

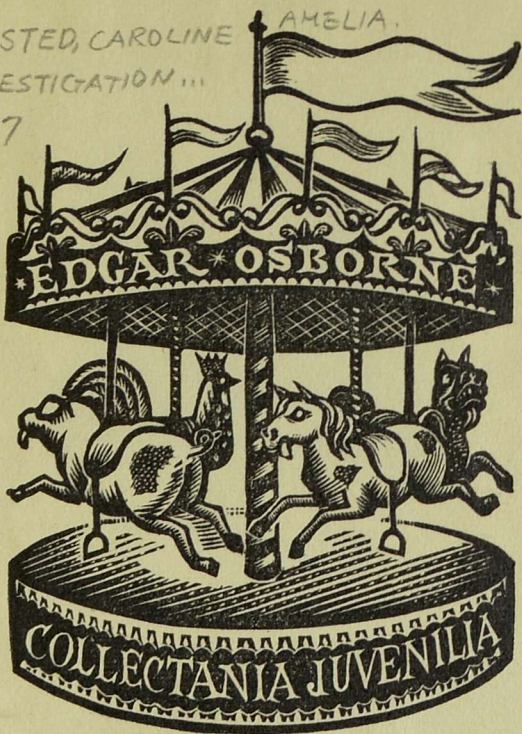


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per deponere l'arte



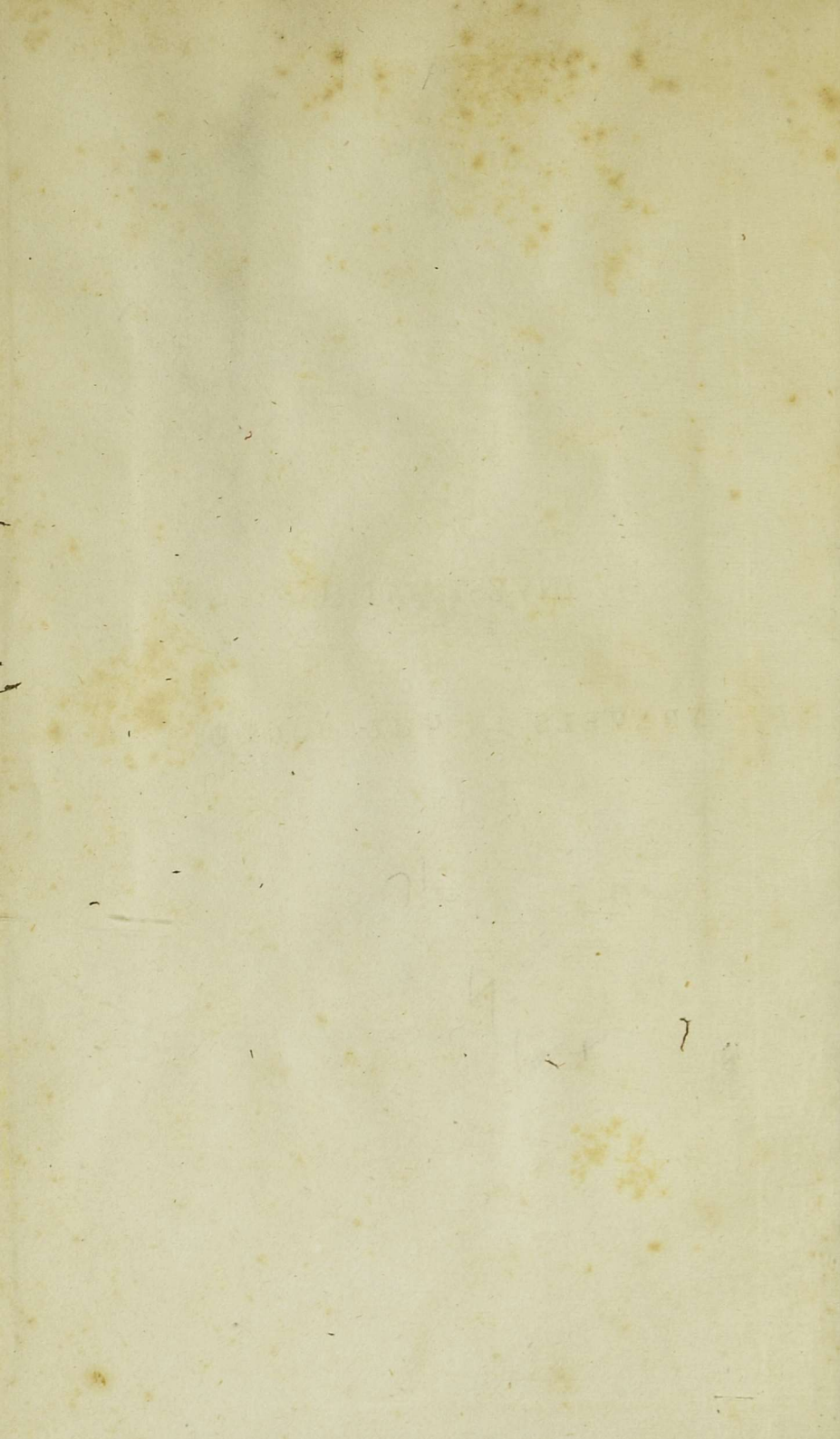
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HALSTED, CAROLINE AMELIA.  
INVESTIGATION ...  
1837



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INVESTIGATION ;

OR,

TRAVELS IN THE BOUDOIR.











*Drawn by C.A. Halsted.*

*Engraved by H. Cook.*

THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

PARADISEA APODA.

Published by Smith, Elder & Co. Cornhill.



# INVESTIGATION;

OR,

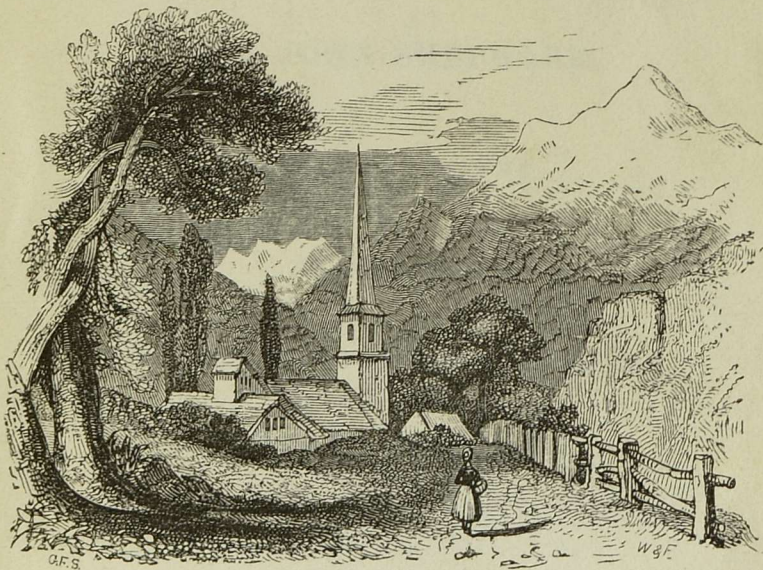
## TRAVELS IN THE BOUDOIR.

BY CAROLINE A. HALSTED,

AUTHOR OF "THE LITTLE BOTANIST."

The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,  
the Lord hath made even both of them.

Prov. xx.



Sketch from the Country of the Waldenses.

LONDON:  
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., CORNHILL,  
BOOKSELLERS TO THEIR MAJESTIES.

1837.

THE ESTABLISHMENT

TRAVEL IN THE DOUBT

BY FARMER A. BARRIS

Author of "The Traveller's Companion"

Second Edition

London: Stewart and Co., Old Bailey.

1841

LONDON:

PRINTED BY STEWART AND CO.

OLD BAILEY.



TO  
HER EARLY AND MUCH ESTEEMED FRIEND,

MRS. JOHN SHEPHARD,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED

WITH FEELINGS OF AFFECTIONATE REGARD,

BY THE AUTHOR.





## P R E F A C E.

---

THE chief design of the following little work is to prove to young persons of active imaginations, that happiness and knowledge depend not, as such are too frequently disposed to imagine, on a foreign tour; but that much valuable information may be obtained in their own country, — amusement in their own homes — nay, pleasant variety and real entertainment, *even in those very apartments* where, for want of occupation, many an intelligent mind may have idly lounged for hours, listlessly wishing for some novelty — earnestly desiring “something to do!”

How many young persons, of superior understanding, who play and sing, dance and paint, with taste and execution beyond their years, — are, nevertheless, totally unacquainted with the origin, history, or progress into general use, of the most ordinary articles with which they are surrounded; so ordinary, indeed, as to be, for that very reason, disregarded, or disdained because within every body's observation: articles which, nevertheless, are so essential to our enjoyment, that their absence would convert the most elegant apartment into a hermit's cell, and give to the most cheerful abode an appearance of desolation, that would at once dissipate that peculiar air of comfort and domestic luxury, which renders an Englishman's fire-side proverbial among foreigners, and *his home* the pride and delight of every true Briton's heart. THERE IS INDEED, NOTHING ON THIS EARTH LIKE A HAPPY ENGLISH HOME! Many may be wiser for quitting it for a time. Few will feel happier or more contented for exchanging it for one in a foreign land. To add to the home recreations of such young persons as have *not* the opportunity of visiting



the continent; and to prove to those who *have*, that seeing is not understanding, and that a mere transient survey of the most attractive scenes, will leave little useful impression on minds not previously prepared to comprehend the nature of the things beheld, is *one* principal object of the following pages. Most of the leading facts, and the elucidations of many of the most prominent subjects considered, are given, either from the personal observations of the author, or derived from the investigation of friends resident in the places mentioned, or connected with the matters described. The whole has been strengthened by references to valuable and standard works; and corrected from the latest and most esteemed authorities. To literary and scientific persons,—if any such should condescend to peruse this volume,—it will scarcely be necessary to state, that knowledge on all subjects (generally speaking at least) must be derived from such writers as first treated, and have since enlarged on them. But the improvements, and valuable discoveries which are daily making in every branch of art and

science, produce, at the end of a few years, a fresh mass of information important in itself, and desirable to be gained by the young, as enabling them to keep pace with the times in which they live.

To compress into a concise form, facts, the authorities for which must be sought out of obsolete and rare works, or obtained from numerous and voluminous ones,—is not altogether an easy task; and precludes the possibility of quoting such as have been consulted, without too much increasing the bulk of so small a work, as is now offered to the public. It must suffice thereof to state, that no fact has been advanced without receiving the sanction of authors, ancient or modern, and corroboration from the personal researches of many talented individuals.

In conclusion the author cannot resist the observation, that perhaps there never was a period when the minds of the rising generation required, more than at the present, to be impressed with the value of those sacred institutions in church and state, which have contributed to raise their country to the highest pinnacle of glory, and to secure to



themselves those happy homes, which they cannot be too early taught to value.

To prove that our happiness as individuals, and our greatness as a community, is attributable chiefly under God's blessing to that venerable church establishment, which teaches her children to submit themselves in all things to the one Great Ruler of the universe — to look up to the one pure source of all good, for peace and plenty, harmony and prosperity—has been *the point* to which the author has wished to render all else subservient in this work. Nothing tends more to diminish the love of the young for their native land, or weaken their respect for our national institutions, than the desultory habits, too frequently induced by a foreign residence, and the undue importance attached to foreign manners, productions, and attainments; — their imagined or actual accompanying advantages, being, alas! often acquired at the expence of those religious principles, which have ever formed, and it is to be hoped will ever continue to form, the basis of a solid English education.

C. A. H.

*Exmouth, Feb. 10, 1837.*





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## CHAPTER I.

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### INTRODUCTION.

*Mamma.* You must be deeply interested in that map of France, dear Agnes, for I have twice spoken to you, and have not received any answer.

*Agnes.* I beg your pardon, dear mamma; I really did not hear you. The truth is, I believe, that I was lost in thought, and not in the least heeding the map, though my eyes, and my elbow too, were resting upon it.

*M.* And may I be permitted to ask on what subject those wandering thoughts of yours were so intently occupied? for it is not usual to make a map a mere resting-place, or to be thinking of other things while looking at one.

*A.* Why, I am not quite sure, dear mamma, that I shall like to tell you my thoughts, for you may be displeased with me for indulging them.

*M.* That, my love, would be very unjust, since I ask you to tell me them.



A. Well, then, dearest mamma, if you really wish to know, I will acknowledge that the sight of the map of France, as it lay accidentally open, led me *first*, to trace your recent tour on it; and then, it made me fancy it was unkind,—No! not quite that; but that it was unlike you and dear papa to leave me at home, and take only Walter with you,—when it would have made me so happy, and have been such a *wonderful improvement* to me, to have accompanied you also.

M. Of the happiness of the matter, I never entertained a doubt; at least as far as happiness depends on lively feelings, golden dreams, and the exhilaration which travelling gives to all admirers of nature; but as I am a few years older than you, my little Agnes, I felt doubtful of the improvement being so *wonderful*, as your disappointment now leads you to suppose it would have been.

A. Still, dear mamma, you must allow I should have seen the places, and the people. I should have visited their manufactories, and have gained more information by a glance of my eyes, than all my reading could convey. In short, I should have understood many things, which now, with all my efforts, I very imperfectly comprehend.

M. Again, dear child, I must differ from you. To *see*, and to *understand*, are as remote from each other, as listening to a foreign language with, or without any previous knowledge of it. You would *hear* a vast deal, I well know, but this would only give you a

strong desire to comprehend the meaning of much unintelligible matter : and you would also *see* much that would astonish and interest you greatly, but which would be robbed of half its power of pleasing—all indeed but the exciting feeling of novelty ; because at your age it would be impossible for you to understand the variety and multitude of things which are visited by, and exhibited to strangers.

*A.* But surely, mamma, I might see first, and read explanations afterwards. It seems to me that having seen such real objects would greatly assist my efforts at correctly attaining more permanent information at my leisure at home.

*M.* Such might certainly be the case with older heads, and with studious persons ; but I much question such a result in youthful minds, which generally prefer amusement to the acquisition of knowledge. According to my old-fashioned ideas, it would be beginning at the wrong end ; my plan having ever been to gain solid information first, and to apply it afterwards, as opportunities occur. I am aware that this cannot always be the case, especially in subjects connected with Natural History ; because a rare shell—a curious bird—or remarkable plant, accidentally exhibited, will frequently stimulate individuals of quick capacity to commence as a study, pursuits, which had previously excited merely admiration and interest. But ordinary matters, which have more claim on the understanding than the imagination, are, I shall ever



feel, more substantially attained before the mind has been over-wrought by a variety of sights, and desultory habits : and I am more convinced of the truth of this remark as regards yourself, Agnes, by feeling how very much there is connected with the commonest articles even in your own house—much more in your own country, which you neither understand, nor could describe ; consequently you would be unable to judge comparatively of such objects in other countries, and would therefore lose one of the greatest advantages of travelling—that of investigating foreign productions, contrasting them with those of your native land ; and perceiving in what we are superior, or where we possess formidable rivals in our continental neighbours.

*A.* Ah ! dear mamma, you are joking ; I cannot fancy I am *quite* so ignorant as you imagine.

*M.* I am sorry if I have under-rated your knowledge, my love ; but I fear I continue very opinionated on that point ; and notwithstanding you consider yourself qualified for a foreign tour, I will be bold enough to say (at risk of wounding your vanity still more deeply) that it would take you a *month* to travel profitably even round my *room* !

*A.* A month to get round your room ! I *cannot* understand you, dear mamma. Why, to penetrate into every corner—to tread over every inch of it, would be at most but a ten minutes' occupation.

*M.* True, if you speak of the mere bodily exercise ; but that would rather strengthen than weaken my



argument. You might go from one end of France to the other in the course of ten days,—if, like the horses in the Diligence, you continued to move on with mere reference to time and space. But I thought you were speaking of the *wonderful improvement* your accompanying us would have been to you; I therefore supposed you meant to have stopped at each place, and to have inquired respecting each object that you did not thoroughly understand.

*A.* And so I did, mamma; and I perceive, that as usual, I spoke without reflecting. But still I am at a loss to comprehend what you can mean by my being a month travelling round your room. Ah! dearest mamma, I cannot help laughing when I look at the chairs and tables, the carpets and such things, and think you imagine that I do not understand them any better than dear little Frank.

*M.* Well! I may be wrong; but it does appear to me that my assertion would prove not very wide of the truth; for although, as a case in point, I know of course that you can tell me you are standing on a carpet, yet I very much doubt if you could describe the process used in making it; or say whether it is Turkey, Brussels, English, or Scotch.

*A.* Dear me, no! that I certainly could not. A carpet has always seemed to me but a carpet; and I have never thought more about it than considering it as a necessary article of furniture. But now, mamma, that you have called my attention to it, I do easily

perceive that there is a material difference between this carpet, and the smooth, flat sort in the school-room ; and also that the soft, velvet-looking one in the drawing-room is quite different from the harder, firmer kind on the staircase.

*M.* The question was a simple one, Agnes, and no doubt rather humiliating to your self-importance ; and yet, my love, had you been on our tour, and seen the beautiful specimens of Abbeville carpeting exhibited in the town-hall at Amiens, as a proof of a new era in the native productions of Picardy, and bidding fair in time to rival the best productions of one of our most flourishing English manufactures, you would have exclaimed, as your brother did, that he wished he knew the distinctions of this common-place article, that he might better have comprehended the pride evinced by the Picardian guide, on exhibiting this improved state of such an apparently insignificant production in his Department.

*A.* Very true ; and this reminds me of a circumstance I thought very singular at the time ; which was, that when my aunt went abroad, she desired that some old pieces of carpet might be fastened round her trunks instead of wrappers, as likely to be serviceable to my poor invalid cousin, when she was ordered to the South of France for her health. My aunt has read, and reflected so much, that no doubt this apparently strange order had some sort of connexion with our present subject. Well, I wish I knew more ; and



could apply what I knew as well as she does, and as you do, dear mamma! But at all events it is of no use to waste my time and thoughts in unavailing wishes; so, as I have no chance of seeing an Abbeville carpet, or listening to the conversation you speak of at Amiens, I may as well shut up the map, and try to forget the subject altogether. But I shall not easily forget carpets generally; for I own I am still greatly amused with the idea of a month's journey round your room. It was such an odd notion, that it makes me quite wish to make the trial. May I do so? On a rainy day it would be very entertaining. Dear mamma, say yes. I quite long to ascertain how much and how little I really know;—only I wish you would not smile so, and shake your head so provokingly, as if I understood nothing useful—nothing but the rudiments of music, dancing, and drawing.

*M.* A little knowledge, my dear child, is of all things the most dangerous; and if I yield to your request, it would be principally to give you a practical lesson of humility, and to curb the self-sufficiency which makes you so frequently aspire to attempting matters beyond your years, and despising those within the compass of your understanding.

*A.* And may I begin to-morrow?

*M.* I have no objection: but carpets being the ground-work of our plan, and essential to its fulfilment, whether as the high road on which you must travel from your room to mine, or the vehicle on which you



must perform your "*voyage ATOUR de ma chambre,*" suppose we select *that* subject as the object of our first day's journey; and as a little compensation for the blow I have given to your vanity, my dear Agnes, I will console you by the assurance that I am doubtful, if you do not find when Walter returns for the holidays, that not only you are more edified by your tour round my room than he was by his tour in France, but also that you will be able to puzzle him with many questions relative to things he saw there, but of which, for want of previous information, he retains but an imperfect idea—the sort of vague feeling indeed, which a beautiful painting leaves on the memory, when the mind is unacquainted with its subject. Now leave me, my love, for I can spare you no more time at present. But look well at all the carpets throughout the house, that you may not have to leave the room to-morrow to examine those of which I may have occasion to speak.

## CHAPTER II.

---

### CARPETS—ASIATIC AND EUROPEAN.

*A.* I find, dear mamma, that the carpet in the school-room is called Kidderminster. How stupid I was, never before to have been struck with the difference of texture between that and those in the library and dining-room.

*M.* The carpets usually styled Kidderminster, are an improvement on the Scotch, which are the cheapest and commonest kinds manufactured: but from this very circumstance, they form a most extensive article of commerce, being within the reach of persons of limited incomes, and commonly used also for sleeping-rooms, and offices in larger establishments. Kidderminster is a very ancient town in Worcestershire, and has for many ages been celebrated for its different woollen manufactures; indeed so long since as the reign of Henry VIII. its broad cloths were celebrated all over Europe. Carpets were first manufactured in this place in 1735; but an inferior sort had been made in Scotland many

years previously : they were, however, thin and coarse, and afforded but little warmth, in consequence of the poverty of the materials used. The Kidderminster, though in appearance somewhat similar, are finer, thicker, and more substantial—this arises from their being double ; by which I mean, that though united at the edges, and apparently single like the Scotch, they are, in reality, formed of *two* pieces of carpeting quilted, as it were, together : but I have had a small specimen of each manufacture brought out of the lumber-room, that you may better comprehend the distinction between the two productions. Take your scissors, and cut off a portion of this piece,—now examine it, my love, and tell me what you observe particularly in the Kidderminster carpeting.

*A.* Why, that each distinct part of the pattern is hollow, like a bag ; and that, when they are uncut, they feel like empty cases.

*M.* Such is the fact ; because the two portions are woven at the same time, and purposely left separate in some places, though they are interlaced in others ; but both parts are wholly united at the edges, that they may constitute one piece of carpeting. Very different, however, is the Scotch mode of manufactory, for cut it where you will, no spaces are to be found, or hollow bags felt ; because, it is composed simply of single rows of coarse woollen threads, which continually intersect each other, and are interwoven firmly together, throughout the whole piece ; consequently



this description of carpetting is less durable than the Kidderminster, as when once it is torn or cut, it easily unravels, and soon appears shabby and comfortless.

*A.* What is the meaning of the word carpet, mamma?

*M.* It is derived from *carpetta*, or *car-pita*, an old Italian word, which signified originally "a covering for floors and passages, made at Cairo;" for the Egyptians have been celebrated, from very early periods, for a beautiful description of matting, which they apply to the purpose of covering floors, and which is quite different from any thing of the kind produced elsewhere. Very elegant patterns are formed in weaving these mats, which are light and cool, of delicate workmanship, and altogether so well adapted to warm climates, that they constitute an extensive article of traffic between the Egyptians, and surrounding nations, especially with the Turks and Greeks; for in those hot countries, fabrics of this description are not only used to cover the floors of apartments and passages, but also the open courts, which are attached to most houses; because in fine weather the wealthy citizens prefer receiving their neighbours in the open air, where they lounge, and smoke together until the hour of repose.

*A.* Then carpets are not altogether a new discovery?

*M.* No, indeed, their origin must be of great antiquity, for very ancient writers allude to the excellence of those made at Babylon; and amongst the

luxuries enumerated, as imported from the East by the Romans, at an early period of their history, were "Babylonish carpets;" and it is somewhat remarkable, that even at the present day the frontier towns, which separate the adjacent country from that in which are the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, excel in the beauty and excellence of their carpets. The luxury, therefore, of these ornamental and comfortable coverings, though recent in our own country, is evidently far from being so in eastern nations, where the floors are of necessity matted, or carpetted; because the natives either sit on the ground, or carelessly stretch themselves upon it. Carpets, such as we are now accustomed to see, were only commonly used in England in the early part of the last century; as we read of a Mr. Moore having received a premium from the Society of Arts, in 1757, for establishing a manufacture in London, in imitation of those of Turkey and Persia.

*A.* Then I suppose, mamma, it is to these nations that we may ascribe the invention of carpets?

*M.* In all probability we are indebted to them for the preservation of the original method, as pursued by the ancient inhabitants of the East;—certainly to them we may ascribe the more recent introduction of carpets into modern Europe; for as the usual posture of the Asiatics has been from very remote times to sit cross-legged, whether in their temples, or at meals, or while entertaining their friends, it is natural to suppose, as



indeed we find it to be the case, that the grandees have mats or carpets spread under them, whenever they desire to rest: for at their visits in that part of the world, they do not set chairs for their acquaintance, as we do in Europe, but a small carpet and cushion are always brought in for the stranger to recline upon. The materials of these vary according to the wealth and dignity of the possessor; and on occasions of great ceremony, or at public entertainments, thick strips of felt, termed *nimmuds*, something resembling our best and thickest hearth-rugs, are arranged for the accommodation of strangers, or persons of superior rank. This Oriental custom is so universal, that on our countrymen first visiting the court of Japan, in 1613, we find it stated that “the king and his nobles did sit at meat cross-legged, upon matts, after the Turkish fashion; the matts richly edg’d—some with cloth of gold, some with velvet, sattin, and damask;” and of the antiquity of this prostrate position, we may also a little judge by its being stated in the records of the early British settlers in India, that “the factors, when they go to an Indian entertainment, do conform themselves to the custom of the East, lying upon Persian carpets; but in the factory they sit on chairs, after the English fashion.”

*A.* Are Persian and Turkey carpets, then, superior to all others, that they are so particularly mentioned?

*M.* They are generally estimated in all countries for the beauty of their texture, and excellence of their



workmanship; especially those of Persia, which are very fine, and the patterns particularly elegant, in consequence of the brilliancy of the colours employed. They are frequently made from the wool or hair of the Caucasian goat,\* and their delicacy is heightened by a mixture of silk. Turkey carpets are usually composed entirely of wool, and are much thicker, and warmer, and remarkable for strength. They are manufactured in many parts of Asia Minor; but principally in the vicinity of Smyrna, from whence they are exported to all parts of the Old and New World. That they must have been greatly appreciated even before the luxury of carpets was so universal as in the present day, may be gathered from the curious circumstance of a fine piece of Mosaic, representing a Turkey carpet, having been discovered, not long since, amongst the ruins of Herculaneum. An early, but celebrated painter too, named Maltese, devoted his talents chiefly to painting imitations of Turkey carpets, and so admirable were his productions, that they had all the rough appearance of the article itself.

*A.* It seems to me singular that carpets should be so generally used in such hot countries; I should have imagined they would make the heat of the rooms insupportable.

*M.* And such would be the case, if their apartments were constructed like ours in England; but as much

\* *Capra Caucasica.*

pains are taken to admit the air in Asiatic houses, as are used to exclude it from those of colder climates—added to which, they vary the texture of their floor-coverings, according to the temperature of the place. In the northern settlements of India, thick woollen carpets are not found too warm, especially during the cold and rainy seasons; and indeed are so necessary, that manufactories have been established in several native cities in imitation of those of Turkey: one in particular, at Migapore, is said in its productions to be scarcely inferior to those of the Levant. In places where these carpets would be too oppressive, they substitute a covering peculiar to India, called *setringee*, woven in different shades of blue; close in texture, yet much cooler than carpets. They also print thick calico, in the same patterns as Brussels carpets, which are a substantial and handsome sort, wrought in the city from whence their name is derived, and which rank next in value to the productions of the East. This light, and excellent imitation, when closely fastened over the smooth India matting, can scarcely be distinguished from the warmer covering it so ingeniously represents.

A. I am wondering, mamma, what answered the purpose of carpets before their introduction into England?

M. It is curious to contrast the simplicity of former times with the luxury of modern days, when accident, as in the present instance, induces comparison. Hol-



lingshed, in his chronicles, informs us, that even so recently as the reign of Edward VI. the parlours of wealthy gentlemen were furnished only with benches, and strewed with rushes; but as one of our English titles of honour, that of Knight of the Carpet, was instituted in the year 1553, we have reason to believe that this article, though doubtless uncommon, was certainly used at court, as this order was so denominated because the individuals ennobled knelt on a carpet at their creation, to distinguish them from military knights, who were created generally on the field of battle. This ancient custom is particularly noticed by Sir Walter Scott, who, in his description of the Lord Marmion, says—

“ His square turned joints, and strength of limb  
Shewed him no *carpet knight* so trim.”

Nevertheless, for very many years subsequently to that period, the coverings of ordinary apartments were merely square pieces of painted canvass, or woollen stuffs, baize, and coarse cloth; the latter ornamented with curious devices, figured in the middle, or with bouquets of flowers in the corners, and a corresponding border of needle-work, composed of coloured worsteds, embellished with silk. Turkey, Persian, and the German square carpets, were esteemed an unusual luxury; and when obtained by means of the merchants frequenting the great continental marts, or *fairs* of Frankfort, Leipsic, Novi, &c., were generally of small



dimensions, capable of covering but the centres of the wooden floors to which they were carefully nailed. The state-rooms of mansions and palaces were floored with fine-grained, and highly-polished oak, as is still visible in many an ancient picture gallery; and in the staircases, libraries, and best apartments of old manor-houses. This continues to be the custom even to the present day in France, where these polished oaken floors are tastefully inlaid with vandyke, striped, or zig-zag patterns, termed *parquets*; and kept constantly rubbed with wax, by men who have brushes affixed to their shoes for the purpose. In commoner houses the floors of the apartments continued to be strewed with rushes, and afterwards with sand, to a very late period, for the English were not always so remarkable for neatness and cleanliness as at present: of this we have a curious proof in one of the epistles of the learned and celebrated Erasmus, who being on a visit with Sir Thomas More, during the reign of Henry VIII., complains bitterly of the slovenly habits of the English. "Their floors," he says, "are commonly of clay, strewed with rushes, under which lies unmolested a collection of beer, grease, fragments, and every thing that is nauseous;" and he, with many other historians of later date, ascribes the prevalence of the plague, which formerly raged so fearfully in England, to the want of cleanliness which this practice engendered.

A. I can well imagine *that*, mamma; for even carpets, thick as they are, are unable to prevent the dust

and dirt from collecting beneath, as is very perceptible when they are taken up to be beaten : but then how cold and comfortless an apartment feels without them !

*M.* Most assuredly in cold weather the comfort they impart is great, and they are besides at all times ornamental. Less civilized nations than ours, my dear Agnes, seem sensible of this; for very few, except savage states, are without some such covering for their floors, especially in winter. From the fibrous roots of the dwarf birch tree,\* the Norwegians and Laplanders manufacture very pretty carpets. In South America the fleece of a small species of camel † is spun into a silken kind of carpet of a dead rose-colour, which sells at a great price; and in some parts of Germany, carpets are even made of dog's hair. In Russia and Siberia a warm and comfortable floor covering, resembling fine matting, is made of the inner bark of the Linden tree. ‡ The stalks of the sago palm, § and the bark of the bread-fruit tree, || are manufactured by the inhabitants of the Phillippine islands into similar articles; and the South Sea Islanders weave most showy looking matting from dyed portions of different species of reed and rush; as do the native Africans from a very long and tough grass peculiar to their country. The floor covering in your papa's study, has,

\* *Betula nana.*† *Camelus Vicugna.*‡ *Tilia Europææ.*§ *Cycas Circinalis.*|| *Artocarpus incisa.*



I know, often attracted your attention. It is composed of split portions of the rattan, or cane\*, manufactured into fine matting by the inhabitants of Sunda, and other islands east of China, where there is a great market for them; they are extremely durable, and when fresh made, with their bright glossy surface of a delicate straw colour, have an uncommon appearance, and are excessively pretty.

*A.* How soft and warm the carpet is, on which I now stand, mamma! How brilliant its colours are, and how very elegant and natural are the flowers represented in its pattern!

*M.* It is one of the kind manufactured at Axminster, a town in Devonshire, remarkable for producing the most beautiful carpets in England. They are made in imitation of those that come from the Levant, and the manufacture was first established at Axminster in 1735: but though it has been successful, and is celebrated for its productions, yet the costly price at which they are sold, precludes the possibility of their being commonly used.

*A.* But what makes them so expensive?

