunges down, down, down, and I think of despair; and now the prow looms up, up, up, and I think of hope. Two carracks, and a rich argosie, into one of which I had well nigh stepped for a waftage, are lost in the gale; but our Joan la Pucelle is more “tight, and yare, and bravely rigged.” Thus, tempest-driven, am I left, after six years absence from my native state, to the tender mercies of the Ruler of the waves, and the winds, in the Gulf-Straits of Mexico!

THE END.

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