*M.* Because, my love, the method of weaving them is very different from that practised in most other carpet manufactures. They are all woven in one piece, whatever may be their size; and the frame-work or loom, (as it is technically called) which is employed, is of

\* Calamus verus.



very large dimensions. The work-people are occupied in different parts at the same time, working the pattern with needles, from a design hung up before them. The commoner kinds of carpeting are, as you may perceive by that in the school-room, of a narrower description; and sold by the yard, so as to admit of being cut into breadths the length of the room, and sewed together by sempstresses, according to the form of the apartment. Another very extensive manufacture of English carpets is that at Wilton, which employs many hundreds of poor persons; and has been brought to a considerable degree of perfection: the most elegant and valuable wrought there are distinguished by the name of Brussels, being in imitation of those which are manufactured in Belgium. They likewise excel at Wilton in another description of carpeting of very superior quality, something resembling that of Axminster, inasmuch as it is thick, tufted, and velvet-looking.<sup>1</sup> The hearth-rug in the next room is of this description; go and examine it, dear Agnes, for it will exemplify the Wilton manufacture better than any description I can give, this same town being particularly celebrated for the quality and superiority of its hearth-rugs; the carpets, though of course not quite so thick and shaggy, are yet made on the same plan, and have in many respects the same appearance; they bear the name of *Wilton*, because this particular description of carpeting was first made in that town, nevertheless many of the most elegant plush (or *Wilton carpets*, as they are invariably styled)

are wrought at Kidderminster, where the carpet manufacture has so greatly increased, that it is now the chief mart in England for articles of this sort—whether of the flat and simple kind, that are characterised by the appellation of the place; or those with a raised pile, such as I have just described. Leeds, in Yorkshire, is also famed for a very flourishing trade in carpets, some of which approach to those of Wiltshire, in the fineness of their texture; and others are in durability equal to the Kidderminster; but none of the productions of this place are so striking or valuable as those of Axminster, it being in the cheaper kinds that Leeds so particularly excels.

*A.* I have not the least idea how carpets are made. Can you explain the method to me, dear mamma?

*M.* This must, of course, depend on the particular sort required; as although the *principle* of carpet-weaving is much the same in all, yet your own observation will, ere this, have pointed out a difference of texture, and a variety in the appearance of even the few kinds already named. But as a general answer, I can tell you (for I have visited several manufactures) that the frame-work employed is styled a *carpet-loom*, and consists of two upright planks of wood, with two rollers affixed to them; from which (within a groove provided for the purpose) certain threads, the required width of the carpet, are kept hanging perpendicularly. These threads are sometimes composed of woollen yarn, and sometimes of coarse string, or twine, of the same



nature as that employed in the manufacture of sacks, or thick wrapper. If you turn back the edge of the hearth-rug, which you just now examined, you will perceive an example of the latter kind; because the Wilton, Brussels, and all such description of carpets, are woven, or worked, on this sort of hempen foundation. In both cases, however, these upright threads are termed *the warp*. The patterns are formed according to a painted design placed before the workmen exactly as you would copy on your Berlin canvass one of those pretty patterns I brought you from Paris: for *their* design as well as *yours* is correctly coloured, and divided into squares, answering to every ten threads—only, there is this difference, that your canvass is already made for you; but it is only partly so for the carpet-weavers, who complete theirs as they go on, by means of other threads crossing horizontally, called *the woof*: which they pass before and behind each stitch with a shuttle until they have done a line. It is these cross threads that complete the pattern, as different coloured worsteds are arranged in due order by the side of the workman, from which he selects such shades as are requisite to produce the effect indicated in his design. When the carpet is intended to be of that tufted and raised sort, which is constructed on cordage, the worsted portion is worked over an iron wire, and the workmen close the loose threads of their fabric by means of an iron reed with teeth. The wire is sometimes round, like a long netting pin, so that when it is withdrawn, it



leaves a line of small loops such as you perceive on this footstool, which is covered with Brussels carpeting: but in other cases, such for instance as the making of the hearth-rug you have been observing, the wire is flattened at one end like a knife, so that, when the artisan, having completed a row, draws it through the worsted loops, they resist its passage, and are consequently cut; which gives to such carpets as are thus manufactured, the velvet appearance that so distinguishes them from all others.

*A.* I see that the commoner description of carpets possess one advantage over the superior kinds you have been describing, viz. that of looking the same, whichever way it is turned, for in this piece of Kidderminster, both the right and wrong sides appear of the same pattern, only that the colours are reversed.

*M.* This arises from their being composed (as I formerly explained) of double webs of woollen threads, each with a separate *warp*, and *woof* of different colours. These are occasionally interwoven; so that the two webs, being made to pass through each other, the colours come alternately above and below; thus forming the device required. But, as my object at present, dear Agnes, is not so much to make you acquainted with the mechanical portion of different manufactures, as, simply to give you a general idea of the objects respecting which you *now* inquire, and might be induced to inquire about *hereafter*, that you may be able to discriminate between the value of English and fo-

reign productions, and know beforehand what merits your particular attention either abroad, or at home,—I shall confine myself on the present occasion, to stating briefly, that the carpets, which have a velvet look and woolly feel, are thick and warm, very beautiful in colour, and appearing as if made on large meshes, and then cut, are generally Axminster or Wilton; though merely imitations of the still more superb articles, celebrated for so many ages, as the produce of Turkey and Persia. These latter you may likewise occasionally see in the houses of persons of rank and wealth; but they are yearly decreasing in estimation in England, partly from the great excellence to which our native manufactures have attained, and partly from the superior taste and elegance of our designs: the Turkey carpets being most uncouth, and grotesque in their patterns; in consequence of the national religious scruples not permitting the artisans to imitate the works of creation, nor even to delineate animals, birds, flowers, or other productions of nature. Those carpets, which appear to be made on small round wires, and are compact of form, with a turf-like feel, very vivid in colour, and usually of fanciful patterns resembling those in a Kaleidoscope, are called Brussels, and are held next in estimation to the velvet sorts of which we have been speaking. The carpets used ordinarily for staircases,—narrow, wirey, firm, and commonly in stripes of different colours, are denominated Venetian. And finally, those which are simply woven



in patterns, but of a texture resembling thick flannel, and having a smooth surface like coarse cloth, or drugget, are Scotch or Kidderminster; not much estimated in England excepting for common purposes, but so prized a few years since in France, that even old pieces were seizable at the Custom-house, as being a prohibited article; and this caused your aunt to apply them in the way you yesterday mentioned; because, in stopping at the inns on the road, your cousin's consumptive habit rendered it indispensable that she should have carpeting in her sleeping apartment. Even now this ordinary article of English furniture is so little used in France, that in hiring furnished houses in Paris, there is always a clause in the agreement to oblige the tenant to take up the scanty portions allowed, from the month of May to that of October.

A. I thought you once told me that French floors were of brick, mamma; in which case they must be cold and comfortless indeed!

M. In the provincial towns nearly all the rooms, even the sleeping apartments, have floors of this description, termed *Carreaux*; but you must not imagine they are made of common bricks, such as compose our walls, houses, and court-yards. They are formed of a thin kind of tile, generally in the shape of an octagon, or hexagon, closely cemented together, and by no means ugly in appearance; for the French keep them constantly rubbed with wax, so that in time they become highly polished, and of a deep colour, something re-



sembling, in appearance at least, those specimens of ancient red pottery in the library, which you know I prize so highly.

*A.* I should think, mamma, that if done in patterns, it would not be very unlike the Mosaic Roman pavements which I have heard you mention.

*M.* Perhaps not. Only you forget that where the colour is uniform, the pattern will be obscure; Mosaic pavements are extremely beautiful both in colour and design; and very fine remains are still to be seen even in our own country; though much inferior to those in Italy. One specimen, however, discovered at Caerwent, a village of Monmouthshire, in 1777, is esteemed equal to any yet known on this side the Alps. These remnants of antiquity, indeed, though buried underground for centuries, have been preserved as bright in colour, and perfect in execution, as though recently finished: but then the Romans had a peculiar method of vitrifying, or glazing their brick, which enabled it to resist the ravages of time; and prevented its being affected by damp. You may form some little idea of the effect of a Roman pavement, by examining this Mosaic brooch with one of the most powerful glasses of my small microscope.

*A.* Yes! What a change! It looks like coarse stones glazed, and the cement is very visible, though when viewed by the naked eye it appears like a delicate painting. But will you tell me why our carpets are

so superior to those of the French ; since *they* appear so ingenious and clever in embroidery of all kinds ?

*M.* It is not in *beauty of design*, or *delicacy of execution*, that we excel our continental neighbours. So far from it, the manufacture I just now mentioned (in imitation of Turkish and Persian carpets) was *first* brought into our country by two emigrant workmen from the celebrated carpet-works at Chaillot, a village on the banks of the Seine, near Paris, where this art was first practised about the year 1600, having been introduced into France from Persia during the reign of Henry IV., and where, from the extraordinary encouragement given to it, it has been carried to the greatest perfection : nay, even the oriental carpets, beautiful as they are in colour and texture, and greatly prized for their workmanship, are not, it is said, superior to those manufactured at the royal carpet-manufactory in Paris, where probably the largest carpet ever made was executed : viz. that for the gallery of the Louvre, which measured nearly 1,400 feet in length ! It is for the variety, abundance, and cheapness of our carpets that we are celebrated ; and this has arisen chiefly from the inferiority and scarcity of material in other kingdoms, and not for want of ingenuity in manufacturing it. *Wool* is the staple commodity of England, which has long been celebrated for *that* and its manufactures of the same. Our sheep and their valuable coverings, have formed the greatest source of English wealth ; no



wool in Europe being so estimated as that of Great Britain, excepting the Merino fleeces of Spain; in which country we should have had a formidable rival, had its inhabitants been as industriously disposed as our own countrymen. But the cruelties of the Duke of Alva, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the horrors of the Inquisition, together with the bigotry of the Spanish Roman Catholics, drove numbers of their workmen from Spain, and the low-countries, into England, where they were protected by our politic Queen, who fostered and aided them by every kindness and encouragement in her power; until at length the woollen trade became the chief riches of our island, and formed one of the most lucrative articles of foreign and domestic commerce.

*A.* But surely we read of cloths, kerseys, and other woollen articles, earlier than the reign of Queen Elizabeth?

*M.* Most assuredly. The working of wool is of much earlier date, having been introduced into England by King Edward III., who invited seventy families of cloth-workers from the Netherlands, to settle in England in 1350; purposely to promote the woollen manufacture; for singular to say, though the Romans are known to have introduced the art into Britain, yet, so totally was it afterwards lost, that for many years prior to the date I have mentioned, the English used to supply the Flemings, and other continental nations, with wool in its raw state, and

re-purchased it from them again, when dressed and manufactured into cloth, at most extravagant prices; and as the custom of the Lord Chancellor, and Judges, sitting on woolsacks, in the House of Lords was also instituted during the reign of Edward III., it is supposed to have been intended as a memento to the rulers of the land, of the policy of protecting a trade so likely to be a source of national wealth as that of wool. You may judge a little of the importance of this commodity, when I tell you that towards the close of the last century, the annual value of the produce of wool in England was estimated at two millions sterling, and at the present time in consequence of the introduction of machinery it has increased to more than five times that amount! So strict were the prohibitory laws, that all persons accessory to exporting British wool, were liable to a penalty of fifty pounds; and every owner of sheep within ten miles of the sea, was compelled to give an account in writing within three days after sheep-shearing, of the *number* of his fleeces, and *where* lodged; nor could wool or woollen articles be carried towards the sea, or within five miles of the coast between sun-setting and sun-rising, on pain of forfeiture thereof, together with the horses and carriages conveying the same. So that you will no longer wonder that carpets were so prized in France, where wool was inferior in quality and scarce in quantity, when you find the difficulty attending the procuring British wool for the same; it being only



done secretly, and at great risk by persons termed *owlers*.

*A.* What is a fleece, mamma ?

*M.* A fleece, is a term applied to wool when first shorn, and before it is rendered fit for use, by the process of washing, combing, spinning, and dying ; for carpets constitute a very small portion of woollen manufactures. Blankets (so named from Thomas Blanket, an inhabitant of Bristol, who in 1340, first set up the looms, for weaving these comfortable articles), cloth of all kinds, kerseymeres, flannels, worsted-stockings, druggets, baize, merino, are all of wool ! besides many beautiful articles in the way of shawls, handkerchiefs, dresses and cloaks. The real Cachemere and Indian shawls, so expensive and so highly prized, and which form so considerable a traffic in Asiatic countries, are manufactured chiefly from the wool of the Angora, or Cachemere Goat ;\* and have been known to fetch two or three hundred guineas each. But other very costly shawls are made from the fleece of the broad-tailed sheep, † a native of Tartary, Persia, and Thibet ; to the inhabitants of which latter place, the produce forms a vast source of wealth. We have however an excellent imitation of these shawls in our own country, especially at Norwich, where those manufactured by Mr. Knight were con-

\* *Capra Angoriensis.*

† *Ovis Aries.*







A FRIGATE MAKING SIGNALS.

sidered by the society of Arts in 1792, to be so good, that the silver medal, was conferred upon him.

A. Worsted too,—is not that twisted wool, mamma? and cruels, as likewise the coloured lambs-wool with which you net the boas; and with which my aunt embroidered those pretty dresses for me and my little sisters?

M. Worsted derives its appellation from a town in Norfolk, in which the art of twisting woollen yarn was first invented. When intended for embroidery and such purposes, it is dyed after it is spun; but wool designed for cloth, is either dyed in the fleece, or not until after the cloth is made. Had we time to pursue the train of inquiries into which we might be led, by considering the nature and extensive use of wool, and woollen articles, we might pass on to various subjects, that would interest you greatly: for the various sorts of flags, which add so materially to the gaiety of a regatta, when the yachts and other pretty sailing vessels are decorated with colours of every hue, and which answer the more important purpose of signals of the Royal Navy, and constitute the distinguishing regimental badges of the Army; those national emblems, which are *never voluntarily* struck or abandoned by the British *sailor* or *soldier*, but which animate our troops in the field of battle, and enable our mariners to discern an enemy's ship, from one of their own country,—“the mistress of the seas!”—are made of a



thin, but very strong and tough woollen stuff, technically called *buntin*. The different kinds of plaids, so dear to Scottish clans, as the connecting links between them and a long train of ancestors, are composed too of wool; so likewise are the Argovie, and other plaids which distinguish the mountainous cantons of Switzerland.

*A.* Yes, dear mamma, and it would lead us too, to wander from sheep to their guardians; and the very name of Shepherd seems to fill one's mind with poetical ideas, and pastoral scenes.

*M.* Few occupations of the present time connect our ideas more with primæval periods, than does that of tending sheep. Abel was a shepherd, "a keeper of sheep." The Patriarchs were shepherds! and by the increase of their flocks and herds, God was pleased to bless them. The burnt-offering accepted of Abraham in lieu of Isaac was "a *ram* caught in a thicket;" and the peace-offering ordained in the Mosaic law, and intended as a type of our blessed Redeemer's *one* great sacrifice for sinners, was "a lamb!" When the Angel of the Lord announced our Saviour's birth, it was to Shepherds "abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night;" and when the Angels had left them, they proceeded to Bethlehem, and made haste to the manger, where, according to the sign vouchsafed to them, they found the "Lamb of God," the one great "Shepherd of our Salvation," who came to gather into his fold those

stray sheep who had wandered from the paths of holiness and peace.

*A.* Have I not read of the Golden fleece, mamma?

*M.* Very possibly, my love; for there is a very ancient order of knighthood so denominated; having taken its rise in Flanders in the year 1492. The fable of the Golden fleece has generally been considered to refer to the profitable trade in wool, so celebrated in Greece; and established in Thessaly by Eason, one of its early kings, through the means of his son Jason, who is represented in mythological language as having sailed to Colchis to procure the said fleece from a dragon, who guarded the treasure; and whom, after innumerable difficulties, wanderings, and perils, he destroyed by means of Medea, an enchantress. This marvellous tale is supposed as merely intended to point out the benefit he conferred on his country by introducing into it so great a source of wealth and riches. The ancients were fond of fables, and frequently employed them to disguise, or conceal, the origin of such popular traditions, as might be traced to very simple causes: the use of parables, and symbols being as frequent in their *language*, as hieroglyphics were in their *sculpture* and *carving*. Those, however, who are deeply read, and well skilled in decyphering the mysterious relations of the early heathen nations, explain their traditionary stories in a still more interesting manner; tracing in many of them a confirmation of the most remarkable events recorded in



the Old Testament. The expedition of the Argonauts under Jason, for the conquest of the Golden fleece, has been, for instance, considered to portray the leading incidents in the history of the Israelites in Egypt, and during their wanderings in the desert; until by means of Rahab (designated by the Pagans as the enchantress Medea) the city of Jericho was taken; and the Israelites established in the promised land. Certain it is that the Mosaic and fabulous periods correspond singularly as to dates—both events being recorded as occurring about 1300 years before the Christian era. It was not, however, in Greece alone that wool was so estimated. Ancient history abounds with instances of its value, and useful properties. The clothes of the Roman senators were made by their wives and daughters from the fleeces and skins of their flocks and herds; and even the Emperor Augustus was attired in splendid robes, woven by the hands of the illustrious Livia. But the great value of the fleece in early ages, is gathered from purer, and more solid sources than the heathen historians; for we find that God ordained the “first fleece of the sheep” to be given to the Levites or priests; and when Job appeals to God in his misery, he especially alludes to his fulfilment of this ordinance. In speaking of the fleece, it is impossible to forget, that one of the most touching instances of the favour, forbearance, and encouraging mercy of God, to those who really trust in him, and give themselves implicitly to his guidance, is contained

in the beautiful and wonderful sign *doubly* vouchsafed to Gideon, as a reward for destroying the altar and groves of Baal; and an inducement to go out and fight against the Midianites. He first prayed, that if God would save Israel by his hand, he would suffer the dew to fall on the fleece alone; and allow the whole surrounding ground to be dry. On the following night, he entreated that the sign might be reversed:—namely, that the fleece might be dry, and dew upon all the earth. And God did so, for it *was* dry upon the fleece only; and there was dew all around: though the previous morning Gideon had wrung the dew out of the fleece, “a whole bowl full.”

A. Yes; dear mamma, I have always felt that this was very wonderful. How different do articles, otherwise trifling, appear, when considered in this way! I little imagined, when I smiled at your question about the carpet, that it would have led to matters so much more important.

M. We are too apt, dear Agnes, to consider as unimportant those things that are abundant and in daily use; and to deem it waste of time to bestow thought or attention, on articles *peculiarly English*; and which we do not appreciate, because having happily not been deprived of them, we have never felt the want of the comforts they afford us. But to a reflective mind, it is not so. The most trivial matters will often engender more salutary and beneficial con-



siderations than the mere acquisition of knowledge. Such certainly may be the train of thought induced by our present subject; for if by flocks and herds God blessed his chosen people *of old*, can we behold the abundance which crowns *our* pastures, and not with thankful hearts (tempered with fear and trembling at our demerits) consider ourselves as the chosen of God in the present day. He has blessed us beyond all nations on earth. "Our garners are full and plenteous with all manner of store. Our sheep bring forth thousands and tens of thousands in our streets." Nor is it alone in temporal blessings that we are so highly favoured. The light of the Gospel beams brightly and strongly on our happy land. No one, however poor or lowly, is denied the means of enlightenment; or the opportunity of procuring those means. Our homes are peaceful, our country is free, our religion sanctified, our nation respected! These things may not be so intelligible to your young mind as they would be those who are older; but when you lay your head on your pillow, and reflect more particularly on your own happy home, on your freedom from undue restraint, on the many comforts you enjoy, and the mercies vouchsafed to you,—you may carry the feeling into a large field; and view yourself as one of a community unusually blessed, protected and endowed! and had you gone abroad with us, and beheld the Sabbath neglected, the poor uncared for, and religion openly scoffed at, or debased by the most melancholy super-

stition; then, my little girl, would you have felt proud of your country, and thankful, (young as you are,) for the privilege of having been born a native of Great Britain, a child of *that* happy—*that* highly favoured land !



## CHAPTER III.

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### TAPESTRY—AND WOVEN HANGINGS.

*A.* I suppose, dear mamma, if I stop before this old-fashioned skreen, which I have so often despised, and wished banished from your room, instead of selecting some object from amongst those that have always pleased me more, you will smile with one of your most provoking looks, as much as to say, "What a fickle little person is Agnes!" But indeed I was so amused and delighted with our conversation yesterday, that, as this shabby looking skreen bears some resemblance to carpet work, I fancied I should be interested in tracing its history, whilst the working of wool, and the many curious things connected with it were fresh in my recollection.

*M.* When I remember, dearest Agnes, how frequently you have quarrelled with its faded appearance, and contrasted its clumsy construction with the more showy substitutes that better pleased your youthful fancy, I could indeed be tempted to smile; only that yours, my child, is the age for fancy to work in its fullest force. It remains for my better judgment to curb her flights when they are too excursive;—but in-

genuousness is so winning, that as long as I see a disposition to self-discipline, a desire of seeking conviction when a doubt has arisen, I care the less for your untutored feelings, or the inconsistencies into which you may be led by a too lively and active imagination. The waves of the sea in the freshness of a spring morning, impetuously scatter sand and weeds on the rocks which arrest their progress; but towards the decline of day, we often find these same rocks fair and unblemished;—the calm breezes of noon, and the gentler ripples of the evening tide, having cleared away the rubbish, and left the surface free for any fresh, and more durable substance that in the stillness of night may adhere to it more tenaciously. This old skreen has a much closer connection with carpet-weaving than you perhaps imagined; for though the two productions are very different in appearance, yet the material of which this is composed is manufactured in a way somewhat similar to that used in constructing these beautiful carpets, about which you inquired yesterday. This faded looking work is termed tapestry. It is seldom seen, and little used in the present day; but in the middle ages it was in great request, as constituting the chief ornament of palaces, churches, and noble mansions.

*A.* Then tapestry is more ancient, mamma, than carpet weaving?

*M.* In England, most undoubtedly; for tapestry was introduced into this country as early as the year

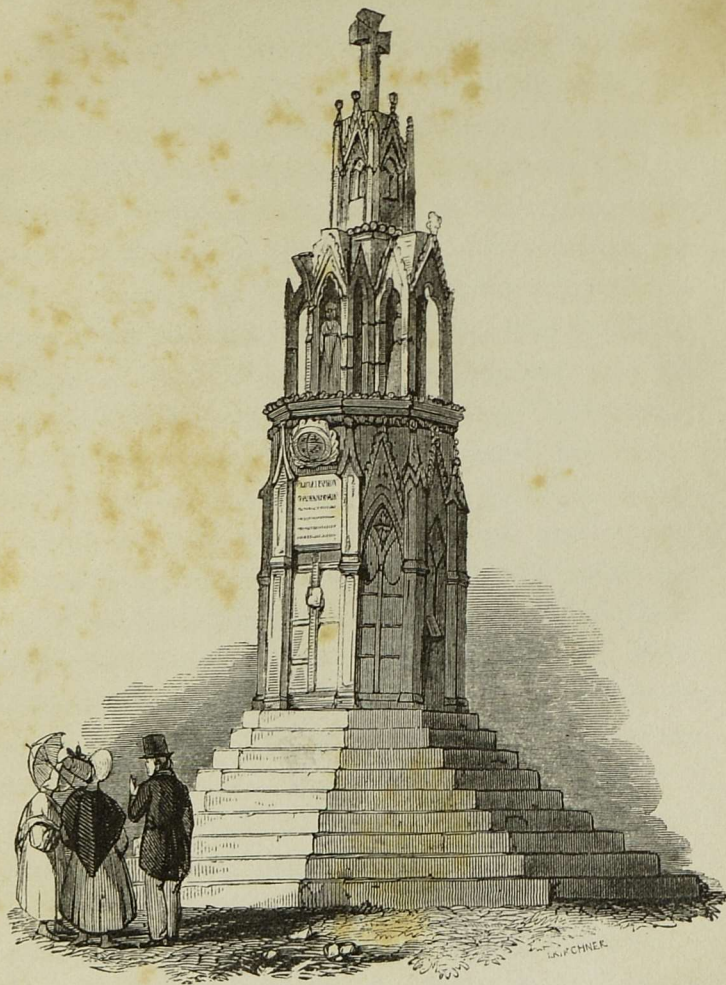


1255, by Eleanor of Castile, wife of Prince Edward, the son of Henry III.

*A.* I well remember that excellent princess, mamma ; for she is said to have saved her husband's life at the risk of her own, by sucking the poison from a wound given him, in the Holy Land, by a revengeful Saracen.

*M.* You are quite correct, my love ; and King Edward appears to have been fully sensible of the value of such devoted affection : for he has left lasting memorials of his grief at her death ; which occurred in 1296, at Horneby, in Lincolnshire, while she was journeying with him into Scotland. The royal mourner returned with the body, and erected fifteen elegant crosses to mark the several places where it rested on its road for interment in Westminster Abbey. For many centuries, they were termed " Queen Eleanor's crosses," and one still existing near Northampton yet retains its original name. Of these ancient edifices however but three remain ; the most remarkable of which is that at Waltham, in Hertfordshire, lately restored by subscription to its original beauty ;—but tradition has perpetuated by their appellations the sites of the rest ; even where the monuments themselves have decayed, or have been replaced by modern objects ; of which you have an instance in Charing Cross, now occupied by a statue of Charles I., but which still retains the name given it, as the last erected of these interesting memorials of kingly attachment.

*A.* And where, mamma, was tapestry invented ?



QUEEN'S CROSS  
(Northamptonshire.)





*M.* The origin of this curious decoration is said to have been in the East; and this seems the more probable, because it is distinctly mentioned in several parts of the Old Testament, but especially in the book of Proverbs, where, amongst the many industrious occupations practised by the frugal and virtuous wife, the making "coverings of tapestry" is particularly noticed. Livy, a very celebrated Roman historian, who flourished during the reign of the Emperor Augustus, also expressly mentions "curtains and tapestry," in narrating the different articles of luxury introduced into Rome by the Asiatic soldiers. It does not, however, appear to have been manufactured in Europe, until a very late period, though it was early brought under the notice of northern nations by the English and Flemish, who are supposed to have acquired a knowledge of the article in Palestine, and to have introduced it on their return from the Crusades, or expeditions against the Saracens.

*A.* That would perfectly accord with its having been made known to the English by Queen Eleanor.

*M.* The supposition I have mentioned is further warranted by a curious circumstance, greatly in its favour, which is, that the workmen employed in the manufacture were anciently called Sarrasins, or Sarrasinois, which seems clearly to denote its origin. Certain it is, that the two nations I mentioned, but especially the English, were the first who wrought this rich and beautiful work in Europe; and as they excelled in



making it, so they have the merit, if not of being the inventors, at least of spreading the knowledge of an art, the effect of which was scarcely inferior to that of the finest paintings; and to which some of the most celebrated masters lent their talents by drawing designs to be illustrated in wool and silk; this singular manufacture giving them an appearance of animation and reality, scarcely to be comprehended, now that the fashion has passed away; and that faded and tattered remnants preserved in very old houses, are all the specimens commonly to be met with.

*A.* And to what purpose was tapestry applied, mamma?

*M.* Chiefly to covering the walls of large apartments, or decorating the interior of churches and convents. On the Continent fine specimens may still be seen, in most Roman Catholic countries, where they are applied to the same purpose; being displayed in front of the altars in large cathedrals, or carefully preserved to ornament the small chapels attached to monasteries and nunneries. In the early period when this art was first introduced into Europe furniture was scanty. The beautiful papers, and fine paintings, now in use, were then unknown; and as size and height seem to have been considered the chief marks of grandeur, the bare appearance of naked walls, must have been greatly relieved by tapestry hangings;—the numerous figures contained in the several histories they were designed to represent, being displayed to peculiar

advantage by the lofty proportions of the apartments they decorated.

*A.* The design upon this skreen appears to have been taken from the Old Testament. By the pit, and the many-coloured coat, I should imagine it to be the history of Joseph.

*M.* It is a portion of what has been a full representation of the unkind treatment of that patriarch by his brothers. The subjects of the best tapestry were generally scriptural, because the immense wealth possessed by the ecclesiastical establishments at the period when these woven hangings were most prized, enabled the clergy to pay a higher price for them than private individuals could afford. Landscapes and animals, however, were frequently represented, as well as the most grotesque subjects from the heathen mythology. Elaborate representations, too, of the battles and events recorded in ancient history, especially those from the lives of Alexander, Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and other heroes of antiquity, were greatly sought after by princes and military chieftains.

*A.* And how is tapestry made, mamma?

*M.* The mechanical part of the manufacture greatly resembles carpet-weaving, inasmuch as the loom is similarly constructed, and the terms warp and woof are equally applicable to the perpendicular and horizontal threads which cross each other; but the method of working the two materials in this frame differs in many respects, though the particular points wherein



that difference consists are too complicated for me to attempt to describe with any prospect of being intelligible. It will be sufficient for you to remember that tapestry, generally speaking, is produced by a very similar process to that followed in the manufacture of the superior kinds of carpeting which I yesterday described, as being woven in one piece; unless the performance is to be on a very large scale, and then certain portions only are allotted to different workmen, the whole being finally united by other artisans, styled "*rentrayeurs*," who are especially instructed in this separate branch of the work, to enable them to repair injuries to old specimens, as well as to complete new performances. Notwithstanding, however, this general resemblance between carpet-weaving and tapestry-work, the two arts are most effectually separated by one peculiarity attached to the latter, which is, that the artisans do not see the effect of their work until the piece is finished—tapestry being all wrought on the wrong side, so that the weaver works, as it were, blindfold. This arises from the subject intended to be represented being drawn on the threads of the warp as soon as it is mounted on the loom, which is accomplished by means of cartons or cartoons, which signify coloured designs, done on strong paper, expressly for tapestry work, from the painting intended to be represented; and which the workman traces on the wrong side of the warp with a black-lead pencil;—the original design being hung up

behind him, wound on a wooden pin, from which he unrols a portion from time to time as he proceeds with his performance. Tapestry, I must also mention, is distinguished by the workmen into two kinds—the high and the low warp. The difference is less in the work produced, than in the manner of working it; and as the former way was found to occupy far more time and trouble than the latter, it is now nearly laid aside, except at the Gobelins, in Paris, a noble establishment, which I hope some day or other to shew you; as it may be said to be the only remaining manufacture of this sort worthy of notice in Europe.

*A.* Oh, then, the French have tapestry manufactures likewise, mamma?

*M.* They boast of the finest in the world, but notwithstanding that they now excel all other nations in this production, the art began to be practised much later in their country than in ours; for though the precise period at which the English applied themselves to tapestry weaving, does not appear to have been satisfactorily ascertained, yet it is known to have arrived at a great degree of perfection during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, and likewise that very little use seems to have been made of the decoration after the reign of James I., who ascended the throne in the year 1603: whereas the first attempt in France, was only made under Henry IV., in 1607, and did not flourish until the reign of Louis XIV., whose minister



the great Colbert, established, in 1667, a manufacture at the Gobelins, in imitation of those which had so long before acquired fame in England and Flanders.

*A.* And why was this manufactory called the Gobelins? Has the term any reference to tapestry work?

*M.* Not in the least, my love; the name is derived from Giles Gobelin, a celebrated dyer, who in the reign of Francis I., (somewhere about the year 1560) erected a large building on this spot, because he discovered that the water of the little river Bievre, on which stands the structure, was particularly favorable for dyeing worsteds, and assisted him in bringing to greater excellence the fine scarlet dye, which still bears his name. This large dye-house was deridingly styled "Gobelin's Folly," but his descendants continued nevertheless to occupy it, and to practise the secret of their art, until the Parisian dyes, but especially the scarlet tint, became in such great repute, that Colbert, who was a zealous patron of the arts, prevailed on Louis XIV., to purchase the building, and to establish therein a manufacture for weaving tapestry. From that period the edifice assumed the appellation of the "hotel royale des Gobelins," and the productions there executed were soon brought to the highest perfection, especially under the superintendence of the celebrated painter Le Brun; from whose designs, when director of the institution, the leading events connected with the life of his royal patron were executed in a

manner truly surprising; the more so, when it is recollected, as I just now mentioned, that the completion of a piece does not always devolve on one workman, but is divided among many: one artist accomplishing the eye, another the mouth, others the hands, feet, or parts of the dress, and as the tapestry of the Gobelins is wrought in portions of a certain breadth only, those workmen (whom I also told you were called "rentrayeurs," or fine drawers), are required to unite them, which they do, with so much ingenuity and correctness, that no joint or seam, is perceptible. The effect produced by some of the pieces, is really astonishing; fine paintings from the best masters have been copied at this celebrated establishment, with a strength and beauty of colour, little inferior to the originals. Remarkable events have been strikingly portrayed, and likenesses of illustrious individuals so correctly executed, that had I not witnessed the effect in my different visits to the Gobelins, I could scarcely have believed it possible, that colours could have been so blended by any process but that of painting, or laid on by any other hand, than an experienced master's. As it occupies however, from two to six years to complete a large piece of tapestry, the price is so enormous, that few but royal purchasers covet the productions. No article indeed can be bought, but by an order from the king, and as the French government expends annually a considerable sum, in supporting this national manufacture, the artisans



are principally occupied in completing presents designed by the court for distinguished foreigners. France possesses, however, several manufactories of tapestry besides that of the Gobelins; the chief of which is at Beauvais, a handsome town, through which Walter can tell you we passed in our road from Boulogne to Paris.

A. There appears a close connection between tapestry and carpets, mamma; their mode of manufacture, their texture when made, and in the French language even the names seem to denote the same origin: for *tapis* and *tapiserie*, must surely have sprung from the same source.

M. The French words you have mentioned, and the corresponding Italian ones—*tappeto*, and *tapezzeria*, are equally derived from the Latin word *tapes*, signifying to line. The latter part of our English compound appellation, car-pet (from *car-petta*,) may be also traced to the same language. At this distant period, it is extremely difficult to define accurately the origin of many of the most common articles in daily use. The art of printing being unknown to our early ancestors, we have little to guide us, in the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, except tradition. Added to this, the communication with distant countries was in those times both unfrequent and hazardous, and accomplished chiefly by men absorbed in particular branches of commerce, or intent only upon deeds of chivalry, or religious pilgrimages. Little informa-

tion, therefore, was to be derived from them, respecting the several articles they casually saw in use, among the strangers with whom they had associated; and although by these means, many objects of use and ornament were introduced into their native land, yet little trace of the country from whence they were first imported, remained on record beyond the original appellations. In process of time even these became so changed and corrupted, that the most learned in the present day have difficulty in tracing the dialect, from whence they were derived. The Crusaders, to whom later ages are particularly indebted for the first rays of that light which gradually dispelled the mist of barbarism which pervaded all Europe before the preaching of Peter the Hermit, were so absorbed by their religious zeal, that all other feelings were subservient to it; still it is to this remarkable confederacy, that we must trace the introduction of many of the most valuable common arts; for as they passed through various countries on their way to the Holy Land, and sojourned long amongst strangers, sometimes in captivity, sometimes as hostages; and of necessity during their weary pilgrimages to and from Palestine, the princes and nobles who led this all-powerful band were the means of disseminating much valuable information, and useful knowledge over Europe, as also of communicating on their return to their respective countries, many curious inventions, with which they had become acquainted, almost insensibly, in their travels.



A. Tapestry is certainly a singular production, and its history is most interesting; still, I cannot fancy, mamma, that it can ever have been pretty: and surely it must have been very inferior to painting: yet you told me just now, that many celebrated masters had designed subjects for the workmen to copy.

M. To estimate the ornaments of early periods, we must be well acquainted with the fashion of all that was coeval with them. The art of painting, for instance, at the time of which we have been speaking, was very different from the perfection to which it is now brought, and in all probability, absurd and grotesque as the tapestry delineations now appear to you, yet the figures in painting of a corresponding date, were far more rude and barbarous; for the art of oil-painting was not discovered until the end of the fourteenth century; whereas we have reason to believe that tapestry had made considerable progress long before that period: for in a valuable work which treats of the manners and customs of the middle ages, we read that, "Joane Lady Bergavenny," a daughter of the Earl of Arundel, married to the Baron Bergavenny, bequeathed to the heir of the Earl of Ormond in the year 1434, (in addition to all her armour in England and Wales, and many costly articles in gold and silver) "a bed of gold of swans with tapetter gren tapestry, with branches and flowers of divers colours;" and to another distinguished person, "her best black bed of silk, with all the apparel of a chamber of the best black tapetter." And

to a third, "a bed of silk, black and red, embroidered with woodbined flowers of silver, and all the costers and apparel that belongeth thereto." This proves that tapestry, although sufficiently prized to be bequeathed with other valuables, was yet in general use amongst the nobility even at that early period; and we cannot have a greater proof of the perfection to which the art was eventually carried, than that the only representation of the destruction of the celebrated Spanish Armada possessed by this country, was executed in tapestry for the then Lord High Admiral of England, at a cost of nearly £2,000! and afterwards sold by him to King James I. This curious relict of ancient workmanship ornamented the side-walls of the late House of Lords, until that edifice was destroyed by fire in 1834.

*A.* That is indeed a remarkable fact, mamma; and now I can quite understand why artists should be required for such vast designs, and artists too of no common talent. Do you happen to know the name of the painter employed on this interesting occasion?

*M.* Cornelius Vroom, a Dutchman, was the artist selected by the Duke of Nottingham, to furnish the weavers with this representation of the defeat of the Spanish Armada; but the great master, whose designs for tapestry have immortalized his name, and who is indebted to these woven delineations for the preservation of some of the noblest productions of his wonderful genius, is the celebrated Raphael: the seven cartoons preserved at the palace of Hampton Court being but a



portion of twenty-five subjects executed by him as copies for tapestry hangings. They were undertaken at the desire of Pope Leo X., and sent to Brussels (then renowned for the superiority of its artisans) to be woven at an immense cost; one set being intended for the papal palace at Rome, the other as a present to King Henry VIII. of England. But it appears, my dear Agnes, that the good people of these times did not think with you that paintings were superior to tapestry; for the latter still remains at Rome, a testimonial of the genius of one of its greatest masters; whilst his original designs, after being tossed about, and encountering every vicissitude of fortune, have gradually diminished from twenty-five to ten; and those few have been so ill-used, that though the gallery at Hampton Court was built by William III. expressly for the seven which Charles I. happily rescued from oblivion through the interposition of Rubens, another eminent painter, yet they were so mutilated, so pricked, nay, actually *cut through* by the weavers in tracing the outlines, that they required the assistance of an experienced artist to repair the injuries they had received from carelessness, neglect, and decay, before they were in a state to be placed in their present situation.

A. This account does, indeed, surprise me, dear mamma; for how frequently have I stood and contemplated at Lady E——h's, the splendid collection of prints taken from those very cartoons at Rome; little imagining when almost riveted to the spot by the

beauty of the figures, that the originals had been merely designs for tapestry ! a production I have so often despised, judging of its effect from the faded, and of course inferior specimen preserved in this old skreen.

*M.* I quite exculpate you, my love, from want of taste or judgment as regards tapestry, for you have had no opportunity of judging of its merits. These stately hangings accorded well with the spirit of the times in which they flourished ; and no doubt, the productions when fresh from the loom, were very superb ; enriched as many were with gold and silver, and the figures in some instances raised from the canvass. Indeed that they must have been costly in *reality* as well as in *appearance*, may be judged from the remarkable circumstance of one of these valuable works, wrought from Raphael's inimitable pencil, having been burned by an Italian Jew, for the sake of the gold contained in some portion of its threads, when the whole set, belonging to the papal palace, unfortunately came into his possession by purchase, on the sacking of Rome by the French soldiery in 1798. His disappointed avarice, however, was possibly the means of preserving them from further injury ; as the trifling amount of metal obtained by this sordid proceeding, induced him to reserve the remainder for more profitable gain, which he afterwards secured by re-selling them at a high price to Pope Pius VII ; by whom they were replaced in the galleries of the Vatican.

*A.* I am glad they were preserved from total destruc-



tion, mamma, for though I may not very much admire the art of tapestry working, yet your description of these curious old hangings assists me greatly in understanding the state of things in former days.

*M.* The advanced state of the arts and sciences since that period, and the increased number of objects yearly introduced to our notice, has made the embellishments of modern houses to consist of a multitude of small, though elegant specimens, perfectly in keeping with the progress of civilization both as regards men and manners. But the things we now so greatly admire would have been wholly out of character amongst banners and helmets, shields and battle-axes; or mingled with the other ponderous furniture of the capacious halls and lofty galleries, so glowingly portrayed by the minstrels and bards of the olden time, whose lays always associate themselves with our ideas of the gloomy and semi-barbarous days, in which they flourished. I never see fine tapestry without thinking of those lines in Gray's beautiful allegorical ode of *The Bard* :—

“ Edward, lo ! to sudden fate  
 “ Weave we the woof; the thread is spun—  
 “ Half of thy heart we consecrate;  
 “ The web is wove; the work is done.”

For the commentators of this sweet poet explain this passage as having especial reference to the amiable and exemplary Queen Eleanor (the early patroness of the

art in England), and to the circumstances that followed her death, which I pointed out to you when speaking of her introduction of the article into this country from Palestine.

A. Oh! I quite well remember those striking lines, mamma, and there is another passage also, in the same poem, which for the future will not only recall *tapestry* to my recollection, from the terms used, but likewise remind me that the period at which it was adopted was that in which these poor bards were massacred: I mean that which begins with—

“ Weave the *warp*, and weave the *woof*,  
“ The winding sheet of Edward’s race,”

and ending with—

“ Now, brothers! bending o’er th’ accursed *loom*,  
“ Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom;”

which I perfectly recollect your once telling me, was intended as a prophetic allusion to the cruelties practised on some of King Edward’s successors.

M. You are quite right, my love. This masterly ode was designed by the poet, who was not only an elegant scholar, but also an antiquarian and profound historian, to portray the anguish of mind and dying inspiration supposed to be felt by one of the Welsh bards, who escaped the general massacre of his race on the conquest of Wales, by Edward I; and to those



well acquainted with the history of their nation, it is impossible not to be struck with his faithful but touching elucidation of the events of that dark period, couched as it is in language so forcible and expressive, that this poem is ranked amongst the highest order of those in its style in the English language. At all events a retrospect of the horrors of those feudal times, whether conveyed in poetry, or in prose, must satisfy us that the gloomy solemnity of these heavy, yet magnificent tapestry hangings, was more in accordance with knights in armour, tilts and tournaments, and the chivalric pursuits of the Plantagenet and Tudor periods, than would be the delicacy of our modern satin papers, the lightness of the apartments they embellish; or the ingenious ornaments which adorn the villas, lodges, and cottages-ornée of the present day.

*A.* Are there many remains of fine tapestry in England, mamma?

*M.* Very few, my dear, in comparison with what adorn the French palaces; for St. Cloud, Versailles, and Fontainebleau, abound with the best productions of this art in all its different stages and varieties. Some of our nobility and many ancient families, it is true, still retain, and carefully preserve, these relics of feudal times, and there are some fine specimens at St. James's Palace, Hampton Court, Blenheim, and Chiswick; and also at the Charter-house, where they were placed by the Duke of Norfolk, so far back as the reign of Queen Elizabeth; nevertheless, as the greater portion so preserved is

merely kept on account of its antiquity, the colours are usually faded, and the whole appearance too sombre and sad to excite general admiration; for notwithstanding King James I. gave £2,000 to build a house at Mortlake, in Surry, for the encouragement of the manufacture of *Arras*, a superior description of tapestry for which the Flemings were celebrated, and which was so named from the town of Arras (formerly the capital of the province of Artois, now the principal town in the department of the Pas de Calais), yet it met with so little encouragement after his death, that though Charles II, on his restoration, sent the seven cartoons which his father had rescued from oblivion, to be woven in tapestry at this establishment, yet they were never executed; nor do we meet with many productions of the kind fabricated in England of much later date than the reigns of Elizabeth and James. Tapestry weaving continued to flourish to a much later period in Flanders, and some master-pieces of this curious decoration were wrought at Brussels during the last century, and are annually exhibited in its venerable cathedral. But the manufactures of that city, once so sought after by Popes and Sovereigns, so prized by crowned heads, and so connected with fine paintings and celebrated painters, have, I believe, now quite ceased to exist, or, like those of our own country, are become unimportant and obsolete. There are, however, still extant *two* most interesting specimens connected with this ancient art, which you will like to hear described. One consists of the tapes-



try and hangings of a bed carefully preserved at Hardwicke Hall, in Derbyshire, on account of having been worked by the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, during her long and wearisome captivity; the other of the celebrated tapestry of Bayeux, in France, executed at the time of the Norman Conquest, and embracing the history of Harold, the brave Saxon, from his embassy to the court of William I. in Normandy, to his death at the battle of Hastings. Though in the possession of the French, the work itself is usually ascribed to the English ladies attendant on Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, who presented it to Odo, bishop of Bayeux, her husband's brother, in gratitude for his assistance during the struggle for the crown. It must have been an immense undertaking, as it is nearly three hundred feet in length! and, independent of the multitude and variety of figures requisite to illustrate the many subjects of which it treats, it contains a Latin inscription in curious old letters, explaining the leading events of each of the seventy-two compartments, into which it is divided. But these remarkable relics are the production of the needle, and not of the loom; and consequently, though usually styled tapestry, should be more properly termed embroidery, for which the British ladies in these early times were particularly celebrated.

A. Dear me, what a surprising undertaking! How I could smile when I look at my performance on Berlin canvass, or recall to mind the embroidery I lately

finished for you, dear mamma, and fancied such an achievement. Surely the ladies at that time must have been singularly industrious ! But though I am astonished at the account of the curious Bayeux tapestry, yet the performance of the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, interests me far more, because it must have been so painful to work when her heart was heavy and full of sorrow.

*M.* Perhaps it was her greatest solace ; for nothing adds so much to the pang of anxiety as yielding to the restlessness it occasions ; nothing subdues the whole human frame more than time watched and waited for. We can neither lengthen the hours of pleasure, nor shorten those of pain ; but the varied occupation which enjoyment gives to the thoughts appears to diminish the same periods which sorrow renders so irksome ; because we are too apt at those times to sit idly watching the clock, and listlessly counting those hours which Dr. Johnson observes, “ may be tedious, but can never be long.” In tracing the progress of her work from day to day, Mary beguiled the tedium of her imprisonment ; and created for herself an object of daily interest even in a state of captivity. A late excellent Divine used to say that “ laziness began in cobwebs, and ended in iron chains.” Nothing certainly is more weakening to body and mind than want of employment ; it engenders fretfulness and discontent, enervates all our faculties, and unfits us for the many trials and troubles of life, from which you see even the most



exalted personages are not exempt. Reflect then, dearest Agnes, often and seriously on the value of time; that great and precious gift so seldom appreciated, until it is gone past all repeal; and whenever you are tempted to waste it, my child, or in idleness to bemoan those casual disappointments, which *you*, in common with all human beings, must occasionally expect to meet with, let the example of the royal captive stimulate you to equally industrious habits; for if, in her unjust and cruel imprisonment, a Queen— young, beautiful, and highly educated, could, for want of more active and suitable employment, embroider a complete set of tapestry hangings, how inexcusable would indolence be in you, who are free to choose and vary your employments; free in body and in mind, and able to pursue the bent of your inclination, with a light heart and unfettered spirit; very different from the hopeless endurance, the agonizing disappointments suffered by this ill-treated, ill-fated exile: very different too from what you would experience, my little girl, were you deprived of your freedom, or compelled to employ your hours in necessitous toil; instead of being blessed with the privilege of selecting such occupations as tend to your present improvement, your future advantage, and I would fain hope to your eternal happiness hereafter.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### MODERN PAPER HANGINGS.

A. I have been thinking a good deal, mamma, about the tapestry hangings, which you described yesterday, and it has led me to imagine, that the ornamental paper which now covers the walls of apartments must be quite modern; but I should never have thought of inquiring about so common a matter, if reflecting upon what you told me about woven hangings, had not convinced me, that at the time *they* were used those of paper must have been unknown.

M. Your conjecture, dear Agnes, is so well-founded, that I am quite pleased with the remark; because it proves, that you not only reflect upon what you hear, but that you are acquiring a desire of general knowledge, a feeling I wish to encourage, because one subject leads so insensibly to another, that by pursuing the chain of inquiries into which you will naturally be led, and gratifying the desire of information this will as gradually create, your mind will be enlarged, your



character strengthened, and a habit of observation induced, which must in itself create a fund of amusement for future years ; and render more agreeable those lighter accomplishments, which, though pursued at your age as studies, will hereafter be probably continued but as pleasing pastimes ; for when you have ceased to require the attendance of dancing and drawing masters, and are able to enjoy music without the practice, and stated hours, which seem irksome to the young, but must of necessity be imposed in the school-room, you will yet experience a void, that will make you appreciate the value of the more substantial enjoyments which reading, and a taste for scientific pursuits affords to all well cultivated minds.

*A.* Then, mamma, I was right in supposing that paper hangings were introduced after the use of tapestry had been given up ?

*M.* Not altogether so, my love ; but rather that on the discovery of a less expensive method of ornamenting apartments, the demand for tapestry decreased ; and the wide field this new invention of coloured papers opened, for constant improvements, and variety, as well as the immense difference, in the cost of the two materials contributed to accelerate the progress of the one, and to lessen the value of the other.

*A.* I have often admired the paper in this room, dear mamma, it has such a soft velvet look ; indeed the surface of some parts of the pattern are quite raised too, but, of course this is a late improvement,

and I dare say altogether different from the kinds first invented.

*M.* On the contrary, *flock*, or woolly papers, were amongst the earliest that were introduced; for the eye having been accustomed to the substantial appearance of tapestry, the delicate sorts of paper, now in daily use, would have appeared tame and out of character with the furniture of those early times; neither were the arts sufficiently advanced, for attempts to be made at producing a substitute for the said tapestry on so slight a groundwork, as the texture of the coloured papers now so universally adopted. Perhaps too, you are not aware, dear Agnes, that paper itself in its most simple form is but a recent manufacture in England,—the first establishment, which was at Dartford in Kent, having only been instituted in the year 1588.

*A.* But surely, mamma, I have read of paper being used long before that period?

*M.* Most undoubtedly you have; for paper made from the papyrus, and the inner bark of trees and reeds, is of very high antiquity: and paper made from cotton, was in use as far back as the Norman conquest. But, *that* prepared from linen rags was not known till 1319; nor was scarcely any kind but brown paper made in England until 1690, in which year white paper was first manufactured in our country.

*A.* I am not surprised then, that ornamental papers are comparatively recent, for the advance in the art must have been very great, before the mani-



facturers became bold enough to think of papering rooms.

*M.* The first transition from tapestry hangings to the lighter, and less gloomy substitutes which have entirely superseded it, was the introduction of a material, in appearance very much resembling the modern velvet papers; only that the groundwork of this article, was composed of canvass or coarse linen. The merit of this ingenious invention, is due to one of our own countrymen, an English artist named Jeremy Lanyer; who, in the reign of Charles I., obtained a patent, "for affixing wool, silk, and other materials of various colours upon linen, cloth, leather, and other substances, to make them useful and serviceable for hangings." From this production we may date all the variety of modern decorative papers; for it is expressly stated in the patent "that the said art which he calleth Londrindiana, is of his own invention, not formerly used by any other within this realm;" and as we find that a very few years afterwards, floss or velvet papers were greatly in demand for lining apartments, there is little doubt that paper-makers soon succeeded in devising means for strengthening, sizing, and tempering, their less durable material; so as to enable this curious method to be practised on paper as well as on linen. It was speedily adopted in France, and pursued with extraordinary success at Rouen in Normandy, from whence it was introduced into Germany; and has since gradually spread all over Europe.

A. But how, mamma, did the artist contrive to produce the velvet look you have mentioned?

M. The ancient flock cloth hangings which succeeded to, and were intended to represent tapestry, were made by first spreading coarse canvass upon a large and even surface, and then covering it well with strong size; whilst it continued wet, shreds of woollen cloth, technically called flocks, and which had previously been ground as small as possible, were sifted through a fine sieve, all over it. Iron or wooden rollers, were then used to press this soft substance quite close; and when perfectly dry, and well tempered with alum-water, designs of various kinds were painted with black, red, and other colours, on this cloth-like ground-work. The effect of this production was not only good, in large apartments, but the material rendered it very durable; and its resemblance to tapestry was so great, unless closely examined, that this ingenious invention was most appropriately termed by the French, "tapisserie en laine hachée." Velvet papers succeeded to flock hangings, and were produced by a very similar process; only that the art had now advanced sufficiently to admit of the figures only being covered with flock, and the intermediate spaces left plain, which had a lighter and better effect; though of course, the process was more complicated. By degrees different shades were introduced, and different coloured flocks applied to represent various objects on the same ground; such as festoons, curtains,



stripes, and pillars. In process of time the shearings of fine cloth from different cloth manufactories were substituted for the coarser and more irregular particles of flock; so that this improvement, conjoined to variety in pattern, and design, contributed to produce very delicate and beautiful productions; and the English name of velvet papers most aptly expressed their elegant appearance; as did also the French term of "papiers soufflés," the light and pretty look given by the cloth shearings.

*A.* And how, dear mamma, are the more common kinds of paper made? I mean those that look like painted calicoes.

*M.* The various sorts of paper manufactured for lining rooms are innumerable; there being scarcely any device or colour that has not been successfully imitated, or perseveringly attempted. But the particular kind relative to which you inquire, is managed in a very similar manner to the process used in printing the calicoes, which it appears to you they so much resemble. To produce this effect, a pattern of flowers, figures, or some fanciful device, is drawn out on a piece of paper the required breadth. This pattern is then copied on different blocks of wood, of a particular size, and the space on the blocks not occupied by the drawing is carefully cut away; leaving prominent the wreath, figure, or device, that is to be transferred to the paper. Large sheets, previously prepared, and of a suitable breadth, are then stretched over a

flat, and even surface, on which the workman proceeds to stamp the first portion of the pattern, which he continues afterwards to fill up in the same manner with such other colours as are requisite to complete the design, a separate print being of course used for every different colour. Very great care, however, is necessary to manage the joints in the pattern, neatly; and where many tints are needed, great delicacy is required in letting the blocks always fall in the same place.

*A.* This sort of paper appears to me to resemble those in the library and school-room, mamma; but that which covers the walls of my bed-room is not so well finished; it is not raised or glossy, neither is it so neat looking as that respecting which I just now inquired. Is it manufactured in the same way?

*M.* No, my love; the coarser sorts of paper used for offices and sleeping apartments are produced by means of what is technically called *stencilling*; which is effected in a manner quite the reverse of the process used in printing; for in the kind of which you are now speaking, the mere outlines are stamped; and the pattern, instead of being carved on blocks, is cut out in pieces of oil-cloth or leather, which are placed on the paper, according to the form of the outline. The workman then, with a large brush, covers the whole fabric with blue, green, or other colours properly tempered; by which means every part becomes stained, excepting such portions as are preserved from the tint



by being covered with the pieces of cloth or leather I have mentioned, and which are denominated *stencils*. But these stained papers are coarse looking, and very inferior to those that are altogether printed; nevertheless, their cheapness renders them a very convenient substitute for such kinds as require more labour, and the dexterity of experienced artisans.

*A.* Certainly the change from tapestry to paper must have been great! I almost wonder that the attempt succeeded; for in proportion as the former decoration appears heavy-looking to us, mamma, so I can fancy the latter would have seemed tame, poor, and even mean to eyes that had always been accustomed to richer materials.

*M.* And such no doubt was the case; for though it is somewhat difficult at this distance of time minutely to trace the progress of an art which has been for a long period so common as to excite neither interest nor attention, yet we can pretty well judge how *gradually* the use of tapestry hangings must have subsided, by considering the many intermediate inventions which were devised for ornamenting the walls of apartments, before painted papers were so universally adopted. Amongst others was a remarkable production termed *gilded leather tapestry*, which was very generally used by the higher classes and wealthy citizens of Europe, towards the end of the seventeenth century. It was quite in accordance with the spirit of the times; and must have been rich-looking and handsome, for it consisted of

various showy patterns ; such as wreaths and bunches of flowers, fruits, cornucopias, stars, &c., being drawn on leather, and then gilded either with leaf gold or by covering the device with some less expensive metal, and giving it afterwards the appearance of gold by means of a brilliant yellow varnish.

*A.* The cover of the piano-forte, dear mamma, must be something like it, I think ; for that is made of leather, and quite covered with small gilt figures.

*M.* You could not have chosen a better example, my love ; but what I particularly wish you to remark is, that as this mode of lining rooms was adopted about two hundred years since, it carries us back to the very period at which the use of woven tapestry began to decline ; and as we further learn by the annals of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, that the peculiar method practised in England of varnishing metals, as a substitute for the more expensive gilding elsewhere used, was first made known to that body so recently as the year 1768, it leads us to the conclusion that the use of ornamental paper was only partially followed at that time, and that long after its first introduction it continued to struggle for pre-eminence with the more substantial hangings it was eventually to rival.

*A.* Were any other kinds used then, excepting those you have described.

*M.* Very many, dear Agnes, though perhaps the greater part may be considered rather as those of the present fashion in their infancy or ruder state, than as



constituting distinct modes or obsolete productions ; for instance, in the early part of the last century, painted oil-cloths and canvass were used, on which were portrayed a series of scriptural subjects, the figures being drawn as large as life ; but though this material is no longer used, yet we still find, especially in France, that whole sides of rooms are papered with illustrations of one subject drawn from history, travels, or voyages. Some of these are most beautifully painted ; and few things attract a stranger's attention more in travelling through that country than the brilliant colours and admirable effect of the French painted papers, which are unrivalled ; one manufactory in Paris alone, employing one hundred and fifty journeymen besides apprentices, to form landscapes, figures, and imitations of sculpture and architecture. In the reign of Queen Anne, silk and satin hangings were much in request ; and state apartments were also hung with damask, crimson cloth, and such costly materials. Of this we have an example at Blenheim, which house being built to perpetuate the exploits of the great Duke of Marlborough, and bestowed on him by his country as a munificent reward for his services, we cannot desire a better test of the prevalent fashions of the time in which he flourished than the style of decoration his mansion affords. Consequently we there see united the three principal methods of ornament which I have described, some of the rooms being hung with tapestry after the ancient

custom, others with the flock paper, which was beginning to rival it, and the chief apartments with the rich silken materials I have just mentioned. But of late years there has been such a wonderful progress in the manufacture of decorative papers, that not only silks and satin have been so successfully imitated as greatly to supersede the use of the articles themselves; but even damask, flowered silks, and figured velvets have been copied so ingeniously as to deceive the most experienced when viewed at a distance.

*A.* What a rapid improvement must have been made, dear mamma! It is really quite astonishing considering the comparatively short period. Do you remember, on our visit to —— House, the superb papers, which you said were meant to resemble gold and silver brocade?

*M.* Most perfectly; and this elegant article has been brought to even greater perfection in Germany, where the idea originated. The papers intended to produce this brilliant effect, are first painted white, rose-colour, or shaded according to the taste of the artist; metallic dust, or a composition in imitation of it, is then sprinkled all over this delicate ground-work, the portion to be gilded having been previously moistened with some glutinous substance, to which the glittering particles adhere. This sort of hanging is now very rare, but the art of stamping gold and silver figures on crimson or other coloured papers has a most pleasing



effect, and is managed in a somewhat similar manner to the process I described when speaking of the papers which appeared to you to resemble printed calicoes.

A. Oh yes! I remember those quite well; and also, mamma, that you said they formed *one* only of many kinds used for lining rooms; so I hope you have yet several amusing particulars to relate.

M. I told you quite truly, my love; for every year is producing some fresh invention, or bringing former ones to greater perfection. But it would be impossible to narrate them all, or to particularize the different means used in producing their effects. The apartments in some houses are very simply lined; the papering being merely a representation of wooden pannels, divided by colmuns or pillars from each other: this effect is the result of common painting only, care being taken to give the lights and shades requisite to heighten the deception. When the walls are required to appear less smooth, and more resembling stone than wood, then a composition or coloured wash is substituted for paint. Another description of paper, chiefly intended for halls, galleries, and staircases, is most ingenious, being contrived to represent marbles of every colour, as well as granite, porphyry, and jasper. To produce these effects a more complicated process is required, but it well rewards the dexterity of the manufacturer; for the deception is astonishing, particularly when rendered more remarkable by architectural divisions. But of all the various materials used for lining rooms

perhaps the most beautiful is that in imitation of India paper; being a representation of birds, butterflies, and other gorgeous productions of the East. This is done after the manner of water-colour, or oil paintings; and the effect is very superior to that of such papers as are printed; for in the outlines of these latter there must always be a degree of formality; but where the brush only is used, perfect freedom and softness is attained. Sometimes gold and silver ornament the plumage of the birds, and at other times cloth shearings raise the foliage or make the figures appear in relief; but whatever may be the pattern the groundwork of the paper is always previously prepared, and highly varnished, which shows the rich looking fruits and flowers that are afterwards painted on its silvery surface to great advantage.

*A.* And are paper borders, mamma, manufactured in the same way as paper hangings?

*M.* There is little difference, my love; for all borders, however small, are, in the first place, equally executed on sheets of paper of the usual width. In this form they leave the manufactory, and are afterwards cut into strips, by persons employed for the purpose. They partake of all the varieties of texture I have already described; being printed, painted, or made to represent cloth and velvet. But for the commoner sorts of stained paper, a border is sometimes made, in which dry colours finely powdered are substituted for flock; being strewed on a sized ground in



a similar way, but rendered by the difference in material much cheaper. There is another most ingenious article connected with paper, which is frequently substituted for bordering, being employed in its place for finishing the upper part of rooms, by imitations of mouldings and other such fanciful decorations. It is a composition called papier machée, and it has been brought to such perfection that an engineer officer assured me the beautiful cornices, friezes, and ornamental works that adorn the walls of a celebrated public establishment in London, were entirely composed of this simple material, which has, when applied for the purpose, all the appearance of carved stone or stucco.

*A.* And what is papier machée, mamma?

*M.* It is a substance formed of the shreds or cuttings of brown or white paper, which are first boiled in water until they are reduced to a pulp, and afterwards put into a mortar and beaten to a paste. A proportion of gum-arabic, size or glue, is then added to this mixture, when it is again boiled, and acquires by the addition of the glutinous matter sufficient tenacity to be capable of taking any form, by means of oiled moulds.

*A.* I think, mamma, it must a little resemble plaster of Paris.

*M.* It is not very unlike it in *appearance*, but it possesses over it one decided advantage; for the preparation you have mentioned always continues brittle, and liable

to injury; whereas papier machée, if properly made, will become hard as stone; and when highly varnished or otherwise tempered, is most durable, and continues uninjured by heat or cold.

*A.* How much I should like to see this curious substance, mamma!

*M.* Your wish, dear Agnes, may soon be gratified; for if you remove that vase of flowers you will be able to examine a small stand made of papier machée which is applied to this purpose, as well as being used for toys, ornamental articles for toilette tables, and other similar purposes.

*A.* Dear me! I always imagined this pretty little tray was made of japanned metal; it is so glossy, and of such a jet black. Is it possible that this can be paper?

*M.* It was originally composed of that material, I do assure you; and the appearance that has misled you is simply produced by the addition of size and lamp-black, with which the dried paper paste is covered after its removal from the mould in which it acquired its round and plate-like form. If gold or silver figures are to be added, or that coloured patterns are designed to embellish it, they are painted on the hardened surface, which is afterwards highly varnished, and finally baked several times in an oven, until, by gradually increasing the heat, it becomes so solid and glossy as to be able to bear hot or cold liquors without injury.



*A.* Well! this is very astonishing, mamma; I never could have imagined that so fragile a substance as paper could, by any contrivance, have been wrought into a substance so firm and substantial as this tray.

*M.* The various works of art, my dearest child, are so interwoven with each other, that like a vast chain each link serves but to connect the extremes of such ingenious productions as form the boundaries of one department, and yet unite it, as it were, insensibly, to others; so insensibly, indeed, that it is somewhat difficult to limit the termination of one manufacture, or to define the commencement of another. The whole forms a wonderful and fascinating labyrinth. Once entered on the path marked out by the curious contrivance of man, we find ourselves induced to wander from one branch of science to another, until the development of the great mass fills us with almost as much wonder and astonishment as that excited in our minds, by considering the more perfect and more finished productions of nature. But, in contemplating with admiration the industry and capabilities of man, we must never forget that "all science, all knowledge, and all powers, can originate from one source only—the Divine fountain of all! For what knowledge have we but that which is derived from Himself, or from the external world? and what is that world but His creation? and what is creation but the composition, structure, and arrangement of all things according to His previous plans, intentions, will, and mandate?" Man is,

nevertheless, a wonderful creature, endowed with powers of thought and intelligence, and capable of exerting those powers to so vast an extent, that in many instances his fellow-men look up to him as to a superior being, differently constituted from themselves. Such is not the case! Perseverance and unwearied industry are the great main-springs that act thus powerfully on the machinery of man's genius; and the knowledge of this, added to the reflection that many of our most useful discoveries have emanated from uncultivated minds, and have been brought to perfection by persons of moderate education, should be a stimulus to urge us to the active exercise of those particular powers with which we are all more or less gifted; although they may be roused to exertion in some from poverty, or be suffered in others to remain dormant from the want of energy, or indulgence of the indolence which wealth and luxurious habits engender in the human mind. But I think I hear your summons to tea, dearest Agnes; you will in that case have another opportunity of examining papier machée; for the red tray, on which your tea equipage is placed, is also composed of that material, red, blue, and other colours being often used instead of the lamp black which gave to my little flower-stand the jet appearance you mistook for japanned metal.



## CHAPTER V.

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### ORNAMENTAL FEATHERS.

*A.* THIS curious looking box, dear mamma, always smells so sweetly as I pass it, that I could almost imagine it to be a box of spices; but it is so closely fastened, that no doubt something more precious is within.

*M.* You are tolerably correct in your conjecture, my love; for it is a box containing spices of many sorts: not, however, placed there as a collection, but intended as a preservative to various kinds of ornamental feathers, brought me at different periods from foreign lands. The scent that seems so fragrant to you, in passing, proceeds, however, chiefly from the box itself, which is made of cedar: \* that wood being so disagreeable to moths and insects generally, that in Eastern countries, cases are usually constructed of it, as the best means of keeping feathers uninjured. I will,

\* *Juniperus Virginiana.*

however, touch the spring that secures my box; now draw out the lid, dear Agnes, and see what you can find inside.

*A.* Oh! mamma, how superb! but this can never be a feather? It appears a mass of many kinds. Dear me! I now perceive that it is a whole bird, the colour of my canary;\* but with a throat beautifully green like the humming birds. † What do you call it?

*M.* It is the plume of a bird of Paradise, ‡ my love; for I can scarcely call it the *bird*: as you will find that the legs are wanting, though the beak, head, and body have been carefully preserved.

*A.* What a lovely creature! And how gracefully its plumage waves. I can scarcely imagine such birds flitting in the open air.

*M.* They would not exist many hours in our cold climate, dear Agnes, even were it possible to transport them hither alive; for they are rarely met with even in tropical countries, being natives only of the warmest parts of India. They are principally obtained from the Molucca or Spice Islands, to the inhabitants of which they have long formed a most lucrative article of traffic; being greatly sought after by the native princes, and military chieftains of India, who use them as plumes for their caps. In Persia too, they are equally valued; being not only prized as an

\* Frangillo Canario. † Trochilus. ‡ Paradisea apoda.



ornament for turbans, but persons of high rank in that and the adjoining kingdoms, decorate the handles of their sabres and the trappings of their horses with these elegant feathers.

*A.* The bird of Paradise is a remarkable name, mamma: though in truth these pretty creatures seem distinct from all the rest of the feathered tribe, and only fitted to breathe such balmy air as one attaches to the idea of Spice Islands.

*M.* They were styled birds of Paradise, because, when first discovered, various and most extravagant fables were reported concerning them; amongst which, it was long generally believed, that whence they came, or whither they went was unknown; that they lived in celestial dew; that they were perpetually on the wing, taking no rest but in the air; were never taken alive, and consequently could only be obtained when they fell dead upon the earth: so that the vulgar imagining them to drop out of Heaven or *Paradise*, and being struck with the beauty of their shape and plumage, bestowed on them the singular name by which they are still distinguished.

*A.* And when were they first discovered, dear mamma?

*M.* They were first introduced to Europeans by Antonius Pigaféta, who accompanied Magellan, the Portuguese navigator, in the ship *Victoria*, when she sailed round the world in the year 1520. After his return from that long voyage, amongst other striking

objects enumerated in the Diary of his Travels, he made particular mention of birds of Paradise. He speaks of them as most magnificent creatures, and held in such esteem and veneration by the inhabitants of the Molucca Islands, as to be termed by them "Manucodiatae;" that is, "God's birds."

*A.* And when were they commonly used as ornaments of dress in Europe?

*M.* Not for a considerable period after their first discovery; for the intercourse with eastern countries was not at that time so frequent and speedy, as by comparison it now is. Communication with the Spice Islands in particular, was of rare occurrence, and only made at distant and uncertain periods. And though the mariners, and ship-owners, whom chance or commerce conducted thither, all endeavoured to bring home some of these precious plumes, yet few succeeded in preserving them from the devastation of insects, until the end of so long a voyage. One of the earliest worn in Europe, was that purchased in the year 1593 by the Emperor Rudolphus II.; who, taking great delight in the works of nature, was most anxious to become possessed of the plumage of a bird of which such marvellous tales had been told. From this period the masters of vessels, and especially the Dutch pilots, who sailed yearly to the Spice Islands after they became possessed by Holland, contrived means for bringing many of these birds to Europe, selling them at Lisbon, Amsterdam, and Franckfort at an



enormous price. After the Moluccas were taken by the English in 1796, they of course became better known in our own country; and were soon much sought after as ornaments for ladies' head-dress; by degrees too, the fabulous tales originally circulated were succeeded by faithful accounts of their nature and habits; so that the Bird of Paradise is now as scientifically described and understood as any other bird belonging to so distant a clime; yet so deep-rooted and firmly believed were the singular notions and accounts first propagated concerning it, that the specific appellation of "Apoda" by which ornithologists distinguish the bird you hold in your hand, is derived from a Latin word signifying "footless;" it being supposed to have neither legs nor feet.

*A.* I had observed, mamma, that this bird was destitute of both.

*M.* All birds of Paradise sent home merely as ornaments for the head are imperfect, being deprived of such parts of their bodies as have no particular beauty; that they may not cover or obscure the splendid plumage for which they are so prized. The same motive induces the natives to shoot them with blunt arrows, or to catch them in snares; which latter method is the less difficult, as by reason of their short legs, they cannot easily rise in the air, when once they have alighted. When dead, their breast-bone is taken out, and their legs are cut off; in short, nothing but the head and skin are left; which latter is stuffed with cotton

and spices, and either smoked with sulphur, or dried in the sun, preparatory to their being sold to the merchants. Sometimes only the wings and side feathers are dressed, as you may perceive by a pair of small plumes that lie immediately beneath the larger one you first removed. The *whole bird*, however, is by far the most esteemed; and when well preserved, contains two remarkable appendages like bristles or shafts of feathers, which arise from the middle of the tail; and are stiff and stubborn, of a black colour, and something resembling whale-bone.

*A.* Yes; here they are, mamma; I should have taken them for pieces of wire. What a remarkable bird! Do tell me what they resemble in their wild and natural state.

*M.* I have never seen one alive, my love; but I have frequently examined a specimen brought from India by the late Lord E——h, and which was considered to be very finely preserved. Here is a drawing. I made of it, by which you will see that its body is about the size of a blackbird\*, with a bill bending a little towards the point; the head covered with short, thick, golden feathers like plush; the under part and throat being of a beautiful bright green, something resembling that of the Mallard.† The body, back, wings, and tail, are of a reddish chesnut colour; but the great peculiarity of this bird, and that which causes it to be of such value, is the cluster of elegant feathers springing

\* *Merula.*

† *Anas-boschas.*



from beneath the wings. They are much longer than its body, and extend a great way too beyond the tail ; being a foot and a half, and sometimes even more in length. These plumes are of an uncommon structure, very fine, exceedingly light, and the web or edge of each feather so open as to have the appearance of gauze. The longest are cream-coloured, tinged with chocolate ; the shorter ones that fall over them are of a brilliant yellow, with an occasional reddish tint at the tip. They fall either above or beneath the tail ; but are of so loose and transparent a texture as to show it distinctly through them. The tail extends a little beyond the ends of the true wings, and consists of a few feathers of the same brown colour, not more than three inches long : from the centre of them proceed those *cirri*, or wiry strings, I just now mentioned, which are frequently sixteen and eighteen inches long. The feet and legs are somewhat clumsy, shaped like those of a jay\*, and armed with small, but sharp claws. They build in trees, and feed on insects and berries, associating in flocks of forty and fifty, and flying always against the wind ; as otherwise they would be buried in the abundance of their beautiful plumage.

A. I am not in the least surprised that mariners were astonished at first seeing this singular bird, or that fables were imposed on the credulous ; for even a true account is sufficiently wonderful to require the

\* *Corvus Glandarius.*

sight of a stuffed specimen to render its peculiarities intelligible. How these pretty creatures may look in Spicy islands, and lands of eternal sunshine, I cannot tell; but indeed, mamma, it seems to me, that in their flight they must more resemble comets or flames of fire, than living animals. I suppose this black-looking bird is placed at its side by way of contrast, for I see no beauty in it, and nothing that indicates an ornament for the head.

*M.* What then will you say, when I tell you that this apparently insignificant-looking creature is the king bird of Paradise;\* the leader of the flock, and so rare, so seldom obtained, that when the Spice Islands were taken by the English, this very specimen was presented to one of the officers by a rich native of Amboyna, as a valuable and curious gift.

*A.* But for what purpose, mamma? Not for its beauty, surely, for it is very homely-looking.

*M.* Were we to despise all that is homely-looking, my child, we should deprive ourselves of much that endears us to life—much indeed that is most valuable in it. A dull exterior frequently conceals gems of inestimable value; whilst the glitter of glass and of foil forms the attraction of weak minds only, and misleads none but the ignorant and unwary. This sable-looking bird is prized for its rarity; there being but one in a flock of vast numbers, it is seldom obtained, and from its un-

\* *Paradisea regia.*



attractive plumage, excites not the cupidity of the natives; but it is termed by them *the king bird*, because it is observed always to be at the head of the flock. Very many wonderful stories were told of this captain, as well as of its more splendid companions:—that it flew high above the rest, and tasted the fruits and water before the others partook of them. These of course, are but idle tales; but all writers on the subject agree that birds of Paradise have their leader, which differs in size and colour from the rest of the flock; nevertheless, for want of having seen them, naturalists differ very much in their accounts, many of which are obscure and imperfect; though the bird you are now examining agrees in most particulars with the black king described minutely by Clusius, an early but celebrated ornithologist, who flourished about the time when these beautiful creatures were first introduced into Europe; and who therefore bestowed excessive pains, and gave great attention to the subject. He describes it as much smaller than others of its race, the body being about the size of a starling,\* covered with black plumage, some portion of which resembles horse-hair.

A. I was just going to remark, mamma, that some of the feathers, especially those proceeding from beneath the wings, are infinitely more like horse-hair than feathers.

\* *Sturnus*.

*M.* Upon a slight inspection they appear so ; but if you pluck out a single feather, and compare it with one taken from the golden plume of the more showy bird, you will perceive that the same peculiarity of structure distinguishes them both. It is only the black colour that gives to one the appearance of horse-hair, instead of that of gauze belonging to the other. Clusius further states that the black bird of Paradise which he saw was peculiar to the island of Gilolo, and others near it. Now these *are* the Spice Islands ; from Amboyna, the chief of which, you may remember, I told you this very bird was brought. But suppose, before you put it aside, that you take it to the window : possibly it may be better worth examining than you at first imagined.

*A.* And so indeed it is, dear mamma ; for instead of its looking like a mere black bird, I never beheld any thing more beautiful than the feathers on the back, the sides, and the tips of the wings.

*M.* The beak is longer : but otherwise, both that and the head are similarly shaped to those of its gayer companions ; only that the thick short little feathers on the crown of the head are of a bronzed black, and more resemble thrums of silk than plush ; but they have an equally metallic or burnished appearance with those on the throat of the other bird : whilst the feathers on the back, and the tips of those on the wings are so brilliant and shining, of such a superb blue, green, and lilac, that I know of nothing to which they can be



compared, but the neck of the peacock,\* or that of the wild drake.† The plumage of the throat and breast resembles black velvet; being without gloss, but exceedingly fine and smooth. The wing feathers are broad and square; and those of the tail are also longer and stiffer than such as belong to the other birds of Paradise; but though not adorned with such graceful side plumes, you will yet perceive that similar tufts of gauze-like feathers spring from beneath its wings, and extend some length beyond its body and tail, appearing of a jet-black, unless exposed to the sun's rays, when they assume a deep chocolate tinge. So also do the two wiry feathers which proceed from the tail of this bird; and which peculiarity inseparably connects it with its tribe: for though somewhat shorter, they are equally as naked looking, and appear to the touch like quills, from which the feathery edges have been abruptly cut.

*A.* The feet and legs, too, are missing; indeed the bird altogether corresponds too well with the ornamental one I first examined, for me to doubt its being of the same species; even if the manner of its being preserved did not mark its having been prepared by the same people.

*M.* The two birds, my dear, were brought to England at the same time and from the same place, but at that period a whole one was so rare, that the companion of

\* *Pavo cristatus.*

† *Anas boschas.*

the beautiful specimen which so surprised you on first opening the box, was intended *for*, and presented *to*, the late Duchess of York, by the Naval officer who brought these home. You will not therefore often see a finer or better preserved bird. But, we must not, dear Agnes, allow these oriental plumes to occupy more time; for this "*curious looking box*" is well filled, and doubtless contains many others relative to which you may desire information.

*A.* I need not inquire the names of these, mamma; for I know that both the white and black are Ostrich feathers.

*M.* They are so; and are procured from the wings and tail of that largest known bird, the ostrich;\* a bird of such magnitude and power, that stratagem, united to the speed of the fleetest horses, can alone secure his profitable prey to the hunter. These giants of the feathered race are inhabitants of the torrid zone; frequenting the plains and sandy deserts of Asia and Africa; where they are sometimes seen in such multitudes, that on beholding them afar off, they seem to be troops or armies of horsemen. To the Arab tribes these birds are a source of great profit; and it is principally from them that Europeans procure the largest and finest feathers; but a great portion of such as are used in England come from the Cape of Good Hope, where they sell more reasonably on account of their

\* *Struthio Camelus.*



greater abundance; though the feathers of the South African ostrich are not so much esteemed generally: being neither so full, nor so regular as those procured from the Arabs, who, after fixing on the best, cruelly pluck them from the poor birds while alive.

*A.* Some of these feathers are much longer than others. I suppose the longest are the most valuable.

*M.* They are so, and are termed *royals*, being used for court-dress, and on other state occasions; one of the principal of these being the ceremony of the Installation of Knights of the Garter, whose hats of black velvet are surmounted with superb plumes. These are valued at a high price from the scarcity of the larger feathers, which are obtained solely from the *wings* of the ostrich; those of its tail being smaller, less white, and frequently imperfect. His Majesty George IV. was celebrated for the magnificence of his plumes; and that worn at his coronation in 1821, excited universal admiration. The practice of wearing ostrich feathers is of high antiquity; for Pliny, a celebrated Roman writer, mentions that they were much prized by the ancients for adorning caps and helmets. We also know that they must have been used in Europe at an early period; not only from their having formed a conspicuous part of the costume ordained by its founder for the noble order of the Garter, the most distinguished, and "the most ancient of any lay order in the world;" (having been instituted by King Edward III., in the year 1344, as a memorial of his

numerous conquests:) but likewise from the circumstance of his son, Edward the Black Prince, having assumed the crest of the king of Bohemia, who was slain at the celebrated battle of Cressy in the year 1346: and which crest consisted of three Ostrich feathers, with the German motto, "Ich dien" (I serve.) This badge the Prince of Wales and his successors, adopted in remembrance of the above-mentioned great victory, and have ever since retained. Nor did the custom cease with those chivalrous days; as we have repeated instances on record of its having been selected as a mark of distinction by various great commanders, from that period even up to the present time: for the unfortunate Murat, one of Napoleon's celebrated generals, and created by him king of Naples, was always distinguished in battle by his superb plume of ostrich feathers; and he was only dethroned and executed so recently as the year 1814.

*A.* You said that the Arabs procured the larger feathers from living birds, mamma; but surely if they are so powerful, this must be a hazardous task.

*M.* It might prove so, were the ostrich gifted with sense, or sufficiently conscious of its powers to use them to their full extent; for even a stroke of its wing has been known to break the thigh of the huntsman. But we are told by Job that "God hath deprived her of wisdom; neither hath he imparted to her understanding:" and certainly it is a most singular thing



that these birds should imagine that when their heads are hidden they are safe. The same inspired writer emphatically alludes to this remarkable circumstance, when he says, "What time she lifteth up *her head* on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider." And such indeed is the case; for their fleetness at first is incredible: yet, from the astonishing fact I have mentioned, they at last voluntarily yield themselves a prey to their persevering and barbarous pursuers.

*A.* But why does not the ostrich use its wings?

*M.* Because, my love, they are small in proportion to its size, and quite unfit for flying; in consequence of the plumage which covers them, being differently constructed from that of the feathered race generally. The web or beard, (by which I mean those little silky filaments that grow on each side of the quill, like fringes,) is downy and loose, and not united into a firm, compact mass, like that which distinguishes the wing feathers of other birds; added to which, the quill divides the web exactly in halves, from each side of which, it droops with a regularity both as regards form, length, and texture, very different from that of most other feathers. It is this peculiarity that gives to Ostrich plumes their graceful, light, and elegant appearance, but at the same time it unfits these creatures for flight: consequently, though they *have wings*, yet they are apparently only designed to aid them in running, which they do most materially; for by being spread like sails, and their movements being

made to correspond with those of their legs, their natural fleetness is so greatly accelerated, that for a long time they baffle every effort at overtaking them, though their enemies are mounted on swift Arabian horses; but at length, spent with fatigue and overcome with hunger, they suddenly bury their heads in the sand, or thrust them into a thicket; thus rendering themselves an easy prey, either to be despatched with clubs and shorn of their feathers on the spot, or to be taken prisoners; when they are kept and tamed to afford future and constant supplies.

*A.* Poor things! it seems sad to take such advantage of their simplicity; though I am provoked to think they should so stupidly seek their own destruction. You have a great variety of ostrich feathers here, mamma; both coloured, as well as white and black; some of them are quite flat, others round, many are curled, and a few straight.

*M.* Ostrich feathers of all kinds require dressing before they are fit for use; as in their natural state they are of course sandy and soiled. They are also too stiff and stubborn for ornamental purposes, until properly prepared by artificial means; so that on quitting the deserts, large and small, perfect and imperfect, are tied up by the Arabs indiscriminately into bundles; in which state they are purchased by the merchants, who know that further trouble in sorting them is unnecessary: as they must be examined at the Custom House, where they are liable to a duty, before



they pass into the hands of feather-workers; a class of persons who make use of various ingenious methods to give to feathers the different appearances you are now contemplating. The flat sort are simply cleaned and rendered supple for head-dresses by means of heat, and by shaving away the under part of the rib or shaft; but the round ones, technically called *fox feathers*, are composed of various portions taken from the sides of larger and perhaps damaged feathers; long lengths of which are twisted round a wire stem, until they become thick and bushy. Those long and very drooping feathers which you have in your hand, commonly termed *hussar*, or *lancer plumes*, are merely the loose and silky filaments of several beards knotted together, and curled or *créped* as it is styled, by means of hot irons and baking. The red, green, and black feathers are dyed; for though the plumage on the body of the ostrich is altogether black, yet its texture is very peculiar, and quite unlike that of other birds, having more the appearance of soft cotton or wool. It is the quill feathers *only* at the tips of the wings and tail that are used for head-dresses, and they are all of a most dazzling white.

A. And these delicate grey ones, mamma, are they dyed also?

M. No, my dear child, they are procured from the American ostrich,\* a smaller bird, whose whole body

\* *Camelus Rhea.*

is covered with plumage of this delicate hue; though the feathers on the back and wings are the largest and most beautiful.

*A.* And are ostrich feathers put to any other uses?

*M.* Not very many; and of these the most material is that which relates to mourning; for which the black plumes of this bird are generally used as an emblem: the melancholy trappings of hearses, horses, and mutes at public funerals, being composed of clusters of black ostrich feathers; forming a striking contrast to the gay pageants of worldly grandeur, at which its admired snowy plumage is exhibited; and which, alas! we too often see exchanged, for the sable plume, that denotes earthly annihilation, ere the youthful votary of fashion has had time to ponder on the instability of sublunary joys, or the fleeting pleasures of a courtly career! Before parasols were invented, bunches of coloured ostrich feathers were formerly much employed in Italy as well as in England, to make fans for ladies, not merely for the purpose of cooling themselves, but also to shade the sun from their eyes. Of late years, too, boas have been made from twisted portions of smaller plumes: and the edges of bonnets are sometimes trimmed with the same material: indeed, the feathers of this majestic bird have always been held in great estimation all over the world for different ornamental purposes; and they still form an extensive and lucrative article of commerce to the several African nations, who export them, and so they are



likely to continue ; for while fashion requires the white plume to wave over the sunshiny paths that conduct the young, the beautiful, the noble, and the brave, to the courts of kings, and the smile of princes, or the black plume to shadow still more deeply the sad and sombre passage that leads to the grave ; the tawny inhabitants of Afric's burning clime, or Arabia's sandy deserts, are not likely to be deprived of those weighty considerations which their more enlightened brethren of Europe give in exchange for a feather ! But I believe I must touch the spring of the box rather sooner, dearest Agnes, than you will like ; for I have an engagement this afternoon with your father, for which I shortly expect a summons, and as I perceive that you have not nearly exhausted its contents, I think we had better leave the examination of the remainder until to-morrow ; when I shall be at leisure again to accompany you in your survey.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### ORNAMENTAL FEATHERS—CONTINUED.

*A.* I have been anxiously waiting your summons, dear mamma; for I know that there is much amusement in store for me to-day. I am such an admirer of feathers, and of the pretty graceful creatures from which they are obtained, that I never tire with looking even at those with which I am familiar; and yesterday I caught a glimpse of many that were quite new to me. Here, for instance, is a coronet, and a plume to match, very different from any thing I have ever seen. It appears as if a fine white powder had been sprinkled upon dark brown feathers, something resembling those of the Gallina; \* but much handsomer, and infinitely larger.

*M.* It is the produce of the Argus Pheasant, † a fine bird with very remarkable plumage; not so much on account of its brilliant colours or variegated tints, as owing to the extreme delicacy and regularity of its

\* Numidia meleagris.

† Phasianus Argus.



marks, and the singular fact of very sombre shades, being so strikingly, yet harmoniously blended, that the effect is *perfectly unique*, and particularly pleasing. This rare bird inhabits various parts of Asia, especially Sumatra, and the peninsula of Malacca. It is about the size of a common pheasant\*; but it unites several of the peculiarities which distinguish others of the feathered race; amongst the most remarkable of which, is the power of displaying in a fan-like form the rich plumage of its wings when pleased, much in the same way that the turkey† spreads its tail, and that peacocks‡ occasionally expand their elegant trains. But the uncommon size of its wing feathers, many of which exceed two feet in length, render their weight so disproportioned to the size of the bird that they appear rather to be intended to aid it in running than to assist it in its progress through the air. In this respect the argus pheasant resembles the ostrich, as, like that gigantic bird, it expands its wings like sails; by means of which it is carried along by the wind with a speed almost incredible. Such ornaments for the head, as you are now examining, are made from the wing feathers of the young male bird before the beauty of its plumage is fully developed. The tail feathers of the older birds are very large, and so long that the two in the centre frequently measure between three and four feet! their plumage too is altogether different,

\* Phasianus Colchicus. † Meleagris Gallopavo. ‡ Pavo Cristatus.

THE ARGUS PHEASANT,

(PHASIANUS ARGUS)







as instead of appearing sprinkled with white powder, the larger feathers are entirely covered with spots resembling *eyes*, from which circumstance it derives its specific name: Argus, the son of Aristor, being represented in the heathen mythology as possessed of a hundred eyes.

*A.* I do not recollect to have seen any feathers of this sort before, mamma.

*M.* That is very probable, my love; for though the plumage of this elegant bird has always rendered it an object of attraction to the inhabitants of India, where immense clusters, richly decorated, are used by their slaves to fan the native princesses of that luxuriant clime, yet their extreme stiffness, and the difficulty of dressing them without injury to the web, has prevented their becoming so common in Europe as many other ornamental plumes. In addition to this, the bird, even in a dried state, is very rarely seen in England; neither, I believe, has there ever occurred an instance of a *living specimen* being brought to this, or any other northern climate. But its plumage, either whole or in separate portions, has long formed an important article of commerce to the inhabitants of the sultry district of which it is a native, being exported from thence, not merely in the shape of head ornaments for men and women, but as trimmings for dresses, and to embellish many articles connected with eastern entertainments, processions, &c.; not used in, or not familiar to, the western hemisphere.

*A.* I think, dear mamma, that the peacock might



claim the name of Argus fully as well as the rarer bird you have just described ; for when its tail is spread it appears quite covered with eyes of the most dazzling beauty.

*M.* From that very circumstance, my dear Agnes, the peacock shares materially in the wonders of the marvellous fable to which you allude ; for it is said that when Argus was shot by Mercury, Juno in compassion transformed him into a peacock, and scattered his hundred eyes upon the feathers of that bird, which is always represented in mythological paintings, as drawing the chariot of the Queen of Heaven, when Juno appears abroad in that character. The Emperor Adrian presented to the temple of this goddess at Eubæa, a magnificent peacock, whose body was of solid gold ; the colours of its train feathers being imitated by an abundance of the most precious stones. At Samos, likewise, where there was another temple dedicated to Juno, vast numbers of living peacocks were superstitiously preserved and attended to with extraordinary care, being considered under her special protection : for which reason they became so estimated, that the superiority of the Samian birds was well known to the ancients, and is often quoted by their classical writers.

*A.* I had no idea, that the peacock was so celebrated ; or that its fame was so great in ancient times.

*M.* In all ages, and from very early periods, these superb birds have been regarded and valued in no common degree: for not only did the primitive heathen nations indulge their lively imaginations by accounting thus marvellously for their dazzling plumage; but we have still more certain proof of their antiquity, by finding them mentioned several times in the Holy Scriptures. Job especially alludes to their beauty: and in the first book of Kings, they are enumerated amongst the treasures imported from the east by Solomon. "Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver: ivory and apes, and *peacocks*." Alexander the Great was so captivated with the beauty of these striking-looking birds during his conquests in the east, 327 years before the Christian era, that when he first beheld them wild in India (of which country they are natives) he strictly prohibited their being killed. The Grecians esteemed them so highly, that at Athens enormous sums were given for a pair; and the Romans considered their flesh a suitable delicacy for the imperial table. Nor was this estimation of the peacock confined to ancient nations only; for in England, these birds were formerly served up at royal feasts, and public festivities, adorned with all their beautiful feathers, which were carefully laid aside at the time the birds were killed, for the purpose of decorating them after they were roasted.

*A.* Dear me! mamma, what a very strange dish it



must have appeared ! The tail of the peacock is magnificent, when he glides majestically on the lawn ; but at table, surely it must have appeared out of character.

*M.* We should certainly view it so in the present day ; especially as “ a sponge dipped in lighted spirits of wine was placed in its bill.” But I must set you right, my child, with respect to the tail of the peacock ; as you are mistaken in supposing that it consists of those elegant train feathers of which we have been speaking. On the contrary, it is composed merely of a few that are short, stubborn, and brown,—the larger ones distinguished by their dazzling eye-like spots, being a range situated above the tail ; and which this bird has the power of raising and spreading at pleasure. These feathers, which are sometimes five feet in length, are little appreciated by Europeans as an article of dress ; but with the Chinese they form a most important addition to it,—*three peacocks’ feathers* marking the highest honour to which a Chinese Mandarin can aspire. You will find somewhere within the box, a curious ornamental bandeau, composed of the centre spots of its eye-like train ; which was brought me from one of the islands contiguous to China, where various fanciful works of a similar description are made by the ingenious natives. The white fire-skreens in the drawing room are composed also of peacocks’ feathers, there being a variety of this bird which is entirely white ; nevertheless the marks that so distinguish others of its race are not wanting ; for when the sun shines on

its expanded plumage, its "hundred eyes" glisten like silver, and are most distinctly visible notwithstanding the snow-white ground on which they are displayed.

*A.* What delicate looking creatures they must be! and what a contrast must their appearance present to that of their gayer companions, when many of each kind are mingled together! I suppose it is from peacocks having become so common, that they are now so lightly regarded?

*M.* That may possibly be the case; as they were certainly more prized in England formerly than at present: for we know that "pecokkes' crests" constituted one of the regal ornaments of the early English kings, and in old records they are enumerated as among the fines paid by the barons to the crown. These crests are extremely beautiful: consisting of twenty-four minute feathers, each composed of a slender stem crowned with a tuft resembling a flower: perhaps it is from this custom that we may trace the origin of some of our cavalry regiments wearing on their helmets the figure of the peacock, which I am told is the case even at the present day.

*A.* What do you call this slender black plume, mamma, that waves so very gracefully, and looks so smooth and glossy?

*M.* It is the heron's\* crest, my love; an ornament less esteemed now than when the diversion of falconry

\* *Ardea cinerea major.*



was in fashion; at which period the sport was esteemed so honourable, that they were considered royal game; and laws were enacted for enforcing their preservation. In those chivalrous days herons' crests were deemed a mark of great distinction, and they even now constitute the chief insignia of the caps of knights of the garter; a tuft of black heron's feathers being worn in the centre of the white ostrich plume which I yesterday described as connected with the habit worn at their inauguration by that most ancient military order of knighthood, and to which it is attached by a diamond band which fastens the whole to the hat. You, who are so fond of Sir Walter Scott's poems, doubtless remember his frequent allusion to the heron's crest.

*A.* Yes! I do indeed, mamma, for—

“That cap with heron plumage trim”

was the badge of the knight of Snowden, when he first met the Lady of the Lake: and the “bonnet crest” of the royal James is also spoken of in another place, though I do not exactly recollect the canto.

*M.* The elegant tuft of this bird is constantly mentioned also by poets whose scenes are laid in the East; for the badge of sovereignty in Persia is a plume of black heron's feathers worn upon the right side of the head. In Cashmere, there is a species of heron said to be peculiar to that country, termed the “Egret of Cashmere\*,” the feathers of which are collected and laid

\* *Ardea alba minor.*

aside for the purpose of being bestowed by the king on his favorites; as the greatest honour which the nobles of those Asiatic countries can have conferred on them, is the privilege of wearing in their turbans an ornament of jewels, surmounted by the egret's tuft. The heroic Nelson had a superb heron's plume presented to him by the sultan, richly set in diamonds; and a very near and dear relative of my own possesses a singularly elegant ornament of this description, which was brought her from some part of India. The feathers are beautifully bronzed, appearing of a jet black in the shade, but changing, in a strong light, into a golden green. At the tip of each is placed a pearl of considerable size, with two others at equal distances, so arranged as to preserve the naturally elegant droop of the tuft: but these ornaments are of course rare, in consequence of their costly price. The feathers of which they are composed do not appear to spring from the head of the bird, as do the tufts used in Great Britain; for an early but celebrated writer on ornithology states that "those feathers which nobles and great commanders are wont to stick in their caps and head-pieces for ornament, and which are sold very dear in the cities subject to the Turk, do not grow on the head, but on the back, at the ridge of each wing."

*A.* Are any other feathers used in dress?

*M.* Very few, my love, in England, excepting such as are required for military purposes; and they are chiefly manufactured from the *neck* feathers of our



domestic poultry, technically called "*hackle feathers*." Of late years there has been such a great demand for regimental plumes, that it has afforded abundant occupation to many industrious females who are employed to make them according to certain regulations, as regards form, size, and colour. The handsome and variegated plumage which adorns that proud tenant of our farm-yards, the common cock\*, enables a great diversity of plumes to be constructed from the long streamy feathers of his neck and back, or the stiffer ones which compose his tail. Nor is this custom confined to the British army only; for almost all European nations have some such decoration. Many are distinguished by their black, others by their green plumes. In France, a *fringe* merely of white feathers is worn round the hat, while the military of rank in Russia, wear a drooping plume of white cock's feathers, with the edge tinged with crimson, very similar to those used by officers of distinction in our own army.

A. And if we may judge from prints and old paintings, this custom is as ancient as it is universal, mamma; for it seems to me that almost all pictures of warriors, as well as of princes and nobles, have their helmets or hats surmounted with plumes.

M. You are quite right, dear Agnes; for few decorations in dress are more ancient than that of feathers. King Henry VIII., is almost invariably

\* Phasianus gallus.

represented with a superb plume; and we read of his having possessed one obtained from some Indian bird, so valuable as to be said to be worth "a king's ransom." The nobles in the time of Queen Elizabeth were particularly distinguished for the elegance of their plumes; and we may trace the custom of wearing them through each succeeding reign, until the end of the Stuart dynasty, when it began to decrease; and has since so gradually subsided, that, excepting for ladies' dress, feathers in the present day are merely adopted on state occasions: or retained as the distinguishing badge of military rank.

*A.* I think, mamma, that I have observed other articles of dress made of them; such as muffs and tippets.

*M.* Very probably; for pheasants' feathers, and those of the gallina have been so applied; and trimmings for pelisses made to correspond. But the plumage most used for such purposes is swan's-down, a material with which you must be well acquainted; and although the term *feathers* can scarcely be applied to this delicate substance, yet it is closely allied to them, and completely envelopes the body of the bird, whence its appellation is derived. This soft down is situated next the skin of the swan,\* and under its feathers; rivalling, if possible, even them in its snowy whiteness. Swan's-down has always been admired and valued in Northern nations as well for

\* *Anas Cygnus Ferus.*



its light and elegant appearance, as for its comfortable feel and pleasant warmth; qualities which recommend it equally for the elegancies of polished society, or the ruder wants of uncivilized tribes. And here, my dear Agnes, we have a fresh instance of the bounty and goodness of providence; for these valuable creatures, the largest of all web-footed birds, are abundantly distributed in the northern hemisphere, even to the Arctic regions, where they breed; thus affording to the inhabitants of Iceland, Kamtschatka, Lapland, and other cold countries, nutritious food and abundant material for warm clothing. In some of these places the inhabitants preserve the swans' skins whole with the down on, and sew many together to make articles of female dress. Others ingeniously manufacture the down only into garments; and in North America, caps and capes are curiously constructed of it; being ornamented with feathers taken from the same bird. They also barter or sell vast quantities to more civilized states, which gains them many additional comforts in their scantily furnished homes. The greater portion of swan's-down used in England is imported from Dantzic and the Baltic; but the Orkney and Shetland isles sometimes share in the rich harvest derived from the warm down, which the same good and gracious Creator has disposed beneath the delicately white plumage of this bird, as if in reference to that cold atmosphere where its peculiar usefulness to man seems to point it out as especially and beneficently

placed. Well may we exclaim in the fervent language of the great Buffon, "All bounteous Creator! Author of Being! each object of thy works partakes of thy paternal care; but chief of all, thy chosen creature man. Thou hast bestowed on him a ray of thine immortal light. Oh deign to crown that gift by penetrating his heart with a portion of thy love!"

*A.* And is the little ruff which I wear round my neck in the winter, made from the inner coating of the swan?

*M.* No, my little girl: that is prepared from goose-down;\* a material of a similar nature, but greatly inferior to the valuable substance it so much resembles; though on account of that resemblance, it is often substituted for common and cheaper purposes. Turkey feathers also, as well as the plumage of many other birds, have been converted into various useful and ornamental articles of dress; and if you take out a paper case from the bottom of the box you are now examining, you will find a very elegant boa, made from the feathers of the adjutant,† an immense bird of the stork kind, a native of Bengal, and the banks of the Ganges; whose white plumage, slightly tinged with black and grey, is of such a peculiar structure; so light, silky, and loose, that tippetts and muffs manufactured from it, have long been greatly estimated in the west, and are very generally prized.

\* Anas-anser.

† Ardea-gigantea.



*A.* Oh yes! here it is: I perfectly remember having seen you wear it sometimes. Feathers are certainly beautiful things, mamma; I do not wonder that the various sorts have been always so much used in dress, and so universally admired.

*M.* It is, I think, impossible to view with indifference the wonderful plumage of the feathered tribe: indeed we find that one of the earliest approaches to civilization is the desire of being decorated with objects so attractive even to savages. The inhabitants of California insert coloured feathers into the holes which they make in their ears, and nostrils. In South America, some of the wild tribes use the beautiful plumage of the red-toucan\* to ornament their dresses with: nay, they even cut out portions of the skin with the feathers—which are of a bright vermilion colour—attached to it; and fasten them with wax to their cheeks, from the idea of thus heightening their beauty. The early circumnavigators state that the Brazilians plucked the feathers of the scarlet parrot, three or four times a year, to make ornamental clothes and bucklers. They also mention that the caps and mantles of the Otaheitan chiefs were composed of rich and divers coloured feathers. The black tail feathers of the ptarmigan† were formerly much in request for female head-dresses in Greenland; where the skin of the raven‡ with its plumage attached, is still used as an article of

\* *Rhamphastos picatus.*

† *Tetrao lagopus.*

‡ *Corvus corax.*

dress. Some of the native Indians of North America fabricate a beautiful material, something resembling coarse plush from the soft web of Turkey feathers, interwoven with the inner bark of the mulberry tree; and other tribes have been celebrated for their coronets, which are composed of the bills of the white-billed woodpecker;\* made into a wreath with the points outwards.

*A.* And after all, dear mamma, uneducated and uncivilized as are these poor creatures, they only prove by their choice of materials for their dress, what we must equally acknowledge; which is, that no production of man,—no ornament which it is possible for him to manufacture, can equal the beauty of birds' feathers, or the extraordinary delicacy of their texture. Our brightest colours appear poor by the side of such brilliant plumage as that of the golden pheasant, the splendid peacock, or those lovely birds of paradise which we yesterday examined.

*M.* Your observation is just, my child. Our most powerful exertions fail, when we would compete with nature. We may borrow from her, and we may imitate her handy-works; but we cannot equal them, and wisely is it so ordained; for it is most fitting that man should be taught how limited are the utmost efforts of human ingenuity. The inhabitants of the southern ocean adorn their temples with images and figures

\* *Picus principalis.*



most curiously formed of the many-coloured feathers of a handsome bird, something resembling a dove. In Honduras, another of the feathered race is preserved from destruction and held sacred purely on account of its plumage, with which the natives compose representations of saints and angels so skilfully, as nearly to imitate coloured drawings. The brilliant feathers of the little humming-bird, are used for a similar purpose; and so dexterously executed are some of these productions as to deceive the eye, which would take them for minute paintings without a close inspection. In natural history there is scarcely a branch in which objects have not been successfully imitated with feathers. Birds themselves, in every form and colour: insects of all kinds, but especially moths and butterflies, which are by this means made to appear much more like the originals than by any other mode of representation. Foliage and fruits have been satisfactorily delineated; and if you pull out the little drawer at the bottom of this box, you will find a collection of artificial flowers, made entirely from different kinds of feathers, an art which has been brought to such astonishing perfection at the Cape of Good Hope, and in some provinces of South America, that a mere description would scarcely be credited, unless the specimens were seen, and compared with such flowers as they are designed to imitate; but after all it is *only* imitation! The finger of God is apparent in all his works, however perverted from their original design

by the wants or wishes of man. The plumage of birds is equally admirable, equally wonderful, whether adopted as ornaments in their natural state, or distorted to gratify the whims of civilized, or the caprices of savage and barbarous tribes. Its beauty remains unimpaired, and when intermingled with the works of art, *they* only serve as foils to make more apparent that perfection which indelibly stamps the productions of the great Author of the universe, whose works can only be compared to others drawn from that wondrous creation, which is perpetually renewed by Him, and solely directed by his Almighty Power. Most truly did Buffon, that celebrated naturalist (whose language I have before quoted), say, when speaking on the subject of plumage, that it "seems to combine all that delights the eye in the soft and delicate tints of the finest flowers,—all that dazzles in the sparkling lustre of the gem; and all that astonishes in the grand display of the rainbow."—Your little canary will rejoice, my dear Agnes, that our journey of yesterday and to-day has led us amongst the feathered tribe,—if it tempts you (as I suspect it will) to give him some fresh groundsel as an excuse for stopping more particularly to observe his graceful form and delicate plumage; so suited to such a fairy-like little songster.

A. At all events, dear mamma, whenever I notice my little pet; whether this evening or at other future times, he will always recall to my remembrance the Asiatic plumes and curious feathers in your sweet-



scented box, whose perfume has so often attracted my attention ; and with the contents of which you have so surprised and pleased me, that even now, I am sorry to see you preparing to close it,—though I feel that it is quite time for me to leave you.

## CHAPTER VII.

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### THE EARLY HISTORY OF IDOLATRY.

*A.* The objects that we examined yesterday, dear mamma, delighted me excessively; but I do not promise myself equal pleasure to-day: for of all the curiosities in your room, I am sure I least admire these hideous figures on the pretty chiffonière, before which the progress of my tour has brought me.

*M.* Is it not then surprising that any race of human beings can be found so infatuated as to worship such things—to render homage to images of wood and stone, “the work of men’s hands,”—and apparently constructed so as to be much more likely to excite disgust than admiration? Yet so it is; for, distorted and unnatural as are the different objects displayed on this cabinet,—the whole are representations of creatures worshipped by different nations, and in different ages; though the greater part appertain to the religion of Hindostan: or were brought me from neighbouring Indian kingdoms.



*A.* It seems a strange perverted feeling, mamma ; yet I know it is the case: for I have too often read the fact and heard it lamented, to doubt of idolatry being still widely spread over the face of the earth. But though these images of yours, are all ugly and unnatural-looking, yet they differ so much in their appearance, that I should like to hear their histories ; for some resemble insects, and animals, and others human beings.

*M.* Idol worship is not confined to any particular "graven image;" for there is scarcely a thing "in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth," that has not been made the object of man's adoration; and before which he has bowed himself down and worshipped. But though the sight of these monstrous productions is painful as a proof of the weakness of human nature,—it may not be uninteresting or unprofitable to trace the history of this infringement of the second great commandment; because it teaches us that when man is given up to follow his own devices, he multiplies ten-fold those evils of sin and wickedness to which our fallen nature is prone; but from which a firm belief in the one great, all-seeing God,—faith in the never-failing help of a Redeemer,—and trust in the operations of the Holy Spirit, must preserve the true Christian; for whereas our religion inculcates peace, love, self-discipline, and above all, obedience to God as the most acceptable offering,—the false deities of the heathen were, accord-

ing to their depraved ideas, only to be propitiated with the blood of human victims, or by the sacrifice of the best feelings of our nature to grace their extravagant and often impure ceremonies.

A. Many of their figures are so well carved, mamma, that it must have required a knowledge of sculpture, as also neat tools to execute them; so that I conclude they were the production of a later period than that at which the homage of God began to be neglected. The worship of things in "heaven above" seems to be the most natural, and *these*, I think, I have heard *were* the first object of pagan devotion.

M. You have judged truly, my love; for the sun, moon, and stars, do appear to have been the earliest objects of man's adoration. We find from the bible that idolatry began to prevail soon after the deluge; and as at that time the few dwellers upon earth were chiefly shepherds or huntsmen, they were naturally struck with the influence of the sun in invigorating by his light and heat all created things; bringing to perfection the fruits of the earth, and separating the hours of rest from those of labour. The moon aided them in computing the longer periods of months and years, and in marking the seasons of harvest and vintage:—dwelling too as they did, in tents, and with the full beauties of the starry firmament open to their nightly observation,—they were naturally led to pay their homage to these, the most visibly striking of their Creator's works; after their fathers had ceased to teach



them that *that* homage was due to the Creator himself alone. But this simple species of worship speedily became associated with less impressive objects; and accordingly we soon afterwards find the ancients adoring the elements;—air, fire, earth, and water; and as the language and sentiments of the east abounded in figurative and poetical ideas, the transition was slight from the elements themselves to such portions of them as were associated with their comforts, their convenience, or the love of their country;—so that particular rivers, groves, mountains, or winds were either deified, or placed under the charge of presiding and guardian spirits. Thus the light of pure religion, was gradually lost in the false lustre, which the pride, and vanity of man attached to the exciting emblems which he had himself substituted for those plain truths preserved to our fallen race by Noah and a few of his descendants; and as the ignorant are even more ready to yield to the evidence of their senses than to attend to matters not actually demonstrated,—the objects that first impressed them with devotional feelings were soon moulded into substantial forms. Idols were carved, temples built, and priests and priestesses appointed for promulgating that worship, which, no longer voluntary, was enforced by strict laws and cruel superstitions: fables became mingled with the vague and confused traditions handed down from primæval times; these legends were increased by the extravagant fictions of poets, the pride of ambitious men, or the superstitious fear of weak

minds,—until at length, that regular system of idolatry was formed, which is known to us under the epithet of the “Heathen Mythology ;” and which had attained to a great height at a very early period of the Jewish history:—the celebrated poets Homer and Hesiod, through whose works a knowledge of most of the pagan rites then practised, has been transmitted to posterity,—having flourished during the reigns of King David and his son Solomon.

A. Oh then, mamma, those marvellous tales which I have sometimes read or heard you relate, are actually founded on truth? I always fancied they were merely imaginary.

M. The heathen mythology, obscured as it is by fables and allegory, undoubtedly had its origin from the events recorded in the Holy Scriptures; and though the sacred writings too evidently bear the stamp of divine revelation, and of truth, to need corroboration from any human source, yet nothing more completely or satisfactorily proves the veracity of the facts therein stated, than these very pagan legends; the principal of which were based on the same patriarchal traditions which in their *purity* formed the faith of the Hebrew; in their *obscurity* the mythology of the heathen. But although the truths of Scripture have been so perverted by the latter as to require considerable research and attention to separate *fact* from *fiction*, or to connect with the right individuals all the remarkable actions which they have



in defiance of chronological order, distributed amongst *many* imaginary beings, yet still so striking is the resemblance between the principal exploits attributed to the pagan gods, and the known incidents connected with the lives of the Patriarchs, Judges, and eminent persons described in the Mosaic records, that it forms a *remarkable proof* of the authenticity of the Bible; since the facts therein recorded are acknowledged by the heathen, and believed by them to have existed, though their propensity to fable, led them to obscure those wonderful actions and astonishing events, on which is founded the creed of the true believer, but which equally formed the basis of their own idolatrous habits. Thus, dearest Agnes, you perceive that although the extravagances of the heathen mythology are not to be implicitly believed, neither are they to be wholly rejected as a mass of unmeaning fiction: for the principal personages that figure in these apparently wild and absurd narrations are either the most celebrated characters named in the Bible, such as Adam \*, Eve †, Noah ‡, Moses §, Joshua ||, Samson ¶, and many others; or otherwise they personify *events* equally to be traced to the same sacred source; such as the creation of the world \*\*, the formation of man ††, the temptation of Eve ‡‡, and the uni-

\* Saturn.

† Juno.

‡ Janus.

§ Atlas.

|| Mars.

¶ Hercules.

\*\* Chaos.

†† Prometheus.

‡‡ Pandora's box.

versal deluge \* ; as well as morning †, and night ‡, spring || and autumn, § fire, ¶ water, \*\* the blessings of harvest ††, and many other matters connected with our existence upon earth, which we acknowledge with gratitude as forming a portion of that vast and universal system, which emanated from, and is under the sole guidance of the One, and only true God : but which the heathens, who were ignorant of the omnipresence of the Deity, adored under distinct forms ; reserving some as household gods, but worshipping others with an intensity of zeal and fervour of devotion, which, when considered, may well rouse to greater energy and activity many who profess a purer and holier faith.

A. It seems astonishing to me that after men had once known the simple truths of pure religion, they should have indulged themselves in such strange fancies ! But, mamma, you said just now, that idolatry began soon after the flood. I wonder from what source it could have *first* sprung ; and from *whence* have extended so universally ?

M. It is generally believed to have had its origin amongst the children of Ham, the unworthy son of Noah, whose grandson Nimrod founded the first kingdom that was established in the world, at Babylon,

\* Deucalion and Pyrrha.

§ Flora.

\*\* Canopus.

† Aurora.

|| Pomona.

†† Ceres.

‡ Nox.

¶ Vesta.



where the presumptuous attempt at building the Tower of Babel had been ineffectually made: and Nimrod's son and successor Belus or Baal, called by the Babylonians "Jupiter Babylonicus," was the first man deified; an image of him being erected for the people to worship. This worship was the origin of that idol so often mentioned in the sacred writings by the name of Bel, or Baal: the homage paid to which in after times, called forth from the inspired writers, and prophets such severe, and dreadful denunciations against those who were previously the chosen people of God. The confusion of tongues consequent on the vain and wicked design of erecting the Tower of Babel, caused the descendants of Noah to separate themselves into distinct societies; and to disperse "every one after his tongue, after their families." This proved the foundation of as many nations. The tribe alone of Heber, or *Eber*, one of the descendants of Shem, (who is, as if by pre-eminence, styled in the Holy Scriptures the "Father of the children of Eber,") is, considered to have retained the original language of Noah, thence termed Hebrew; for in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, Abraham is styled "the Hebrew," and as his lineal descent from Heber is expressly given in a chapter almost immediately preceding, it is most probable that all the descendants of that patriarch preserved his name; by which means, not only the pure religion conferred on our first parents, but even the language used by them, are

inseparably connected with the blessing vouchsafed to the eldest son of Noah, through whom the covenant made by God at the renewal of mankind has been preserved in all its purity up to the present day. But idolatry continued to spread, and at length beginning even to infect the little flock that had alone remained steadfast to their Creator, God made choice of a faithful agent by whom his laws might be preserved; and by what is termed in the sacred writings the "call of Abraham," (signifying the manifestation of God to that Patriarch,) He separated this chosen servant from his idolatrous neighbours and relations; and by his means, and that of his posterity, the pure and holy worship originally practised by our first parents was to be preserved unimpaired; until, in the fulness of time there should from the same source spring that Redeemer in whom the promises vouchsafed to Adam at his fall were to be perfected; and of whose coming upon earth, not only the true prophets and inspired of God had written and foretold from the beginning, but of whose appearance even the heathen seem to have had an imperfect and vague expectation, judging from the interpretations given to many of their oracles, or mystic inquiries into futurity.\* Nor is this fact so astonishing as it may

\* The Sybils were held in great esteem, on account of their prophecies concerning Christ. The principal of these were, Sybylla Delphica; Sybylla Europæ; Sybylla Persica; Sybylla Samia; Sybylla Cumana, &c. &c.



at first appear : for we have seen that the foundation of all the kingdoms on earth arose from the three sons of Noah, and idolatry, alas ! was not confined *solely* to the descendants of Ham : for Ashur, the second son of Shem, built the city of Nineveh shortly after his cousin Nimrod had erected that of Babylon : and on the death of the latter, Ninus the successor of Ashur, seized upon both kingdoms, and incorporated them under the name of the Assyrian Monarchy ; that first and great empire, whose authority continued supreme for so many centuries ; but which had its rise only one hundred and thirty years after the deluge ; and whilst that awful event, its cause and consequences must have been fresh in the recollection of many of its inhabitants, by reason of the greater age to which men lived in those days, than that which they at present attain. Yet *there* did idolatry take its rise, *there* did it first flourish, *there* was it encouraged by the riches, vices, luxury and pride, which formed the reproach of Babylon its chief city ; and on account of which that city has continued a byword, and a proverb to all ages and nations from that time even to the present day ; though scarcely a remnant now remains of its former glory, its surpassing splendour, its once absolute dominion : “I will cut off from Babylon, the name, and remnant, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water : I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot.”

A. But idolatry does not appear to have been confined to the Assyrian nation only; for even at very early periods of the Israelitish history we find allusions, as though all nations but themselves, were sunk in dark and confused notions of religion and religious belief.

M. From the Assyrians, idolatry was communicated to the Phœnicians, the great maritime power of the East; and through them it was farther disseminated by means of their extended commerce to more distant parts of the Globe. The Egyptians taught it to the Greeks, who multiplied beyond measure the false gods of earlier times. *They* transmitted it to the Romans, by whose powerful means it was finally established in most parts of the habitable world; which, during the zenith of their power, was sunk in the most abject and degrading superstition; and during that period the very vices that form the scourge and reproach of mankind, were exalted into demi-gods, and cherished and appeased by rites and ceremonies suited only to such unhallowed and impious purposes. It was at this juncture that the sun of righteousness, the great Propitiator of mankind, appeared upon the earth to save it from that doom which its lost condition merited: but the purity of life, and unostentatious demeanour of our heavenly Intercessor,—the mild and peaceable doctrines which He inculcated, were ill understood by a world whose greatest men were accustomed to frame excuses for the most unwarrantable violence and am-



bition, by an assumption of divine origin, and whose very lawgivers could only secure obedience to the wisest and most salutary regulations, by the pretence of supernatural inspiration, or by pampering the passions of the multitude. It was as the pretended son of Mars that Romulus, the founder of Rome, was venerated. The precepts of Numa were revered because they were represented as emanating from the Gods. Alexander became the *Great* when he made himself the son of Jupiter. Sparta was raised to her highest pitch of glory from the laws of Lycurgus being believed to have sprung from Apollo; and the celebrity of Athens was due to Solon, who procured the observance of his rules by imputing them to Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

*A.* But does it not seem strange, mamma, that such enlightened nations should have been so carried away by their imaginations, as to bow down before creatures of their own invention, and imagine them to be Gods?

*M.* It does so appear to us, my child; and yet had it not been a frequently besetting sin, as well as one of peculiar temptation, we should not find the Old Testament so abounding with denunciations against idolatry; or such exterminating wars enjoined for clearing from the face of the earth those who were deeply sunk in the practice of Pagan rites. The mercy of God manifested itself to the Israelites by miracles and wonders, of which the mere description at this distant interval

fills the mind with astonishment and awe: and yet, partakers and witnesses as they were of such peculiar marks of God's favour, who, "with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm, delivered them from the power of the Egyptians," yet they—even his chosen people, turned from worshipping Him, to pay adoration to the golden calf, which image was made in imitation of the sacred ox,\*—one of the principal idols of that nation, from a residence amongst whom the Israelites acquired their idolatrous propensities. If, therefore, the twelve tribes could so easily forget God—so speedily turn from truth to error, as to worship a molten image, and "turn their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay," even whilst living under the especial protection of the most High God, and conducted by his *servant* Moses, through whom such miracles had been wrought; it is less extraordinary that nations who had the bad examples of their princes, governors, and teachers before them, and who were accustomed from their birth to deem holy the mysteries and rites practised by their forefathers, should continue in the observance of a worship so admirably adapted to flatter the passions and pride of the people, that it might favor the views of those who wished to keep them under priestly subjection. But although idolatry was thus universal, there are many remarkable instances among the ancient philosophers†, of their belief in but *One True God*—

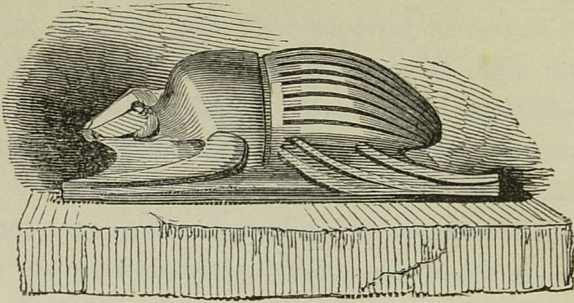
\* Apis.      † Seneca; Plato; Pythagoras; Varro; Socrates.



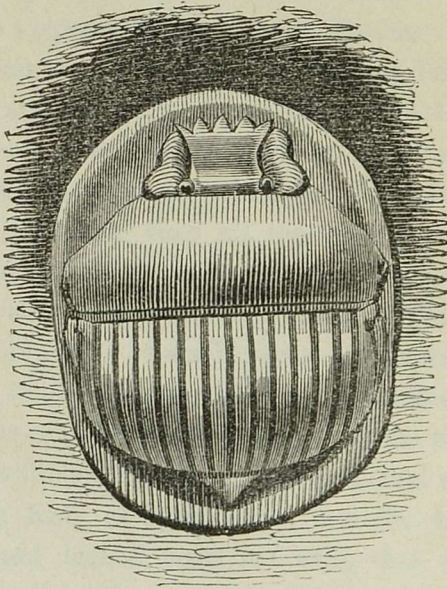
and of their tenets being founded upon the first principles of religion: yet their superior understandings made them so sensible of the necessity of some established form of worship to control the depravity of human nature, and to preserve the stability of government and the well-being of the community at large, that they were induced *publicly* to sanction and even aid in the performance of ceremonies which *privately* they rejected as both futile and absurd. Of this feeling we have a remarkable instance in that very beautiful chapter of the bible which treats of the cure of Naaman's leprosy by the hand of Elisha. Naaman was a convert to the belief in the God of Israel; but he felt that nothing but a miracle had been able to turn his hard heart, when, in contempt of the Prophet, he had exclaimed:—"Are not Abana and Pharphar rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he also felt that his solitary example could do little in shaking the faith of a whole and a powerful nation. Therefore it was that when in the fulness of his heart, he determined henceforth to sacrifice unto no other God but the Lord, he besought Elisha to intercede for him, that when his master (the King of Syria) went into the house of Rimmon, and leaned upon his arm, that when he bowed himself in the house of Rimmon, "the Lord would pardon his servant in this thing." An affecting and striking example this, my child, of the strong hold which the honours and treasures of this world







Side View.



Full View.

THE SACRED BEETLE OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS,  
(*Scarabæus Sacer.*)

have on the human heart, when it is influenced by no higher principle, no livelier faith than that drawn forth by a passing impulse of remorse, or a feeling of gratitude so transient, that it wavers between the allurements of future temptation, and the conviction of that better path which conscience, an unerring guide, points out to us all. But in tracing the rise and progress of idolatry, we have forgotten these images which first led us to the subject; and respecting each of which you desired more particular information.

A. I have been endeavouring to discover what this bronze image is meant for; but except that it is intended to represent an insect, I cannot find out anything to which I can compare it.

M. It is the most ancient of all the idols on the table, being Egyptian. It is one of the sacred beetles\* that was worshipped by that nation, and consecrated by them to the sun: these insects still abound in Egypt; and divine honours were paid to them by the ancient inhabitants, because their provident, industrious, and persevering habits,—especially as regards the welfare of their young,—occasioned them to be considered as a fit emblem of creation, as a symbol for *which* they are frequently used in their hieroglyphics. This image is larger than the living insect it represents; but figures of the beetle are found of every size and sort, some very much larger than mine, others sufficiently minute

\* Scarabæus Sacer.



for rings and other ornaments, in which form it has constantly been discovered by the side of mummies, and is also occasionally found with an inscription engraved upon it, placed next the skin on the breast; or painted on the wrapper in which the mummies are enveloped. This very perfect relic was brought me from Egypt by my brother, and beautifully as it is preserved, it is of great antiquity, as you may judge from its style of carving and general appearance.

A. So the Egyptians worshipped insects? I always thought their gods had been huge statues of sphinxes and such unmeaning things.

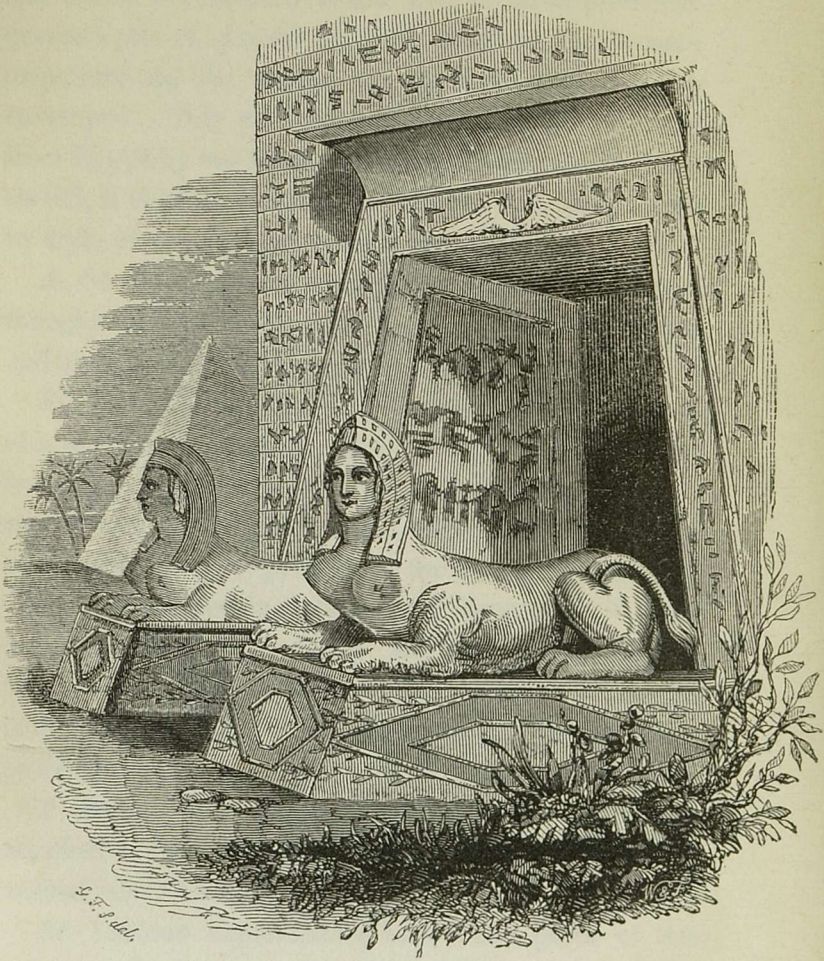
M. This nation rendered homage to a portion of almost all created things; but nothing that they adored was *unmeaning*, my dear Agnes; far from it. All connected with the religion of this ancient people bore an allusion to the past, present, or the future; though you were fully justified in forming your ideas of their idols in general, from the colossal and extraordinary representation you have been accustomed to see in paintings, or to hear described as being obtained from their temples, or discovered amongst the ruins of their ancient cities.

A. But what meaning, mamma, could they have attached to the sphinx? for it has an appearance half-animal—half-human.

M. Various explanations have been given of this monstrous production; but the most probable appears to be that it was designed as a symbol of one of the most important events connected with the prosperity







THE SPHINX,  
An Ancient Egyptian Symbol.

of the country where it was celebrated. I need not tell you that Egypt is not fertilized by rain; but that it is watered by the overflowing of the Nile, once a year. As it was highly important to the inhabitants to mark by some public representation the precise period of this annual and remarkable phenomenon, that the people in general might be prepared to escape from the rising of the waters, lest those who chanced to be on the plains should be overwhelmed by the flood;—they ascertained that it was always at its height during the months of July and August, and as the hieroglyphics for that period in the signs of the zodiac were the lion\* and the virgin†, this singular people, who were great astronomers and observers of all things connected with the heavenly bodies, united these *celestial* emblems to convey a *terrestrial* warning. Look at the little sphinx on the chiffonière, and you will perceive that it embodies the two signs I have named; having the face of a young woman, but the body of a lion. For a long period it continued to be considered as the mere symbol at first intended, and constituted a usual ornament to the principal edifices, whether religious or civil, in their great cities: but the vast benefit derived from the remarkable event it had been at first designed to portray, eventually procured for the sphinx a place amongst those gods to which the Egyptians paid divine homage, and representations of

\* Leo.

† Virgo.



which they have transmitted in such abundance to posterity by means of their skill in sculpture, and their admirable knowledge of all connected with the fine arts.

*A.* And was their adoration chiefly confined to imaginary beings?

*M.* By no means; for though all connected with the religion of this extraordinary people is wrapt in mystery, and concealed by hieroglyphics;—in which enigmatical manner they wrote even on ordinary occasions, and were particularly expert when desirous of perpetuating religious matters, from its forming the chief occupation of their priests and learned men;—yet we find that they condescended to worship the most ordinary animals and reptiles; for besides *beetles*, they adored *fishes* and *serpents*; paid divine honours to *birds*; erected altars to four-footed *beasts*; and made gods *even of plants*: for leeks and onions were deities in Egypt!

*A.* And did any other nation carry their idolatry to such a remarkable length, mamma?

*M.* Very many; for we read of *weasels* being worshipped at Thebes,—*rats* and *mice* at Tenedos,—*flies* and *ants* by the Thessalians,—*stones* by the Finlanders,—*iron* by the Scythians,—and *gold* and *silver* by many nations. The stork is still a sacred bird, and not allowed to be killed in many Eastern countries. The horse and elephant are worshipped in the present day at Tonquin,—cows, bulls, apes, and other animals

are sacred in Hindostan,—and the worship of things altogether inanimate comes very closely to the times of our own ancestors ; as the Druids, who were the ancient priests of Great Britain, dwelt in groves, because they paid adoration to the oak, and considered it sacred. Many more instances could I give you equally astonishing, both as relates to the present period and to days gone by ; but we have already so far exceeded our time that we must defer the examination of the remainder of the images until to-morrow, when you will find that idol worship is still as prevalent as at the earlier ages of which we have been speaking ; and also that the revolting images now adored by a great portion of our fellow-creatures are fully as monstrous, nay, even more disgusting than the animals, reptiles, and insects, so degradingly worshipped by the ancients.

*A.* Poor unhappy creatures ! One can scarcely consider such idolaters as human beings ; surely, mamma, they can have no consolation in sickness or suffering,—no hope in this world or that which is to come ?

*M.* We are not justified in viewing the actions and feelings of our fellow-men harshly, my child. The great Apostle of the Gentiles says, “There is no respect of persons with God. As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.” Neither can we venture to ascribe a limit to God’s



power, or say how soon they may be converted by his mercy to the better views and brighter hopes of the gospel. In all our reflections upon the religion of others,—not even excepting Pagan superstition,—we must be specially careful that self-righteousness does not prevail in lieu of that christian charity which “vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—but suffereth long, and is kind.” For if we, who have been born in a favoured land, and preserved from all temptation to the idolatrous worship that formed the reproach of Noah’s descendants, and has degraded to the lowest level his childrens’ children: less excusable will it be for *us*, if at our final judgment we shall be found to have worked unprofitably and luke-warmly in that vineyard to which we were hired in the morning of our lives, than for the heathen, who at the eleventh hour of grace did the will of his Master with alacrity and singleness of heart; repenting him truly of the hours he had idly spent, but labouring with earnest zeal to work out his salvation by a steadfast faith in the result of that high calling vouchsafed to him through the intercession of a holy and gracious Mediator.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF HEATHEN WORSHIP CONSIDERED.

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*A.* I need not ask you, dear mamma, what this large image is intended to represent; for both it and those immediately surrounding it are evidently designed for human beings.

*M.* The group which has attracted your attention is composed entirely of Burmese idols, taken from different temples in that kingdom during the late war. The one you hold in your hand is a representation of their chief god; it is simply a human figure in an attitude of contemplation, and I have seen it of almost every size, and wrought in every kind of material, such as mixed metals, clay, gilded wood, silver; and sometimes very large images are made of a beautiful description of marble, almost as clear as alabaster: but these last are rare, being chiefly placed in the interior of their principal temples: for the marble of



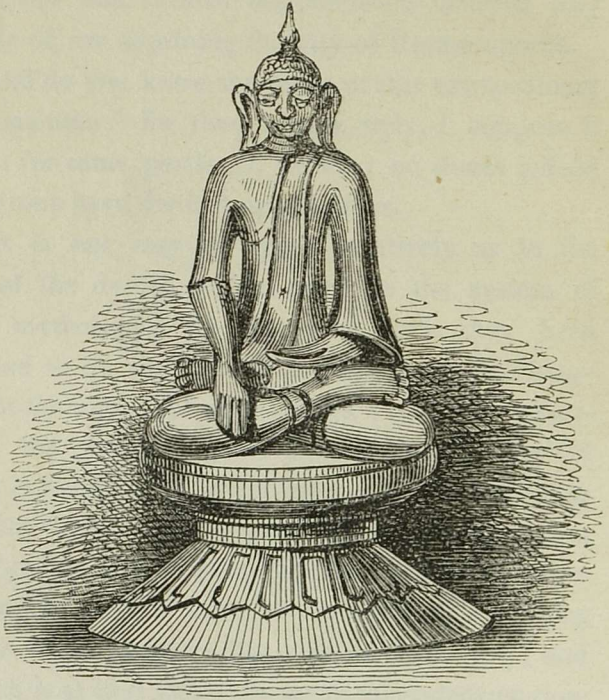
which they are composed, is held so sacred, that none of it is allowed to be sold in blocks, though the natives are permitted to purchase the images after they are manufactured; which process is confined almost exclusively to the town of Chagain; though the quarries that furnish the cherished material they are made of, are adjoining the city of Ummerapoor.

*A.* And do you know the name of this extraordinary image, mamma? for though very ugly, I suppose it is meant for some particular person; no doubt indeed all the group have distinct appellations.

*M.* It is not easy to speak positively as to the names of the deities which compose the system of Indian mythology; for not only have they been multiplied to an astonishing degree in that vast kingdom, but the same idol often wears a different appearance in the several nations into which the Indian territory is divided. The difficulty, too, of translating terms that have no corresponding definition in our own language, and of pronouncing words relative to the sound of which even the natives of adjoining provinces differ, renders the task unsatisfactory, and one which is at best liable to much mis-interpretation. Neither indeed have all the deities of this empire distinct appellations as you seem to imagine; for when the Portuguese, who were the earliest European settlers in India, transmitted home accounts of their proceedings in the year 1506, they attached the term Pagoda to all pagan temples,—“Poutgheda” signifying







THE IDOL " GAUDMA :"

THE PRINCIPAL DEITY OF THE BURMESE.

in one of the Eastern dialects "a temple of idols." From that period the name has been commonly used by Europeans, not merely to designate the temple itself, but also the numerous idols contained within it; and in this habit they have been further confirmed by the word which the Hindoos expressly apply to a holy house or sacred building \*, bearing the same sound as Pagoda, when quickly pronounced. But I believe I may venture to tell you that the particular image respecting which you have inquired is called Gaudma; which word signifies a sage, or an eminently wise person. It is a small representation of the chief god of Burmah, whom the natives represent as a great philosopher, who visited their country many ages since, and to whom they ascribe all their knowledge, and attribute a great revolution in their original civil and religious government. The Burmese erect temples for his worship, of great beauty, both as regards their style of architecture, and the magnificence of the embellishments; in which a great quantity of gold is employed: it not only covers the throne, on which the idol, usually of polished marble, is seated; but is also profusely lavished on the open screen within which he is enclosed, as well as on almost every other part of the building. They have priests appropriated to his service, named "Rhahaans;" and monasteries or colleges are erected adjoining his temples denominated "Kioums;" attached to which

\* Bhaga-vati.



are seminaries where the children of the community at large are received and educated free of expense—rich and poor being equally well attended and carefully instructed in their civil laws, and the mysteries of their religion. The temples of this, their chief god, are however ornamented both within and without with various other images, some of which are merely designed as decorations;—others represent deities of an inferior order, amongst which are these indescribable figures before us, holding the sacred serpent, which is the general emblem both of creation and eternity throughout India; because as the serpent changes his skin, and then comes forth renovated and apparently unaltered, he is considered to live for ever. Others are designed for mystic animals, which form a species of idol common to all Indian nations, on account of their belief in the transmigration of souls; for they imagine that after death the soul of man enters into the form of beasts of different kinds. This conviction procures for all animals amongst them a degree of tenderness and consideration, forming a striking contrast to the cruelties often practised upon them in more civilized communities. In addition to these, many extraordinary devices, like those at the back of the chiffonière, are usually found mingled with the others; containing spaces for fire or flame to burn in, as in a lamp or censer, some of the Asiatics having a superstitious veneration for fire, considering both that element and water as purifiers of the soul.

*A.* And how, dearest mamma, did you obtain all those curious images, and ascertain the particulars you have related to me ?

*M.* The specimens we have been examining, my love, as well as the silver figures near them, were all taken from different temples in the vicinity of Ava, Rangoon, and other places in the Burmese territory, and were brought to me by a very near and dear relative engaged in the Burmese war ; who, taking great interest in the manners and religious customs of a people, before that event, so little known to Europeans, devoted his leisure time to obtaining much original information respecting them, which he communicated to me after his return to England ; and which I have since found corroborated by many valuable works written on the same subject.

*A.* I had not overlooked the silver images, mamma, but was about to ask you why the heads of all of them were injured and broken ?

*M.* It has arisen, my love, from the superstitious feelings of this singular people, which induce them to place a jewel of considerable value within the head, or head ornament of their principal idols ; especially such as more immediately surround the altar of Gaudma. Fear, reverence, and religious devotion preserve these gems untouched by the Birmans ; but these considerations having no weight with Europeans, their soldiery, either partially or wholly, decapitated most of the figures they met with in search of the valuable



booty they coveted, and very many stones of great price were thus obtained ; though others of the images being empty, disappointed the avarice of their destroyers.

*A.* But I should have imagined that the natives would have been too jealous of their deities to have suffered any European to touch them ?

*M.* Their laws on that point are very strict, for they are not permitted under any temptation to export their gods out of the country, nevertheless the English army had no difficulty in obtaining as many as they desired, and this too without entering the temples ; for vast numbers lie scattered outside and within sight of these sacred buildings, where they are deposited by the natives, who, after purchasing an idol, and having it consecrated by the priests, take it within the shadow of the nearest pagoda ; and after uttering certain prayers and performing a few ceremonies over it, leave it on the ground, giving themselves no further consideration for its fate. This accounts for so many Burmese idols having been brought to England, since the termination of the war with that country. But the silver images whose mutilated appearance so particularly attracted your notice, are more rare than those wrought in less valuable materials : gold, silver, and such precious substances being reserved for the manufacture of their domestic gods, or such as are dedicated to the interior of some particular temple.

*A.* I think the inhabitants of Burmah must be sin-

gularly honest, mamma; for gold and silver images cannot fail to be very tempting to poor people; especially when jewels add so considerably to their value.

*M.* Honesty is a very striking feature in the character of this nation, and theft is marked with such public detestation, that the most degrading offices are imposed on such as escape being executed for it. But at the same time I must inform you that the temptation to steal gold and gems is not so great in Burmah as in other nations; for even the highest subjects in that kingdom are not permitted to gild their houses,—the art being reserved exclusively for embellishing their idols, and the buildings dedicated to their service: and this they can afford to do profusely, as this kingdom is very rich in mineral treasures; gold, silver, and precious stones being found here in great abundance in the mines: gold, also, of great purity, is washed down in their mountain streams. *Charity* being likewise another peculiar characteristic of the Birmans, poverty presents no temptation to theft amongst them; for so religiously is the virtue I have mentioned inculcated and enforced in this country, that no mendicants are to be seen in their cities,—the aged, sick, infirm, and unfortunate being carefully and tenderly provided for by the piety and benevolence of the priests and wealthy inhabitants.

*A.* This figure, mamma, somewhat resembles the Burmese idol Gaudma; only, as it is larger and placed



apart, I suppose it must be the deity of some other country.

*M.* It is the principal god of the Siamese, a nation adjoining that of Burmah. This, like Gaudma, represents a great philosopher. They call him Sommona-Codam; and he is the only object to whom they pay divine adoration. Their tradition respecting him states that he was a great and good *talapoin*, which in their language signifies priest; and that, for his superior piety, he was advanced to the enjoyment of supreme felicity. It is not improbable that this may have some allusion to the history of our Saviour: for there is a tradition of the church that the gospel was preached by the Apostle St. Thomas to many of the oriental nations. The Syrian christians on the coast of Malabar, affirm that St. Thomas arrived at Cranagnore, and passed over to the coast of Coromandel, where he suffered martyrdom at Meliapore, a very ancient city about a league to the south of Madras, on the ruins of which the early Portuguese settlers built the modern city of St. Thomè—naming it after that apostle, whose memory is still held in great veneration in those parts. This most interesting tradition is, however, considered to be legendary. But certain it is, that Christianity was early planted in India, and the christian communities in Malabar had obtained many valuable privileges from the heathen princes of Trevancore, when the Portuguese, under Vasco di Gama, arrived in that country.

*A.* It seems to me singular, mamma, that the two

nations whose idols we have been examining should deify human beings, however great and good they may have been as *priests* and *philosophers*, unless they were convinced of there having been something more than human in their doctrines.

*M.* This circumstance, my love, as connected with idolatry, has often struck me as very remarkable ; and seems to imply as distinct an era in Pagan worship, as does the coming of our Saviour on earth to the worshippers of the living God. As Christians, we are, you know, quite distinct from the Jews, who still, however, although differing from us with regard to the great stronghold of our salvation, believe as firmly as ourselves in the truth and doctrines of the Old Testament. The ancient heathens, notwithstanding their darkened views and idolatrous practices, retained, as we have already seen, a glimmering of truth with respect to the Supreme Being, and the events connected with the early history of the world, as recorded in the sacred writings. The idolatrous Indians, and the natives of many adjoining kingdoms, which have become, it may be said, recently known to us, in consequence of the geographical discoveries of the last few centuries, appear all to possess, not only the same vague and imperfect idea of the Creator of the world, as did the ancients, but likewise a general tradition of some great and good prophet, law-giver, or benefactor, who, more than mortal in his maxims and conduct, is yet believed to have visited them at some distant period in mortal



form, and to have been translated into heaven when his ministry on earth was terminated. I do not mean to say that the dates of these traditions correspond with that of the christian era, (for in all matters connected with chronology the calculations of this remote part of the East differ widely from those of the Western world;) but simply that the purity of doctrine and virtuous principles inculcated by these reformers of mankind, make a wide distinction between their followers and those of the ancient Pagans, who rendered homage to the most debasing sins, and elevated into deities the most criminal passions. This is evident, not merely from the works of the Greek and Roman historians, but also from frequent allusions contained throughout the holy scriptures; and it appears equally to sully the ancient Hindoo religion, excepting where it has been purified (though, alas! then how imperfectly!) by the founders of the sects to which I have alluded, whose chief design seems to have been to reform the age in which they appeared—to shew mercy—and to prevent cruelty: for human sacrifices were common in the earliest periods to almost all religions, and these preservers (or *avatars*, as they are termed in the Indian mythology,) seem to have been the necessary accompaniments to religion, accordant with increasing wisdom, for all forms of religion have changed since idolatry first debased mankind.

*A.* But surely, dear mamma, these sects must entertain some very strong, though perhaps corrupted idea

of a Supreme Being; for if they pay adoration to deified philosophers, how can they do otherwise than acknowledge a conviction of some superior Power, capable *first* of creating them, and *then* of advancing them to supreme felicity?

*M.* And such undoubtedly is the feeling entertained amongst the Indian nations generally, for though they differ on many points, yet they seem to be all agreed that a Supreme Being existed alone from all eternity, and in some of their sacred books, the description of the Deity is said to be truly sublime. But, my dear Agnes, this ray of light beams but dimly through the darkened atmosphere in which their superstitious practices have plunged them; for, as I have already stated, the greater part of the populous territory of India is sunk in the most abject idolatry. Image worship is there carried to a height almost surpassing credibility; especially by the followers of Brahma,—the most ancient of the Hindoo sects,—and which forms the foundation of, and materially influences, other sects who have seceded from it.

*A.* And is there no certain history of this ancient people, mamma? No trace of the source from whence their superstitious practices arose?

*M.* The points of resemblance between many of the religious customs of the Hindoos, and those observed by the ancient Egyptians, have led theologians to suppose that the two systems of idolatry, must have been formed about the same time; and though there



can be no doubt of the antiquity of the Hindoo religion, yet those talented individuals who have deeply studied *it*, as well as that belonging to *other* ancient nations, conceive that it took its rise at the general dispersion of mankind, and even trace the derivation of the word *Hindoo*, to a son of Ham, the son of Noah. It is too, I believe, now satisfactorily ascertained, that though the Brahmins aspire to much higher antiquity than the Hebrews or Egyptians, yet that the oldest of their records do not in reality go farther back than the deluge. Their great law-giver Brahma, is considered to have been Abraham, from the similarity between the legends of Brahma and the true history of that patriarch, as detailed in the Bible: and other traditions that they possess corresponding with the account of our first parents—of Paradise—the flood—dispersion after Babel—sacrifice of Isaac—as well as many extraordinary coincidences between some of the ordinances of the Jewish laws and Hindoo code—warrant the conclusion, that a corruption of the first and pure religion—that which consisted in the worship of the one true God,—was the foundation of the Hindoo mythology, which gradually decreased in purity, and increased in idolatry, until it became so interwoven with Persian, Egyptian and Greek superstitions, that it now requires the deepest research, and most profound learning to trace out with accuracy even a few points on which the antiquary, and historian may rest with certainty. So that notwithstanding all the pains and study bestowed

on the subject, the Hindoo religion up to the present period is but little understood by other nations. It is a worship enveloped in obscurity, and abounding in mysteries,—which can scarcely be solved by the most zealous or talented Europeans, on account of the peculiarities attached to the language, the consequent difficulty of translating their records, and the disinclination of the Hindoo priests to converse with strangers, or to communicate the secrets of which they are the depositories. But it is quite clear that Brahma, who still is, and ever has been the supreme object of Indian adoration, is worshipped as the Creator of all things, though considered to be but the agent of an Almighty Spirit. His temples, however, are a mass of revolting idols; the attributes of this deity being represented under the most monstrous and hideous forms and devices—creatures partly beasts and partly men, and human beings with many heads and many limbs—all so disfigured, distorted, and transformed, that it but too sadly verifies the inspired writer's description of the idolater of old, “who taking the very refuse, hath carved it diligently, when he had nothing else to do, and formed it by the skill of his understanding, and fashioned it to the image of a man; or made it like some vile beast, laying it over with vermillion; and with paint colouring it with red, and covering every spot thereon.”

*A.* What a melancholy picture! but how true! mamma; judging at least from the few Hindoo idols



*only*, that are on the chiffonière : and is this sad state of things universal, or is it limited to the followers of Brahma ?

*M.* Idolatry prevails to a fearful degree throughout Hindostan : but though Brahma forms the basis of the Hindoo mythology, yet a numerous sect overspreads India who are termed Buddhists, or followers of Buddha, who, as they teach, was a prophet of piety, self-denial, and a performer of miracles, who visited their country many ages since, purified their religious doctrines, and was a preserver to *them*, and to all those who believe on him ; bringing with him the olive-branch of peace and love, censuring all inhumanity whether to animals or men, and prohibiting all sacrifices that involved the destruction of life. The followers of Buddha differ very much from those of Brahma in the decorations of their temples ; for no monstrous images are associated with their presiding deity ; or shock the visitor by their unnatural deformity. True, they are still idolaters, but they only render divine homage to the representation of virtue under the form of a good and great prophet, who is usually represented sitting cross-legged, (as is, you know, the custom of the East,) or standing in a thoughtful, meditative attitude. Of this nature are the Burmese and Siamese gods, of whom we have been speaking ; as well as those worshipped by the Japanese, Ceylonese, Chinese, Peguese, and other nations,—all of which are considered by those who have made Eastern theology their study, to be Buddha, under the different

names of Gaudma, Sommona-Codam, Seaka, Goutma, Foe, and Samana-Khutama.

*A.* Do you imagine, mamma, that this numerous sect could in any way have sprung from a traditional expectation of a Saviour's appearance on earth,—or from a confused knowledge of the Messiah and of his miracles, which, by some unknown means, may have been preached to them?

*M.* It is difficult to hazard any decided opinion on a matter of so serious a nature, and one which the lapse of years has involved in such obscurity: but though Buddha is stated to have existed very many years before the Christian era, many ecclesiastical writers have imputed his doctrines as at present received, to a glimpse of Christianity derived either from the preaching of St. Thomas in India, or that of some other of our Lord's disciples; sent, as they were, by him to publish the gospel in all lands. Other learned divines consider Buddha to have been merely some good and wise Indian prince, deified by superstition, but whose mild and just precepts rendered his followers so peculiarly alive to the labours of Christ's disciples, that some portion of the miraculous circumstances attending our blessed Saviour's visit on earth may by this means have become mingled with their more ancient traditions. The idol Foe, whom the majority of the Chinese worship, is acknowledged by them to have come from India about forty years after our Saviour's death, and they style him the "only God



of the world," though they render superior homage to what they call the "Eternal Mind," which holy Spirit they imagine animates both heaven and earth. The priests of the idol Foe, called Bonzes, inculcate moral precepts, and a state of rewards and punishments after this life; and what seems remarkable, is, the statement of missionaries, that many images in his temple exhibit a striking resemblance to those seen in Roman Catholic churches; especially one they call *Shingmoo*, or the Sacred Mother; which, like the image of the Virgin Mary, (mistakingly adored by the followers of that church,) is placed in an alcove with a child in her arms, and rays proceeding from a circle round her head, which, like the Romanists, they term the glory.

A. Have you any of these remarkable idols in your collection, mamma?

M. I have not, my love; but the two groups which stand on each side of the chiffonière, represent some religious ceremony connected with the worship of the god Foe, curiously and minutely carved in a species of soap-stone;\* a mineral substance of so soft a nature that it is easily wrought into any form, even with a common knife: yet it is so firm, and of so solid a texture, that the Chinese frequently make use of it, to represent ceremonies, either civil or religious.

A. How neatly the carving is executed! and how beautifully clear and distinct are the numerous figures

\* Steatite.

and trees! But, mamma, there is nothing in either of these groups so unnatural looking, as the different Hindoo idols which you have placed near them.

*M.* That is very true; yet Creishna, a great object of worship to the followers of Brahma, corresponds even more remarkably (always excepting the chronological order) with some portions of our New Testament; for he is represented as a wise child, born of a virgin, half man and half God,—a preserver of mankind, good, beneficent, and humane, a Saviour! But notwithstanding these coincidences, and that many of the original principles and doctrines of the Hindoo religion are simple, pure, and abounding with amiable, charitable, and humane feelings to man and beast; yet it has either most fearfully degenerated in practice through the agency of the Brahmans or priests,—or else it must *ever* have been idolatry of the most distressing and degrading kind; for their devotees or saints practise the most revolting superstitions; distorting their limbs, and enduring voluntarily sufferings and agonies, the bare recital of which is harrowing. The attributes of their deities are personified by the most hideous figures, or rendered mysterious by disgusting images of monsters of different descriptions; some of so colossal a size as to surpass our ideas;—others upon a scale correspondingly minute, but equally frightful,—as you may judge from the specimens against which you exclaimed on approaching the chiffonière yesterday.



*A.* And can nothing be done, mamma, to turn these poor deluded creatures from a faith so perverted and extraordinary ?

*M.* I would fain hope, in common with some of the brightest ornaments of our church, that the efforts making for their conversion will be sanctified by that Almighty Power, who can alone prosper the work so actively pursued at this time, by many a devoted and zealous servant of the gospel. Already have the blessings of Christianity begun to enlighten the vast, and hitherto benighted region of Hindostan,—the burning of widows on the funeral piles of their husbands, the sacrifice of innocent children, and the voluntary self-destruction of enthusiastic fanatics, is forbidden wherever the British law prevails. The mild measures of early education, and translations of the Scriptures, begun by Swartz and other protestant missionaries, seconded by the active encouragement of Bishop Middleton and the excellent Bishop Heber, together with the exertions of the indefatigable Buchanan, and many eminent men, whose lives, health, and talents have been all devoted to the furtherance of this great object, have produced a confidence and trust in these poor simple-minded people, which was in vain attempted to be obtained by the Portuguese and Spanish settlers ; who, with a blind and mistaken zeal, sought by the horrors of the inquisition, the artifices of the Jesuits, and the rigours of an unrelenting persecution, to drive their wretched victims from the faith of their ancestors ;

and to substitute by force and the most grievous cruelties the Roman Catholic persuasion, in lieu of those pagan rites that had so long existed in, and alas! still continue in too great measure to defile, this ancient kingdom. Much, therefore, remains to be done; and very many years must elapse before the laudable attempts now making in the East can be expected to be crowned with general success. But relying on the sure promises of God, we do not despair of such a result,—in spite of the obstacles which local attachments, and deep-rooted prejudices, perpetually raise in the minds of these deluded people, who are more under the dominion of their priests, than we, as Christians, can imagine. But in proportion as *we* experience, and are by contrast with others made more sensible of the blessing vouchsafed to us in being born in a land where the gospel of the Redeemer is practised in its greatest purity; so are we more especially called upon to exert ourselves by every means which the gospel sanctions, to turn the hearts of our idolatrous brethren; and to implore the great Physician of souls, that he will sanctify and aid our efforts for their conversion:—exclaiming in the words of the wise son of Sirach, “O Lord God of all, send thy fear upon all nations that seek not after thee; as thou wast sanctified in us before them, so be thou magnified among them before us. And let them know thee, as we have known thee, that there is no God, but only thou, O God.”



## CHAPTER IX.

### ORIENTAL CHINA.

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*A.* TO-DAY we are to examine the inside of the chiffonière, and I am glad of it; because I have often wondered, dear mamma, why you prize the old-fashioned china within it so highly. Some of the little cups are certainly beautiful; but many of the animals painted on the bowls and plates are almost as hideous as the idols which we examined yesterday.

*M.* I value my collection of porcelain, dear Agnes, for many reasons; but principally for the antiquity of the greater portion of it. The pieces, too, which you so lightly esteem are many of them very admirable as works of art; for almost all the articles within the chiffonière are specimens of old oriental china, the rarity of which is another reason for its being prized; as the Chinese are said to have lost the secret by means of which they formerly brought the art to such perfection; and I understand that they will now eagerly purchase articles anciently manufactured in

their own country. It is certain, however, that the greater part of the porcelain which we at present receive from China is as inferior to that which was imported from thence formerly, as the present productions of Europe are superior to those of past ages.

*A.* Then I suppose it is in consequence of the Chinese having been so long celebrated for the manufacture of this ware that it commonly bears the name of their country?

*M.* There can be no doubt that the arts flourished in the East, and had reached a state of great excellence long before the principal nations of the West were in existence, or at least in existence as civilized nations; consequently, as I have before told you, it is to the East that we must ascribe the invention of most of the luxuries, and many of the comforts of life. But the term *China*, though a very common expression, is nevertheless incorrect when used in a general sense; for it can only be applied literally to such ware as is produced in that country; the word *Porcelain* is applicable to all manufactures of this material: whether those of Canton, Sevres, Dresden, or Worcester; because it indicates all earthen-ware that is fine-grained, white, and semi-transparent: but the perfection to which the oriental work was brought while the art remained unknown, or was in its infancy elsewhere, caused the term *China* to be used for denoting great superiority, and above all, to distinguish the productions of the East from those of the West, porcelain being



an European expression, and wholly unconnected with the Asiatic appellation, for this ware\*. It is derived from *porcellana*, a Portuguese word signifying a small cup or dish; being the term which the early European settlers in India, who, you may remember were Portuguese, bestowed on the delicate cups and plates, which in texture so surpassed any thing they had beheld in their own country, and which they were the means of introducing into it, and eventually into the rest of Europe.

A. And I suppose it is now retained from habit, mamma? for of course other nations have long ere this succeeded in making the ware equally good with that originally imported from China?

M. No! my love. Beautiful as are the productions of the different manufactures in Europe, and distinct as is the character which each of their porcelain works possess; none of them have quite succeeded in acquiring the peculiarity which distinguishes the Chinese ware from the European; or of uniting the whole of the qualifications which render the former so perfect. This arises partly from the materials used by the orientals, which, though abundant in many districts of Asia, have not yet been discovered in the same purity in any part of Europe; partly from the extreme jealousy of the Chinese; who are so tenacious of the mysteries by which their productions have acquired

\* Tse-ki.

such celebrity, that they take all possible pains to preclude the possibility of strangers arriving at the knowledge of them.

*A.* And how long, mamma, have the productions of China been so celebrated ?

*M.* That is a difficult question to answer, my child ; for though I may safely tell you that they have been estimated in Europe ever since the communication with India by the Cape of Good Hope introduced them more generally to notice, yet it is well known that in the East they were prized, and sought after long antecedent to that period ; and we may conclude with tolerable certainty, that the art was no longer in its infancy when first made known to Europeans, from the circumstance of the oldest specimen of china-ware now extant not differing essentially from that we at present receive, though in some points superior to it. The first time that we find any historical mention of china-ware, is in the year 1591, about which period a great quantity was brought from the East by merchants belonging to the Dutch East India company, who at the same time introduced that agreeable beverage *Tea* into Europe from the same country. But you must not imagine that the manufacture of this ware was wholly confined to China from the common application of the term ; for what is ordinarily called oriental china is likewise procured from Siam, Tonquin, and many other eastern countries ; especially Japan whose productions are singularly beautiful. It is however impossible to



assign to any of them the merit of the invention; for the period at which it originated, as well as its first discoverer, are alike unknown to all: even the Chinese annals, strange to say, are, as far as we know, totally silent on the matter. But that the art is very ancient in that kingdom may be inferred from the fact, that in the records of one particular province, it is stated that the town of King-te-tching has furnished the Imperial table with China since the year of our Lord 442.

*A.* And when, mamma, did Europeans first attempt to imitate the Chinese manufacture?

*M.* Somewhere towards the close of the seventeenth century, when tea and coffee were beginning generally to supersede the ancient beverages of beer and milk, amongst the higher classes of society; and that lighter repasts had succeeded to the substantial meals of earlier times. Saxony is said to have been the first kingdom in the western hemisphere that succeeded in imitating China-ware; and we find that the manufacture of porcelain at Dresden was in a very flourishing state in the year 1706. Since that period it has been brought to still greater perfection there, so much so, that in the present day its productions are valued almost as highly as those imported from the East. The manufactories of France were next established somewhere about the year 1710; and that of Sevres is now the most esteemed of European establishments after that of Dresden; for in consequence of many distinguished members of the Parisian Academy of Science having

interested themselves in its success, especially the celebrated philosopher Reaumur, who set the example of attending to it on scientific principles so early as the year 1727, and upon whose experiments the royal manufactory of Sevres was founded, the investigation of the subject acquired a degree of importance and excited a spirit of emulation which soon spread to adjoining kingdoms, and has contributed greatly to accelerate the progress of the art. Porcelain was first made in England in the year 1750, at Chelsea, and the ware produced there was but little inferior to that so estimated at Dresden and in France; but the expensive price attached to the articles, which were chiefly designed for ornamental purposes, prevented the Chelsea works from becoming of such general advantage as many subsequent establishments for the manufacture of less costly articles, instituted throughout Great Britain between the years 1752 and 1760. Germany and Italy soon followed the example of England; and some Jesuit Missionaries, who, by reason of their astronomical skill, so obtained the favour of the Emperor of China as to be permitted to sojourn in his dominions, and even to enter Peking his capital city, transmitted to the Grand Duke of Tuscany much useful information relative to the mode of manufacture pursued by the Chinese, and the ingredients employed by them in it. Various experiments, and substantial improvements were the result of this information; and although the Asiatics still retain the pre-eminence on account of the



superiority of their materials,—yet the art has so rapidly advanced, and is now so flourishing in Europe, that many of the specimens wrought in its principal cities are almost as much esteemed as the oriental models which called forth such successful imitations.

*A.* Indeed, mamma, I am not surprised at that; for it appears to me that the singularity of the Chinese ware, both as regards the shape of the articles, and the devices painted upon them, is its chief recommendation: otherwise I cannot comprehend why that old-fashioned looking china should be considered so superior to the far more elegant things manufactured in Europe.

*M.* In all arts, my love, there is a certain standard of excellence, and of course the nearer this is attained, the nearer does any art approach to perfection. If in the attempt to imitate any particular species of manufacture a different article is produced,—that article, although it may be prettier, more elegant, or more useful, yet remains a failure as regards the object in view; though it may thus become the means of giving rise to a new and distinct branch of the same pursuit. The case stands precisely thus with regard to oriental, and European porcelain. The ware we wish to imitate is a half vitrified substance, that is to say, a material in a middle state between *thick* earthen-ware and *clear* glass. Now to whatever degree of perfection we bring either earthen-ware, or glass, though each sort produced may be prettier than porcelain, yet they

are no longer successful imitations of it, inasmuch as the distinguishing characteristic of the latter article is its being a substance between the two sorts of manufacture I have just alluded to, viz. a substance partly vitrified, but not wholly so. Herein then lies the superiority of the Chinese work ; which being composed of ingredients that can stand the most intense degree of heat without danger of running into glass, combines the essential and true character of porcelain, namely, its being a semi-transparent material of exquisite whiteness, uniting firmness and density with great delicacy of texture : but for want of similar ingredients in Europe, the substitutes used in its different manufactures approach generally so near to vitrification, that if the greatest care were not observed in regulating the heat of the furnace employed during a part of the process, the finer articles would eventually become glass, or the more solid ones fall into the opposite extreme of possessing no transparency at all—the semblance of it only being given by the lustre of the varnish applied to the surface. You will, therefore, perceive, that notwithstanding the richness, elegance, and beauty of its *external* appearance, European porcelain must be inferior to the oriental ware, because deficient in the qualities which compose the *intrinsic* excellence of the latter.

A. And what are the ingredients, mamma, wanted to make our imitation of china-ware quite successful ?

M. The composition which gives so distinct a char-



acter to the oriental porcelain, is a paste formed from two peculiar kinds of rocky earth or hewed stone. These are brought in blocks from different quarries, and then ground to the finest powder, after which they are mingled together in due proportions, and by means of water of a brackish or salt nature, compose the aforesaid paste, which being subsequently well kneaded, acquires sufficient consistence to bear the operations of the workmen. These two minerals possess the most opposite qualities. One is called *Petunse*, the other *Kaolin*. *Petunse* is of a flinty nature, extremely hard, and in appearance approaching nearly to a pebble,—the texture being fine, and the surface somewhat transparent. It is of a greenish white colour, and vitrifies so easily that it requires no addition or assistance whatever to make it yield readily to the action of the fire. *Kaolin* is an earthy stone of a much softer nature than *petunse*. It somewhat resembles talc or mica; at least it is intermingled with glittering particles of the same metallic description. Though quite soft when dug out of the mines, it will bear the most intense degree of heat without melting. The mixture of these two opposite materials produces the substance which I have told you is essential to the composition of true porcelain—that is to say, a semi-transparent material, neither earthenware nor glass, being less clear and brittle than the latter, but of a closer and more transparent nature than mere baked earth. The proportions of the two ingredients differ of course according to the quality of

the articles required, and petunse is added in greater or less quantity as it may be desired to increase or decrease the clearness of the ware. Thus the difference between the Chinese and European manufacture arising from the mixture of kaolin in the former, may be easily detected by the vitrified appearance of the latter, whenever equal transparency is attempted to be effected by the action of heat. Oriental china is further distinguished from that of other countries by its peculiar whiteness, which is owing to a mineral oil or varnish, extracted from that valuable fundamental ingredient which I have told you is called petunse, and which is rendered very liquid by the addition of another oil procured from burnt lime, and the ashes of a large sort of fern that grows abundantly near the quarries.

*A.* But except the difference arising from the use of this composition, I suppose the method pursued in manufacturing the ware is similar in all countries, or do the Chinese still maintain their secrecy on the subject? Have you ever visited any porcelain works, mamma, so as to be able to judge?

*M.* I have, my love, and most attentively observed their process at Swansea, in South Wales, and at Sevres, in France, which latter superb establishment I have twice visited; the first time in company with a gentleman of high literary attainments, who, having been in China, and had an opportunity on his return of inspecting the principal porcelain works in Europe, was highly interested in closely examining the different



methods pursued in each; and which he carefully pointed out to me, having procured permission to visit such workshops as are not generally open to strangers. In the interval between my two visits, I read a minute account of the oriental process, (as far at least as it has been made known to us) and I found that the principle pursued was much the same in the East as in France and Great Britain, though, as I have already hinted, each country, whether of Europe or Asia, has a peculiar characteristic which distinctly marks their several productions.

*A.* I should like to see a manufactory of porcelain, for I cannot imagine how they form the handles of the cups and vases, or those delicate ornaments that finish the edges and covers of fancy articles.

*M.* You would little imagine, my child, the multitude of hands that are required to complete even a common basin or tea-cup, much more articles of such superior workmanship as vases, &c.; and it is only by the inspection of different manufactures that we become sensible of the mutual dependence which all classes of society have on the resources of each other. But I will try briefly to explain the method pursued; and if you open that curious-looking porcelain box, you will find within it specimens of the earths and clays in their natural state, as well as of the powder, paste, handles, and ornaments before they are baked; in short, *all* the various gradations through which the art of porcelain manufacture passes, both as carried on at Swansea and

Sevres. The first process of pounding and grinding the earths is the same in all countries, only that in Europe a greater number of ingredients are required to form the mixture which in China is combined of the two minerals which I have already described as peculiar to the East, where they are first kneaded in paved pits by the trampling of feet, but in our part of the world the different materials are ground in mills, preparatory to their being formed into paste with the hands. The shape of each article, whatever it may be, is given by means of a turning wheel or *lathe*, on which a portion of the paste is placed, and by means of the thumb and finger of one hand inside, and the action of the other outside as he turns the wheel rapidly with his foot, the workman gives to the vessel its first rough form. One set of artisans is confined exclusively to each department, which makes them more active and expert in their operations than if more indiscriminately occupied: after the vessel has received its height, and suitable dimensions, it is passed on to other journeymen, who shape it more accurately by means of a mould, which regulates its exact proportions. Again it has to pass into fresh hands to be smoothed and polished within and without, and rendered fit for those persons whose peculiar occupation it is to fashion the tops of tea-pots, the bases of bowls, mugs, basins, and vases, the handles of cups, the lips of jugs, and such additions as are requisite to decorate the edges or sides of ornamental articles. These latter are formed



chiefly in moulds, and are afterwards attached to the different vessels for which they are intended by means of a cement composed of the same ingredients as the paste, only in a more liquid state : but many articles which rest merely on a hollow foot or stand, are scooped out by means of an iron instrument ingeniously used by workmen employed for that purpose

*A.* Oh ! I clearly perceive a ragged edge round these little handles, and this ornamental head too, dear mamma, has evidently come out of a mould in the manner you describe.

*M.* These edges, which I purposely preserved in the same state in which I received them at the factory, are carefully taken away before the handles, or other similar additions are cemented on to the vessels : and after they are united to it, the superfluous cement is neatly removed, and both parts well smoothed by means of an iron spatula, so that no trace of any joint is visible. When the articles are completed, as far as regards their form and proportions, they are placed within an oven to be baked, where they remain nearly two days, before the paste is transformed into porcelain ; and in order to ascertain the exact time when the furnace has attained the intense heat necessary to effect this change, narrow slips of the ware are so placed as to be drawn out at pleasure, and by their appearance, the workman judges at what period he may discontinue the supply of fuel. Look at the side of your box, and you will

find two of these proof pieces, one partly baked, and the other entirely so.

*A.* Dear me! how beautifully white and delicate! Why, mamma, I do believe that those pretty figures in the library, which I know represent the four seasons, are composed of the same substance; but, having no polish, I always thought they were made of marble, and should never have dreamed of their being porcelain, had I not looked at these narrow slips, which they so much resemble in substance.

*M.* You are quite right in your conjecture, my love. Those very elegant allegorical figures are formed of porcelain in its purest state, when it is technically termed *biscuit*; and the establishment at Sevres (where they were purchased) is celebrated for this description of ware, in consequence of the composition there used being remarkably white and fine-grained; so that beautiful pieces of sculpture, after the models of the Italian marbles, are very successfully formed of it. I am not in the least surprised, therefore, that you mistook my specimens for stone; because the unglazed and unpolished surface of this material makes its appearance approach much nearer to that of white marble than China-ware. Those kneeling children which you have often admired in the shops, and the busts which I gave your cousins, are also composed of the same substance, but all these are very inferior to the figures of the Seasons; because the excellence of the biscuit must of course depend on the quality of the porcelain



paste; which is a point in which they particularly excel at Sevres.

*A.* And now that I know what it resembles in its half-finished state, I can clearly comprehend its effect when fully prepared; for these old Chinese figures, mamma, are, I suppose, nothing more than biscuit, glazed and varnished.

*M.* You have brought matters to a very rapid conclusion, my dear Agnes. You have forgotten the *painting* which in itself doubles the labour, after the ware has been transformed into biscuit. When an article is not intended to remain in this simple state, it is dipped into a liquid preparation about the thickness and appearance of cream, and again exposed to intense heat to melt the ingredients of which this liquid is composed, which are of so fusible a nature as to give the article a beautiful gloss, when the furnace has a second time effected the change intended. In this more advanced state, the biscuit-ware has become pure white porcelain; and a great deal of it is used in that state; but when it is to be painted, it is removed to rooms allotted to that department, where the labours of the artists are quite as distinctly separated as in the earlier stages of the process; for some paint birds and butterflies—others flowers and fruits—some simply etch the patterns which other persons shade and complete—whilst landscapes, human figures, animals, or ships occupy distinct artists; and from the beauty and superior execution of the designs upon the best porce-

lain you may imagine that artists of considerable talent are required for the larger establishments ; as the paints, though laid on in the same manner as oil and water colours, are very differently prepared, and do not acquire their proper hues until they have undergone the action of the fire ; considerable caution and judgment therefore are necessary in using them to produce the desired effect. From the painting-room the ware finally passes into the hands of those whose office it is to give their vessels their beautiful polished look, which is effected by another exposure to intense heat : this calls forth the lustre of the painting, fixes the colours, and renders the varnish equally clear, smooth, and even in every part of the work.

*A.* What a complicated process ! And are all those plates and cups which we commonly use, and which are sold so reasonably, painted by artists ? Surely they must work very quickly !

*M.* You would indeed be surprised to see how very rapidly their fingers move, for constant practice makes them very dexterous in the use of the brush. But yet if we depended on their exertions only, coloured porcelain would not be so common as of late years it has become. The articles, however, to which you allude, belong to a manufacture, which, though it somewhat resembles *porcelain*, is nevertheless very inferior to it. It is distinguished by the appellation of “ British stone china ” or “ blue and white ware ; ” and the patterns on its surface are transferred from prints



instead of being painted by hand: a method far more expeditious,—and by means of which many designs copied from oriental china have been represented on this common material with a neatness and exactness, that proves the value of the invention. Give me that oily looking fold of paper which you removed from the top of the box on first lifting up the lid. And now that I have unfolded it, tell me, dear child, what you think it resembles?

A. How I am surprised! Why it is the exact representation of one of the plates of the common dinner service, which we use every day, and really, mamma, the very form of the plate with its border, and the bridge, tree, and Chinese house are so exact that it looks as if you had taken off the skin of one, on purpose to surprise me.

M. The method pursued is simply this. The pattern selected is first engraved on a copper plate; upon which is afterwards spread some thick colouring matter, generally *blue*, from whence has arisen the common appellation for this ware. A sheet of very thin paper well soaped is then placed over it; and after being passed under a rolling press, is removed from the copper plate, and applied to such articles as are in a state of biscuit; which material being of a porous nature, imbibes the tint whatever it may be, so that when the paper is removed from it, the white surface of the ware is found to have received the impression of the pattern; which it retains as clearly and distinctly,

after being baked, and glazed, as if it had been painted upon it with a brush. The rapidity with which different articles are printed is most astonishing, and I do not know any thing of the sort that pleased me more than watching this part of the process at Swansea, and comparing the expedition of this ingenious invention with the tedious advance of articles painted by the hand at Sevres;—which, though exquisite when finished, and of course infinitely superior to the printing, is nevertheless distressing to witness, as the poisonous nature of many of the paints used for ornamenting porcelain renders it an unhealthy occupation; and the pallid looks of the poor people employed prove how much they are injured by it, and by the close confinement to a room impregnated with such unwholesome air.

*A.* And how, dear mamma, are these odd looking Chinese figures made? Is it by the same process, as that you have described?

*M.* The greater part of the small images in my chiffonière as well as the idols and animals which you may occasionally see arranged as chimney-piece ornaments, as well as in collections, are either fashioned upon moulds, or simply modelled with the hands; but the large Chinese Mandarins, so much valued by connoisseurs are formed of many separate pieces joined together with a cement that is composed of the same ingredients as the mixture of which the porcelain is made; the places of joining being carefully concealed by repeated smoothing and polishing until nearly dry



when the whole fabric is completely covered with a transparent varnish prepared from the stone oil I have before mentioned with the addition of another mineral substance, which so increases its consistency, without diminishing its clarifying properties, that no trace either of the cement or of the seams, is eventually visible. In this ingenious manner the larger Chinese productions are formed — such for instance as those magnificent *jars* and *beakers* whose size so astonished you in the ante-room at —— Court, and which are immensely valuable, not only from their uncommon size, but from the beauty of the workmanship, and the extraordinary brilliancy of the colours with which they are embellished.

*A.* I remember them well, mamma; but though I was astonished at their amazing size, yet I recollect, being much more pleased with some smaller specimens, which papa told us came from Vienna; they were so elegant, and so much less stiff and formal looking. This reminds me, that you said just now, that the different manufactures in Europe were all distinguished by some peculiarity, or particular method:—Can you explain to me the difference? or is it so trifling that none but persons connected with porcelain works, could perceive or comprehend the distinction?

*M.* The characters of the different European establishments, are, as you may imagine, not so strikingly separated as those which distinguish the Eastern from the Western productions: nevertheless if decided dif-

ferences did not exist, we should not find persons who do not even pretend to be judges, so infinitely prefer the productions of one kingdom to that of another, and so readily distinguish the difference between them. But as the consideration of this matter might lead us into a long dissertation, we must not enter upon the subject now, as it is getting late; but if you feel inclined to spend another day amongst the porcelain works, I would advise you to walk into the drawing-room, and attentively observe all the china ornaments you can find there. They consist entirely of European porcelain; and a careful examination of them may considerably aid you in understanding my explanations to-morrow. To-day you will only have time carefully to put away the examples you have been examining; and which I prize greatly as memorials of visits which circumstances rendered peculiarly interesting to me.

*A.* I will endeavour, dear mamma, to arrange them in the same order in which I found them; but whilst I am doing so, do tell me if this box is really made of porcelain; for it appears almost too clear for that, yet too thick for glass

*M.* It is a specimen of what is termed glass porcelain, an invention founded on one of the earliest attempts at imitating Asiatic china. It is an elegant material, and was formerly termed "Reaumur's porcelain," because the improvement is due to that celebrated, and most scientific man, who first communicated his ideas on the subject to the Academy of



Sciences at Paris, in the year 1739. I have already told you more than once, that porcelain is a material in a state of semi-vitrification, to produce which effect M. Reaumur suggested the converting common glass vessels, which are, you know, *wholly vitrified*, into a middle state by neutralizing the clearness of the latter with some opaque substance: this design he completely effected by means of burnt gypsum, commonly called "plaster of Paris." These two opposite substances, mingled together by means of intense heat, had the desired effect, and the change was produced with very little trouble, for the commonest and meanest kind of glass fully answered the purpose; and having received their proper forms at the glass-house, they were merely put into earthen vessels filled with gypsum, and after remaining the usual time in the furnace, the *inferior* glass articles, become converted without any change of form into a very *superior* looking porcelain of fine texture, delicately white, and appearing, in short, to possess many of the most essential qualities of china-ware. It is this vitreous porcelain which still sells so cheap in Paris, where this production is much more ancient than the more perfect ware, for one of the earliest attempts at imitating china, was made in the suburbs of that city, by reducing glass to powder, and then forming it into paste with some less fusible substance. Great improvements have, however, been effected since this early attempt, an example of which after M. Reaumur's

suggestion, you see before you in the glass porcelain box, which suggested the inquiry. Respecting the vitreous porcelain as at present made, you have another and daily example in the breakfast service, which I brought back with me from Paris, and which you frequently admire for its dazzling whiteness, and transparent appearance.

*A.* Yes, I now plainly perceive how much more nearly it resembles this pretty box than porcelain generally. There, dear mamma; I have carefully packed up all your relics again; and certainly I am indebted to them for understanding your descriptions much better than if I had merely listened without seeing these specimens.

*M.* Be assured, my dear Agnes, that nothing assists our attainment of general knowledge so much as the having before us examples of such objects as we think worth investigation. They are as letters of the alphabet, which lead us to the acquirement of a new language, or as dates in chronology to recall to our memory remote historical events. They fix subjects and circumstances on our minds, which would otherwise perhaps insensibly pass from the recollection, unless it were aided by such apparently unimportant but in reality effective memorials; the sight of which even at a far distant interval will instantaneously revive the idea of an almost forgotten subject, in the same way as does the sight of a long hidden portrait, the features of a valued friend; or a print even in a



foreign land, the scenes of early childhood. Let therefore the contents of the little porcelain box impress this useful lesson on your mind, my child. Lose no opportunity of obtaining useful information from persons, however lowly in life, whose particular avocation or pursuit, enables them minutely to describe the practical part of such subjects, as you desire to comprehend. And having obtained such information, eagerly embrace the means (if happily afforded to you) of securing at the time, and when the impression is fresh on your mind, examples, however simple, of what you have seen or heard explained, that you may be able to refer to them at any future period, either for the refreshment of your own memory, or for the benefit of others.

## CHAPTER X.

### EUROPEAN PORCELAIN.

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A. I followed your advice, dear mamma, and attentively examined all the pieces of porcelain in the drawing room yesterday evening; and I certainly perceived a great difference amongst them; for instance, those beautiful figures on the chimney-piece, I mean the ladies, in such rich brocaded dresses, and the gentlemen with green coats flying open to exhibit their gold embroidered waistcoats, appeared to me to be more ancient, and less transparent looking, than the pretty vases which you brought from France the last time you were abroad. But you promised to explain *why* each manufacture was particularly esteemed; and wherein they differed from each other.

M. The Saxony porcelain, which is chiefly fabricated at Meissen, a town at a short distance from Dresden the capital, is, you may remember to have heard me say, the most ancient of European attempts at imitating china-ware. It is estimated chiefly for its near



approach to the oriental manufacture, which it greatly resembles; on account of the pure whiteness of its ground, the smooth and compact nature of its internal structure, the superior excellence of its colours and enamelling, and for the valuable property of sustaining liquids in a boiling state without injury, or the most sudden changes of heat and cold; which latter qualification is one of the most remarkable recommendations of the Eastern ware.

The exquisite workmanship of the groups of figures, of which you just now spoke, and which were so fashionable as chimney-piece ornaments some fifty years since, prove how attentively the art must have been studied in Saxony from the time of its first establishment there; for you were right in your conjecture as to these being much older than any thing else of that description in the drawing-room: and nothing can be more admirable than the abundant ornaments in relief, which cover the exterior of those highly-finished goblets, bowls, and vases, which even in the present day are so universally esteemed as the produce of Dresden. Did you remark how beautifully the flowers are formed upon the cover of the round jar, that stands between the figures, and how true their colours are to nature? Many of them are as minute as the original plants, and the leaves scarcely thicker than paper shavings. The union of this delicacy with the solidity for which the Saxony porcelain is remarkable, is effected by means of a peculiar paste, the dis-

covery of which, (or rather of the exact proportions which constitute its excellence) is attributed to the ingenuity of a person named "Betticher," who, being imprisoned on suspicion of having the power of converting metals into gold, beguiled his confinement until his death in 1719, by making a variety of experiments relative to porcelain ware, which, just at that time, was exciting such an extraordinary degree of interest and enquiry. As an alchemist, his knowledge of metallic substances made him also particularly alive to the value of cobalt in colouring porcelain, as well as in enamelling it; because its nature is such that it resists the most intense heat without change of tint. Cobalt, though now found in many parts of Europe, was, at that time, chiefly obtained from Saxony: so that the use of this brilliant and permanent blue formed another characteristic of the Dresden ware. French porcelain, especially that manufactured at the royal establishment at Sevres near Paris, is considered superior in taste and elegance to that of any other country. It is remarkable for the regularity and beauty of its forms, the quality of the ware, its admirable coloured grounds, its superb gilding, its shining white and brilliant polish: this last peculiarity, however, is owing to the vitrifiable nature of the varnish used for glazing. The Sevres ware is still further celebrated for the superiority of its illustrations, than which it is impossible to imagine any thing more perfect; for the most eminent painters in every branch of the art are employed at a



high price in the manufactory ; but especially for the portraits of remarkable persons, which are copied with surprising exactness. The larger pieces of porcelain are chiefly embellished with historical illustrations, which are portrayed with an attention to truth that creates great interest : but sets of plates for dinner and dessert services, often represent a series of the principal manufactures of France,—the costumes of different countries, and many other matters which make them almost as valuable as paintings, as they are admirable as perfect specimens of porcelain. But the exorbitant price of even the smallest article renders them unattainable to general visitors ; since a single plate sells as high as £20, or £25 ; and vases and such large pieces vary in price, according to their size, from £100 to £1000 !

*A.* What a price for so fragile a thing as porcelain ! I should think they could never sell enough to support the expence of the establishment.

*M.* None but royal funds could defray the expenses attending it ; but as the works are carried on at the expense of the king, no cost is spared to make them approach as nearly as possible to perfection ; and truly it is a regal manufactory—its productions deserving a place in palaces and imperial courts—to which, indeed, they are often sent as royal gifts by the king and French government. The Worcester porcelain is now considered the finest and principal establishment of this kind in England ; though the Chelsea works were

the first which succeeded in placing us on a footing with our continental neighbours. The articles executed at the latter place were remarkable for the beauty of the ware, and excellence of the workmanship. The figures of men, women, and animals, for which it was famous, were finished with an exactness and particularity which makes it still valued, and sell at a high price; but as its efforts were more directed to ornamental than to useful things, other manufactories were speedily established with the express design of uniting both purposes, but especially for perfecting the common articles of life, which add so much to the comfort of all classes of society. These more recent manufactories soon flourished in an astonishing degree, and have, at length, attained to such eminence, that not only have their commodities been eagerly sought for, both in the old and new world, but they have completely extirpated the pewter plates and mugs, and the wooden bowls and trenchers, formerly used in taverns, schools, and public institutions in England, as well as by many most respectable families in the middle rank of life. The best productions of Worcester are said to unite the richness of Saxony porcelain with the elegance of the French; for the artisans employed have so successfully imitated foreign specimens, and have so wisely and ingeniously acted upon the scientific improvements suggested by chemical professors in our own and other kingdoms, that the ware of Great Britain is not only deservedly appreciated at home, but



estimated all over the world, for its neatness, durability, and excellent workmanship.

*A.* I suppose, mamma, few nations in Europe are now without some kind of porcelain work, though they may prefer purchasing the finer kinds from such noble establishments as those you have described.

*M.* The use of earthenware is now so universal, that most countries possess manufactures approaching to, or rather in imitation of Chinese porcelain; and, in addition to those I have already enumerated, I could select many others equally celebrated; especially those of Vienna, Berlin, Naples, and Florence, which are greatly to be admired, either for the superior quality of their material, the brilliancy of their colours, or the elegance and delicacy of their forms and execution: for the vast attention which has for many years past been bestowed on the subject, has led to the discovery of clays, approaching so nearly in their effects to the Chinese earths, that, though every nation boasts of some secret method of preparing their ingredients, or some peculiar mode of completing the entire process, either as regards the varnish, or the compounding the colours,—yet the result with *all* has been the fabrication of superb works, and the attainment of a degree of excellence in the art, which excites admiration even in China itself.

*A.* How very strange it seems, that amongst such numerous and really superior porcelain manufactories,

not *one* should yet have succeeded in uniting all the excellences of the oriental ware!

*M.* Yet such is the case, my love; for, if some have successfully imitated its internal structure, its outward whiteness and lustre may be wanting: whilst, if the latter desirable properties are obtained, the ware probably remains deficient in the density and solidity for which the Chinese and Japanese porcelain are remarkable. But we cannot judge of the excellence and beauty of the Eastern ware by that which we ordinarily see; for all the best kinds are exclusively reserved for the Emperor's use, and that of persons holding high official situations at court: these sorts are not allowed to be exported. Yellow is the Imperial colour in China, and consequently it forms the ground-work of all articles used in the Emperor's service, but is not permitted elsewhere; from this circumstance it cannot be obtained at any price, even by the natives, unless the articles are imperfect, or defective in form and colour. The Mandarins and higher classes have a beautiful species of ware allotted exclusively to their order, and which cannot be procured by the merchants, excepting from similar accidents. It appears like pencil-work, of the most delicate kind, irregularly wrought in lines, on a silver grey ground of the finest and most transparent texture; and the price of this and of the yellow china is very high. The ware used by the natives at large, and consequently that which is



chiefly brought into Europe, is white, or blue,—the former ornamented with paintings of flowers, figures, birds, and oriental landscapes, either executed in various colours, intermixed with gold, or simply in shades of blue.

A. Oh! I see the bottom shelf of the chiffonière is entirely filled with the blue and white sorts; and I remember, too, that in grandmamma's china-closet, there is a small tea-set of the same kind, covered with an hideous figure, something like a flying serpent.

M. Your description makes me smile, dear Agnes. You must not depreciate this ware. It is called the dragon china, and is extremely difficult to procure, and very expensive, because this device constitutes the Imperial Arms, which this singular people assert were given to them four thousand years ago by Fohi, the founder of their empire! The Imperial Dragon is called "*Lom*," and is distinguished by having *five* claws. The Emperors of China always carry representations of it on their banners, and it is only used for ornamenting *their* porcelain, silks, curtains, equipages, counterpanes, &c.; but the dragon you have observed on your grandmamma's tea-set, as well as that on some of my china, is called "*Mam*;" and its use is permitted to the grandees of the empire, and persons holding official situations. It is very similar to the Imperial badge, excepting in the circumstance of its having but *four* claws. The Viceroy of a province, when he travels in state, is preceded by two

officers, who bear maces in the form of dragons: and this device is also wrought upon the garments of the chief military officers, to distinguish them from the civil magistrates, who usually wear the badge of a bird, similarly embroidered on their habits, in gold and silver. This description of China is valued in proportion to the fineness and whiteness of the ground, the clearness of the blue, and the transparency of the ware. Hold up one of these cups to the light, and you will find it appears like a thin piece of alabaster; it is so delicately smooth, and evenly clear. The Chinese judge of the quality of their ware by such parts of the articles as have not been varnished,—such, for instance, as the base of a cup, &c.; and, as the greatest care is requisite to prevent the blue colour from tinging the white ground, they disdain all that is not of the purest white; for anciently, the ware of this kingdom was altogether white, and used in the country for many years in that simple state: indeed, the province of Fokien is, even at the present day, remarkable for this primitive description of China, and for the total absence of all gilding and colouring, or any decoration whatsoever, excepting such as can be effected in a purely white state. Blue was the first colour introduced, and that, too, continued unmingled with any other for a very considerable period. It was of a fine, deep, rich tint, and prepared from a valuable mineral termed Lapis Lazuli, or azure stone, which is found abundantly in China and Persia, but rarely elsewhere.



Of the peculiar beauty of this blue, even you may judge, because it forms the basis of that superb colour called ultra-marine, so useful to you in flower-painting. In process of time, however, the Chinese introduced green, red, and various other colours; but from the inferiority of the *blues*, of *latter years*, the fine deep tint of the ancients has been considered to be lost. This, however, is not the case; but the preparation from azure stone causing their ware to be so expensive, that merchants would not give the price asked, they substituted for it another blue extracted from smalt, which is a substance obtained by a chemical process from the metal termed cobalt, and which the Chinese found they could purchase from the Europeans with whom they trafficked, at so far more reasonable a rate than that at which they could prepare their own precious colour, that not considering the inferiority it caused in the appearance of their ware, they eagerly and universally adopted the cheaper substitute.

*A.* But I think, mamma, you must allow that though the quality of the oriental porcelain may be more perfect, and the colours perhaps more brilliant than those of Europe, yet the painting of the Chinese is very inferior to the specimens you have pointed out to me as the produce of Saxony, France, and England.

*M.* That fact must always be admitted; for the Chinese appear to be totally ignorant of the arts of design and perspective. Their human figures, and indeed their animals, as commonly represented, are

monstrous deformities; whilst their unwillingness to admit the possibility of their inferiority in this respect to other nations, makes them assert that they should not sell differently painted articles; and it is an actual fact that the Chinese themselves prefer their own misshapen figures to those that are better proportioned. Their flowers are far more justly executed; and from the brilliancy of their colours they excel in the representation of birds and insects: this however does not compensate for the incorrectness of design which forms so curious a contrast to the minute manner in which most of their paintings are completed.

*A.* They certainly must be a comical people, mamma; for, look at these nodding mandarins,—is it not enough to make any one laugh to see their grave faces and constant movement?

*M.* The Chinese are indeed a most original race. No nation upon earth can produce better or neater workmen; and the ingenuity of their productions will ever make them prized by the curious, and their variety valuable to the collector, for it is remarkable that scarcely two articles are found alike in the several collections so frequently met with. A very curious sort of ware formerly executed, but the secret of which I now believe to be lost, is a proof of their ingenuity. It is called *kialsum*, which signifies concealed azure; and it consisted of representations of fishes, boats, or river scenes painted inside of vessels, but so contrived as not to be visible until they were filled with water, or



some other clear liquor. Another pretty deception consists of vases and cups covered with flowers, birds, and insects apparently raised and beautifully carved, yet when closely examined, the surface is found to be smooth and even. This appearance is accomplished by pressing the vase, or cup, when quite soft, and before it is baked, in a mould of its own size and shape, but cut within in different devices; after which it is dipped in a fine white varnish, sufficiently thick to fill up all the cavities, and make the surface level and smooth. This varnish however being made of the stone-oil, and the other mineral substance which I yesterday described, is yet so transparent, as to allow of the patterns being clearly visible through it. You will find somewhere within the chiffonière a very elegant little jar of peculiar appearance, which is derived from the effects of another mineral oil. It is called marbled china,—is very much esteemed by the natives, and consequently very uncommon elsewhere. It has you perceive, the appearance, of many broken pieces being united together, or rather of innumerable cracks, not widely separated; but is in reality caused by irregular veins intentionally so effected, and termed by the Chinese *Tsout-chi*.

A. What a superb cup and saucer this is, mamma, which hid the jar from my sight. It is quite black, but brilliantly ornamented with gold; it almost resembles jappanning. And by its side is another sweet little cup, exquisitely white, as if by way of con-

trast, as thin as an egg-shell, and quite covered with elegant white flowers raised upon its transparent surface.

*M.* The black china is much admired in the East, though with us even a specimen is rare. Its texture is most beautiful ; and after being painted with gold, it is varnished several times to heighten the brilliancy and insure the durability of so costly an addition. The raised ornaments on the white cup and saucer, which sort is also greatly prized in India, is effected by means of a substance formed from agate, a precious stone which the Chinese collect in great abundance on the shores of their rivers, and after burning and reducing it to a powder, they mix a certain proportion with the stone oil, or varnish, to which I have so frequently alluded. Different designs are then portrayed on the porcelain, either in a purely white state, or mixed with some showy colour ; and the consistency of this composition causes the raised appearance you so much admire. The works of the Chinese will indeed bear the closest inspection. Look at these porcelain scent-bottles. Can any thing be more brilliant than the green ground-work both of them and the larger canisters by their side ? or more perfect than the gilded network which seems to be actually spread over that white tea-pot and bason ? It is indeed quite admirable ! And I have seen a kind which even imitates lace itself in appearance,—a cup of the finest quality being so encased with a sort of minute gilded fret-work, that



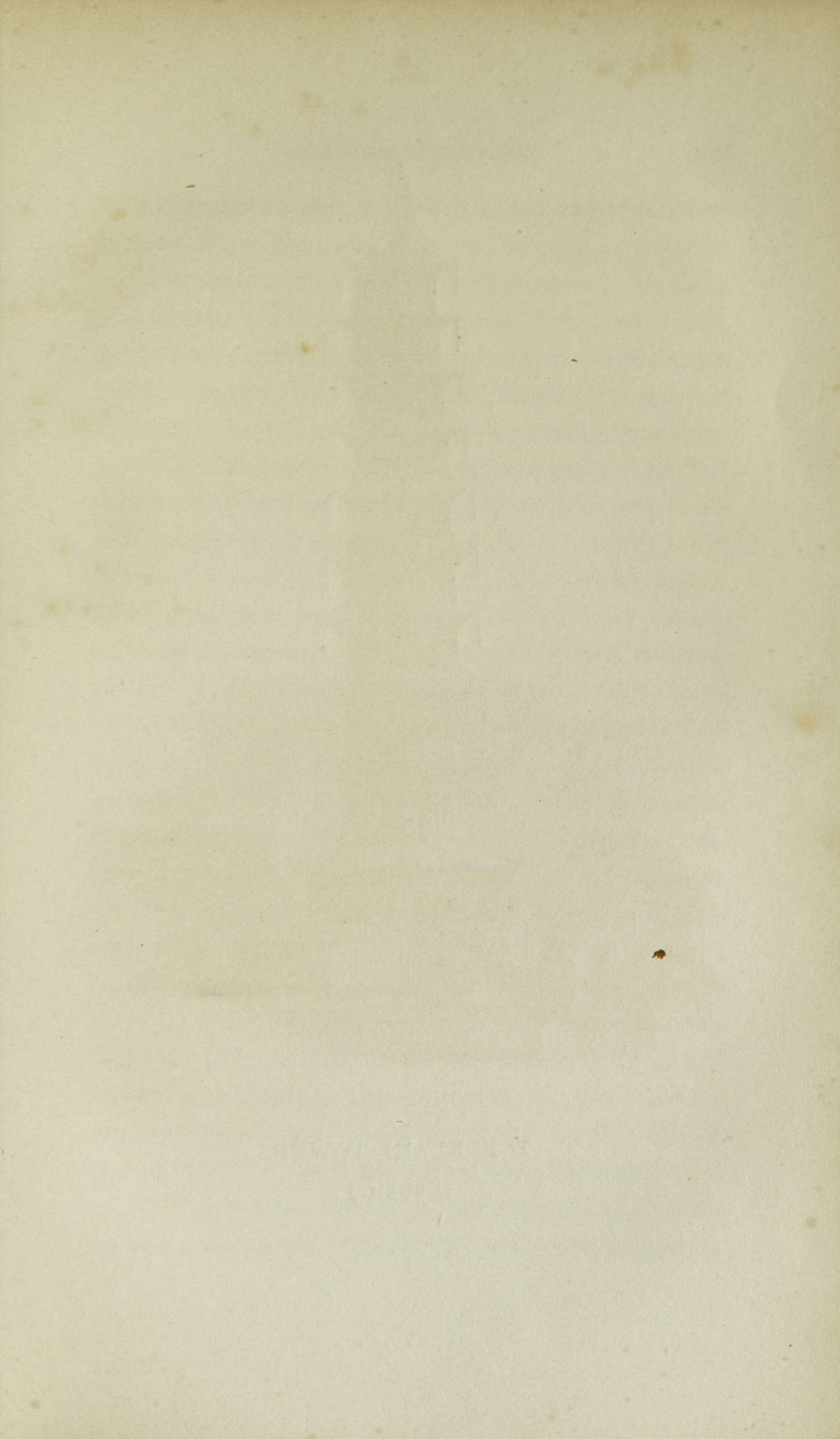
one would imagine it hardly possible for any thing but sculpture to produce so perfect and pretty an effect.

*A.* What an ingenious people they must be! and how very industrious too; for they seem not only to supply their own country with useful and ornamental things, but to furnish other and far distant kingdoms with their curiosities.

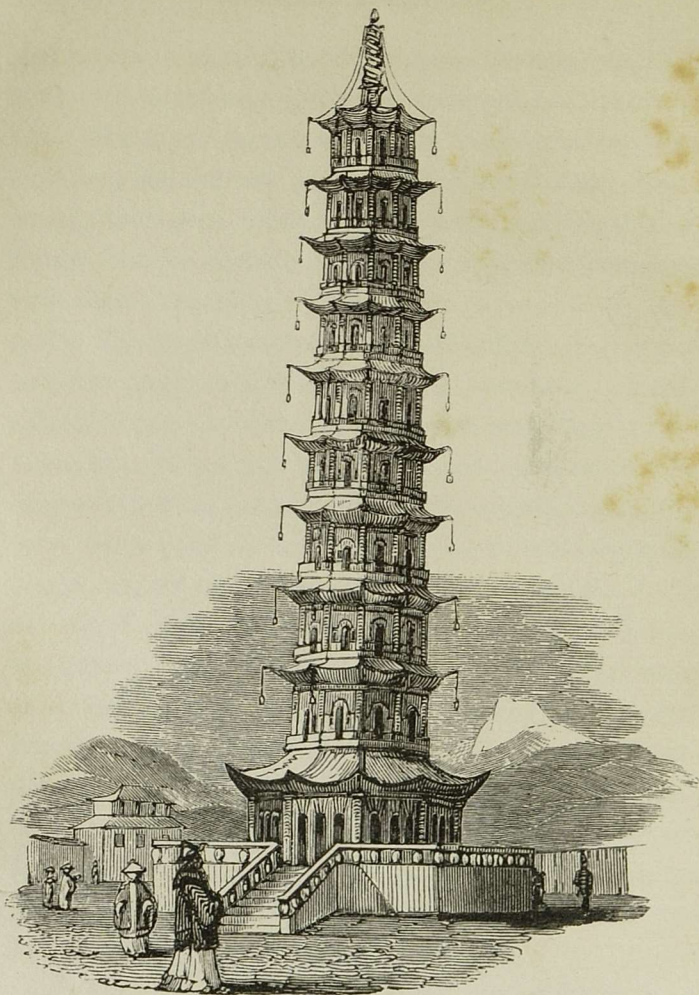
*M.* The quantity of porcelain anciently manufactured in China must have been enormous; as not only a considerable portion of the eastern world was supplied by them, but for a long time a great part of Europe also. And when it is further taken into consideration that very little glass is used in China, or the adjoining kingdoms, in consequence of that material not being estimated there; but that all the vessels used for beverages of every description, both on ordinary occasions and at entertainments, are composed of porcelain of different qualities, varied, perhaps, occasionally with cups of silver, agate, or scented woods, the demand for it, in the Chinese territory alone, must be immense. Indeed, it is said, that in one province only, that of Quansi, nearly a million of persons were, at one period, engaged in this occupation.

*A.* Oh! mamma, can you credit this statement?

*M.* The Chinese dominions, my love, are very extensive, and its population amazing; and when, in addition to this consideration, we reflect on the magnitude of some of their undertakings, it makes the assertion less staggering. What think you, dear Agnes,







PORCELAIN TOWER.  
(Nankin.)

of a porcelain tower, 200 feet high, and containing within it *nine* stories!!

*A.* A tower of porcelain! Now, mamma, you must be joking, I am sure.

*M.* Indeed, my child, I am not; I never was more in earnest; and, moreover, Le Compte (an old but faithful writer) mentions that this wonderful tower was one of the best contrived and noblest structures he had witnessed in the East. When he wrote, which was considerably more than a century ago, it had stood upwards of three hundred years: and he stated that it then appeared “wondrous beautiful.” This astonishing edifice forms one of two towers entering the gates of Nankin, formerly the capital of China, until the seat of the empire was removed to Pekin, with a view of preventing the incursions of the Tartars. It is raised on a massive base of brick; and the wall, he tells us, is twelve feet thick at the bottom, and nearly nine at the top; for the tower is merely faced with porcelain; but this is sufficient to give it the appearance of being altogether constructed of that material.

*A.* Ah! Now I can quite understand the sort of thing; for I do believe it must be very similar (only far more beautiful and surprising) to those old China-ware chimney-places, which so much amuse me and my sisters, in the nursery at the Manor House, when we go there to stay with grandmamma.

*M.* You could not have selected a better comparison; for those old-fashioned fire-places were com-



posed of brick-work, faced with glazed earthenware; and the porcelain tower, I should imagine, must have been cased in a somewhat similar manner. But you must not fancy that the old fire-places of which you speak, were composed of china, my dear Agnes; for they were coated with a far less costly material, in use long before the porcelain works flourished, which you seemed to think they resembled. The ware to which you allude was denominated Flemish, or Dutch tile; and was merely a fine and close description of pottery, glazed highly, and painted in red or blue devices. It is seldom seen now, except in the upper apartments of very old houses; but in the early part of the last century, it was considered a fitting ornament for sitting-rooms; each fire-place containing a complete Scripture tale, or historical event, illustrated in the several compartments which were formed by these square tiles.

*A.* And are there many other substances which I could mistake for China ware? or which approach to it in appearance or quality?

*M.* Very many, my love; for the several branches which separate common pottery from glass, or rather, which connect porcelain with these two opposite fabrics, are innumerable: but unless they were explained very particularly, the distinctions between stone-china, queen's-ware, crockery, Staffordshire earthenware, semi-china, and many others, would not easily be perceptible to a young mind, or to an indifferent observer. Here now, for instance, is a pair of very old vases,

perhaps the most antique articles in the chiffonière. They are, I know, generally taken to be oriental porcelain; but they are not so, being what is termed Dutch delft. *You*, doubtless, would have called them china.

*A.* Most certainly I should; for they are very unlike a European production; except that their long necks and round bodies something resemble the form of the oil flasks that come to England from Florence.

*M.* And yet, if you attentively examine them (provided, at least, that I have given you a clear explanation of the character of true porcelain), you will perceive that these vases are by no means like china; for they are not only opaque, but of a far thicker substance; for delft-ware is merely baked clay or pottery, covered with a thick white glazing both within and without, which gives it the external appearance of porcelain; especially when painted as are these vases in imitation of Asiatic china. Delft ware, though very inferior to it, or to its many imitations, is, nevertheless, a far more ancient European production; for it was first invented in 1450, and the art was practised afterwards with extraordinary success in the town in Holland, from whence it derives its name. But this material is more intimately connected with pottery than with porcelain, its early history being quite distinct from that of the latter; but a retrospection of the former art would involve matters of too much interest, and historical research, to be briefly sketched or hastily considered; as the use of pottery may be traced to very ancient



periods: nay, almost to the patriarchal times; for not only are some of the descendants of Judah especially designated in the 1st Book of Chronicles as "*potters*;" but the type of the "potter's vessel" is used so frequently by the prophets in the Old Testament, as to prove that it was an art generally practised, not only in their days, but as far back as those of the Royal Psalmist; who, you must remember, in speaking of the destruction of the heathen, says, "Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The Grecian pottery, especially that of Corinth, was prized above gold and silver; but the ancient Etruria, in Tuscany, was the country most celebrated for the art. The taste and elegance of their works were eagerly imitated by the Romans, whose vessels have been the models which other nations have been equally ambitious to copy. To these mighty conquerors is usually attributed the early introduction of the art into Great Britain; though some antiquaries trace it to the intercourse of the Phœnicians with our island many years previous; for it is well known that the occupation was followed both by that nation and the ancient Egyptians, from whom the Greeks learnt the art, and from whence it passed into Etruria. Be that as it may, the potteries of England, in the present day, have attained a degree of eminence that is universally acknowledged; and that sort in particular, known by the designation of Wedgewood ware, has not only greatly superseded the general demand for porcelain at home by all but the very

wealthy and noble, but has become so estimated on the continent for its utility, elegance, durability, and reasonable price, that the discoveries and persevering industry of the indefatigable man whose name it bears, have contributed to form an era in the progress of the art not only honourable to himself, but reflecting credit on the country that gave him birth; and under whose fostering care, his zealous efforts were so satisfactorily matured.

Thus, dear Agnes, you see, that, rude as the term *pottery* may sound in the common acceptation of the word; yet, were we enabled to pursue the subject further, and to enter fully into its ancient, and modern history, it would afford us much curious, and valuable information: perhaps at a future time we may resume the theme; but at present, we must return to the delft vases, which you were examining, and which owe their intimate resemblance to porcelain, from being glazed with plain enamel, to which process the Dutch are indebted for the celebrity of their delft. No material indeed approached so near china in external appearance, as the fine enamelled earthenware of Holland, on account of the bright polished surface, and the beautifully finished paintings with which it was embellished; and it was in consequence much prized, when porcelain was less common than recent improvements have made it.

A. And what, dear mamma, is enamel?

M. Enamel, my love, is a vitreous substance which,



in its simple state, is transparent, and approaches to glass; but when rendered opaque by the addition of thick white or coloured matter, greatly resembles porcelain; and is used in the latter form to give the appearance of it to earthen-ware, delft, and similar compositions: or to heighten the beauty of porcelain itself, by what is designated "painting in enamel," which is effected by mixing with this substance certain metallic colours, which are reduced to powder; and after being chemically prepared with certain oils, are used in a liquid form like other paints; but their brilliancy is not apparent until they have been baked, when the whole mass becomes vitrified by the action of fire, and acquires a lustre singularly beautiful, and which further possesses the advantage of never diminishing or fading: but as the art of enamelling is of various kinds and even more closely connected with other arts than that which we are now considering, the investigation of it would lead me into a digression so distinct from the subject which gave rise to your question, that I believe you must be content with my shewing you this pretty little pair of candlesticks, as an example of that branch of the art, which relates to porcelain; on examining which, you will perceive that they are in reality made of copper; but covered both outside and inside with a porcelainous coat, which is highly glazed and beautifully painted and gilded, appearing in fact like the finest china-ware.

A. And, are those pretty candlesticks which I have al-

ways so much admired, really only *cased* with enamel! I see it distinctly now; but they seem so old, mamma, that I conclude it is not a modern discovery.

*M.* Far from it, my love; the art of enamelling is very ancient, and it appears first to have been practised on pottery: for historians notice the manufacture of vases [of this description in Tuscany at a very early period; and there are yet existing in the cabinets of the curious in Italy some interesting specimens of a similar kind, painted by the celebrated Raphael, who flourished at the close of the fifteenth century. It bore the name of "*Raphael's ware*," and not many days since I had an opportunity of examining a most elegant and valuable vase and stand of this description, dated 1512. The art of enamelling was also very successfully pursued by the French, in the time of Francis the First; and the productions of Limoges in particular were universally esteemed. But up to that period the clear and transparent enamel with black and white figures, or white shaded with black, was the only method attempted: it was not till the year 1632, that the discovery of opaque colours was made by a goldsmith called *Tantin*, in France. Since that time his countrymen have so improved the art, that it has now arrived at extreme perfection, and is pursued both there and in other countries with great success; some excelling in ornamental jewellery—others in the enamelled paintings of porcelain works; and many in that branch of it which is devoted to the faces of clocks, watches, or



such fanciful articles, as the little candlesticks you hold in your hand.

*A.* It is very singular, mamma, that different nations should *only* excel in particular branches of the same art. One would imagine that perfection in one department, would insure success in all.

*M.* By no means, my love; because it is only by continual application to one particular branch that extraordinary excellence is to be obtained. Of this we have a familiar example in our every-day intercourse with society at large; for how many of our friends profess to be good musicians, and are perhaps theoretically so; but how few *really excel*, excepting those who have exclusively devoted themselves to *one* particular department of the science, or confined their attention to *one* particular instrument. Again—how often do we meet with persons who have a correct judgment and elegant taste for drawing; but if we seek for a highly finished landscape, or a just and faithful portrait, we go to professors who have attained eminence in their respective styles, from *limiting* the exercise of their genius to *one* branch of painting. If the attainment of perfection were permitted to any one nation on earth, it would neither increase their happiness nor add to their comfort. They would become overbearing and proud; and from disdain of the praises, and despising the opinions of their fellow-creatures, they would soon forget their dependence on their Creator, or arrogate to themselves that superiority of

wisdom which is not attainable by mortals. As it is, the different grades of society, and the position of nations, are beautifully and evenly balanced. All are more or less dependant on each other: and the superiority which some kingdoms attain in particular arts and sciences, either by reason of their valuable resources or persevering industry, excites competition, gives a stimulus to commerce, and represses that tendency to pride and vanity so inherent in human nature. The error of the Chinese in this respect is conspicuous. They look upon all other nations as barbarians; and by thus considering themselves superior to the rest of mankind, they are cut off from all improvement; and remain, notwithstanding their ingenuity and powers of application, in many respects lamentably ignorant of some of the most valuable and useful arts of civilized life; and singularly deficient in those higher paths of science in which Europeans so particularly excel. When, therefore, dearest child, you are amused by the incorrect drawings which disfigure the Chinese ware,—remember that it is vanity, conceit, and contempt of others that has prevented its being as perfect in ornament as in material. And when you admire the superiority of European imitations in this respect, remember also, that industry, perseverance, but above all, deference to the suggestions of talent from however humble a source, or foreign a soil they may spring, have overcome difficulties apparently so insurmountable, that they would seem to have been placed by nature herself



as a barrier to improvement. Thus, from the abundant and excellent ingredients for the manufacture of China, lavished upon that country but denied to Europeans, it might at first appear as if it had been ordained to limit the art to the East, and preclude the possibility of competition in the West; but further considered, we may perhaps, without much inaccuracy, judge it permitted, in order possibly to rouse that energy of experimental inquiry, which when rightly directed, is generally crowned with success.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ART OF WRITING.

*A.* "A present for Agnes!" Dear mamma! is this beautiful writing-desk really for me? I am, indeed, delighted, for I have often wished for one; but never dreamed of possessing anything so very pretty as *this*, which I have frequently admired, and thought such an ornament to your room.

*M.* I always intended it for you, my love, when you should be capable of putting a desk to a proper use; and I felt that no occasion could be more fitting for presenting it to you, than that which should bring you acquainted with the history of its contents; for I conclude you would not have passed it by without some comment.

*A.* No, indeed I should not; for although I guessed, of course, that it contained paper, pens, and ink, and knew they were applied to the purposes of writing, I am ignorant of all that relates to wafers, sealing-wax, and those pretty seals, which are such a surprise to me.



At least, I am sure, I could not say how they were made, where they came from, or at what period they were brought into general use.

*M.* And these articles, my love, constitute the least important part of our present inquiry, if, as I conclude, you intend it to relate to writing; although your observation respecting these appendages to your desk, is a sufficiently natural one at your age. In the present day, when letters are so speedily transmitted from one extremity of the globe to the other, that uninterrupted communication between friends and relatives can be continued for years, with ease and comfort to all parties, the history of the rise and progress of writing might naturally be supposed to be a subject of great interest; yet it is one which seldom occupies the thoughts, because it is much too common an employment to rouse inquiry or excite curiosity, unless circumstances like the present lead to the consideration of it. Nevertheless, of all the arts that contribute to the comfort and happiness of mankind, no one, perhaps, is more intimately connected with our social habits, or more closely entwined with the best and purest feelings of our nature, than that of writing; for not only does it soften the pang of absence, and bind, as it were, by an invisible chain, the affections of distant relatives to each other; but it helps to allay fear and anxiety during periods of sickness and affliction, and in times of war and tumult lessens the terrors which suspense would otherwise render insupportable. In

peace it tends to the advancement of science, the diffusion of knowledge, and the extension of commerce; besides accelerating that universal communication with near as well as distant nations, which is so essential to the politician and the lawgiver, and so important to the well-being of society at large. In short, the value and comfort of this method of intercourse is experienced by all ranks and all degrees, from the monarch on his throne, to the absent mariner, whose fate is as dear to his humble parents, as is that of the child to his relatives, whom Providence has placed in a more exalted station of life.

A. Letter-writing is, indeed, a great accommodation, and I am sure it is a source of very real pleasure, for it is the only substitute for conversation when separated from our friends: and I have often wondered, mamma, what men could have done without such a blessing. But I conclude that writing is a very ancient art.

M. So much so, my child, that, although its progress and gradual development can be more clearly and satisfactorily traced than might, perhaps, have been altogether expected,—yet at what *precise* period it had its rise, or *whence* it derived its origin, has baffled the researches of the learned and curious to discover; and remains, like many less important matters, buried in oblivion. That some rude attempt at writing was made even prior to the confusion of tongues, seems certain; because almost all nations, even the most uncivilized, possess some traces of epistolary commu-



nication; and many of the modes adopted by the most ancient kingdoms, bear a strong affinity to each other, even though the countries are remotely separated. All these early attempts, however, are widely different from the art of writing as practised in the present day. The first trace of the existence of the Alphabet in Europe is coeval with the time of King David, when Cadmus, a Phœnician by birth, who flourished about that period, introduced one, consisting of sixteen letters, into Greece; and this Alphabet is considered to have been the same as that used by the Hebrews, Arabians, Samaritans, and many other nations, who either resided upon the borders of Phœnicia, or who participated in the extensive commerce of that ancient maritime power.

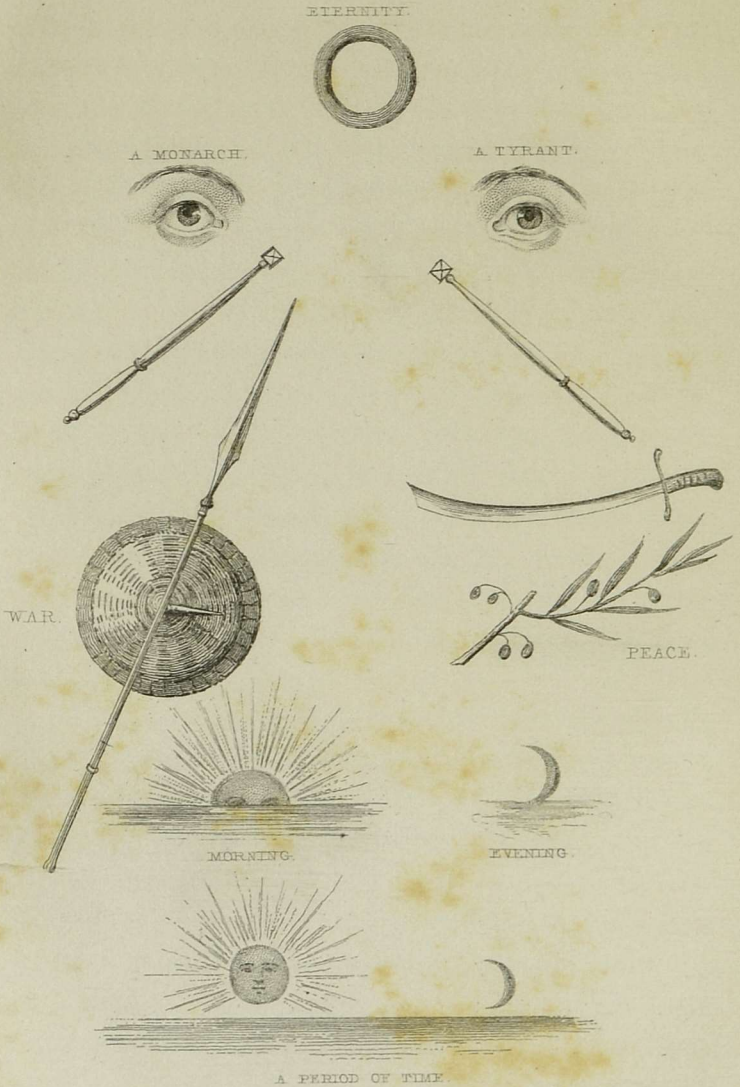
*A.* But, mamma, in what way was it possible for people to correspond, previous to the knowledge of an alphabet?

*M.* On the renewal of mankind after the deluge, when they were few in number, and not as yet widely dispersed, little intercourse beyond that of personal communication was needed, and that little could be well supplied by means of trusty messengers; but when the world became more populous, and the dispersion consequent on the vain attempt at building the Tower of Babel, caused separate nations and kingdoms to be founded, so that jealousies and strife began to arise, other modes of communication were requisite, whether to threaten hostility, to sue for peace, or to barter and treat for such commodities as were common





SYMBOLICAL CHARACTERS USED BY THE ANCIENTS.



*Drawn by C.A. Halsted.*

*Engraved by H. Cook.*

to one country, but scarce or unknown in others. The first simple effort appears to have been made by delineating the subject to be treated, in the form of a rough picture; that is to say, by tracing the outline of a certain number of objects too familiar to all parties to be mistaken. Thus, for instance, if one people desired to exchange flocks and herds, for corn, wine, and oil, a rough portraiture of these articles could easily be conveyed to a great distance; and the affair satisfactorily arranged, though each party was ignorant of the language of the other. But as this mode of intercourse was limited, and at best but imperfect, such nations as had advanced in civilization, and whose increasing wealth rendered it expedient to extend their commerce beyond the mere exchange of the necessaries of life, devised an improvement on this original simple method, by employing signs for well-known and visible things, and symbols for invisible or imaginary objects; by which I mean, such as have no definitive representation in nature. Thus, for example, by a circle, which has neither beginning nor end, the ancients indicated *eternity*. An eye and a sceptre signified a *monarch*, and a sword placed beneath these implied that he was a *tyrant*! The spear and buckler were the emblems of *war*; but the olive branch intimated a desire for *peace*. The sun-rising was the symbol of *morning*; the moon of *evening*; and the representation of both together was intended to designate *a day* or a *period of time*. This second state of



the art was denominated hieroglyphics, and it was brought to astonishing perfection by the ancient Egyptians, by whom this symbolical writing was especially studied and reduced to so regular a system, that even at this distant period the learned are enabled to unravel and decipher many of their mysteries. Recent discoveries have made these known to modern nations, either by means of scrolls buried with the mummies discovered in the pyramids, or from inscriptions found in their ancient cities and ruined temples, which the researches of enterprising travellers have brought to light, after they had remained hidden and buried for centuries under heaps of sand. The invention of certain characters to mark *ideas* (as well as the most simple objects) appears to have been the *next step*; and this method is practised, even in the present day, by the Chinese; which makes their language so extremely difficult, that a whole life, it is said, could scarcely enable an individual to read or write it fluently, as every separate character designates some one thing, or is expressive of some particular idea; so that the number of their characters amounts nearly to the enormous number of eighty thousand! You may better understand what I mean by this alphabet of ideas, by recalling to your recollection the amazing variety of forms which lines and dots may convey to the eye, and with attempts at which you have so often amused yourself. By this means a man may be represented standing, sitting, kneeling, fighting, prostrate, or dead;

and as the ancient Chinese figure for a man was indicated simply by a species of curved line, you may judge how much meaning may be conveyed in this manner, not only as regards the actions of men, but also with respect to the number and size of houses, the proportion and form of mountains; besides various other matters connected with such external objects as are capable of being delineated in a similarly expressive manner. An alphabet of syllables succeeded to this; and it appears to have been that which immediately preceded the use of letters. Traces of this ancient method are said to be still remaining in many parts of India, in Tartary, and also in Ethiopia, the language of which country contains the most numerous alphabetical characters extant, next to that of China, as it consists of two hundred and two. Notwithstanding this advance, however, all these methods of communication were imperfect, ambiguous, and unsatisfactory. Men began to feel the want of some more full and explicit mode of giving expression to their thoughts and feelings, after the spread of knowledge and the increase of population. By degrees, therefore, the sound of the human voice seems to have suggested the idea of vowels and consonants, and this naturally led to the invention of certain small but fixed marks, by which to designate them, and by the union of which words could be expressed, and sentences constructed. These signs, or marks, are what we call letters; and it is very remarkable that those so universally used by all European nations at this day, may be traced, it is

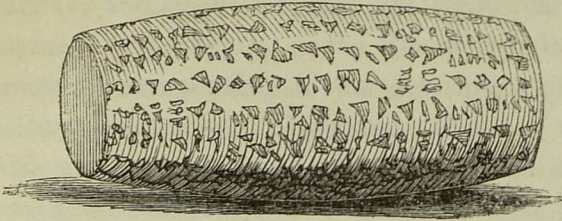


believed, to the same original alphabet introduced by Cadmus more than a thousand years before the Christian era! though, of course, during the long period that has since elapsed, the mode of delineating them has varied considerably in different countries, and the number of letters has been greatly multiplied; for the Greek alphabet was increased to twenty-four letters, about four hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the present day the Italian, which consists of twenty letters, is the smallest of all European alphabets. I need not tell you, that the French alphabet is composed of twenty-three letters, and the English one of twenty-six, including the consonants J. and V.

*A.* And on what substance did the ancients write? for I remember your telling me, mamma, that paper was comparatively a modern invention.

*M.* The first attempt at writing seems to have been made upon bricks, either flat or cylindrical; very curious remains of each, have been discovered amongst the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon: and I had the gratification, a few days since, of seeing some rare and valuable specimens of both kinds, in a very fine state of preservation, lately brought from the latter most ancient city, by a gentleman\* attached to the British residency at Bagdad.

\* J. Hine, Esq., the friend and companion of the talented and highly gifted Claudius Rich, in his antiquarian visit to Babylon, by whose kind permission the annexed illustrations were drawn from original specimens, procured by him in that interesting and scientific expedition.



A Cylindrical Brick.



A Fragment of a Square Brick.

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ANCIENT MODE OF WRITING,  
PRACTISED BY THE BABYLONIANS.





Pliny mentions, that for several centuries the Babylonians wrote their observations respecting the stars on bricks; and singular to say, not many years since, a fragment was dug up, on the site of Babylon, with characters corresponding to the description given by the Roman historian. Josephus, also, an eminent Jewish writer, speaks of a pillar of the same material, whereon the children of Seth inscribed their astronomical remarks. Tables of stone were used at a very early period; for Scripture tells us that the Commandments were written on "tables of stone, with the finger of God." The first time, indeed, that writing is named at all in the Bible, is at the delivery of the Law to Moses; in consequence of which many learned authors have attributed the knowledge of letters to Divine inspiration, considering that the Alphabet took its rise from that period, and was communicated to man by the hand of the Almighty. Plates of soft metals appear to have been also used at the same early period; for Job exclaims, "Oh! that my words were now written!—that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" As knowledge increased, and writing became general, lighter and more portable substances were used, such as ivory, wood, &c.; and, as the wood of the cedar-tree is particularly disagreeable to insects, the ancients selected tables of cedar, to write upon, when they wished to preserve any very important document uninjured. The Greeks covered their wooden tablets with a thin



coating of wax, on which they wrote with a pointed iron instrument, flattened at one end, so as to permit of errors being erased. The Romans and many other people made use of tables of brass, whereon they inscribed the laws of their own empire, and transmitted to conquered nations such as they chose to impose on the vanquished.

*A.* But I thought, mamma, that the stalks and leaves of trees were used at the early periods of which you have been speaking: at least, I fancied you had once told me that the word paper was derived from that custom.

*M.* And so it was, my love; for the bark of the papyrus used by the Egyptians is of very high antiquity; and, though the precise period at which it was first introduced has not, I believe, been positively ascertained, yet the term certainly owes its origin to the Greek appellation for this plant; and the merit of the invention appears to be due to the ancient city of Memphis. The substance called Papyrus was composed of the inner part of a huge species of rush,\* which grew most abundantly on the banks of the river Nile, whence the inhabitants gathered it at particular times; and, after bestowing some pains on its separation from the outer rind of the stalk, it was pressed, beaten with a heavy instrument, and polished with a smooth ball. This material was also adopted by the

\* *Cyperus papyrus.*

Greeks and Romans, at a more advanced period of their history. Of this we have, even now, some curious and interesting examples: for no less than eighteen hundred manuscripts, written on rolls of papyrus, were discovered in a chamber of an excavated house in the ancient city of Herculaneum; which, during the reign of the Emperor Titus, (more than seventeen hundred years ago) was overwhelmed by a dreadful eruption of Mount Vesuvius, and remained buried for centuries beneath the mass of lava, and hot ashes that destroyed it; nay, its very existence was forgotten, until about eighty years ago, when its ruins were accidentally discovered in digging a well at the little village of Resina, which had been built over the place where part of Herculaneum formerly stood. Several of these manuscripts, though reduced to a state of tinder by the heat, were nevertheless in a state to be unrolled; and many of them could be read with ease; and as the process of unrolling and deciphering their contents is still zealously pursued, it is hoped that much curious information, as regards ancient times, may eventually be brought to light, and made known to the literary world. The Romans likewise made use of a fine thin substance, which lies inclosed between the bark and wood of various trees, especially the elm,\* ash,† and lime or linden.‡ This inner portion is termed *liber*, and as it was frequently cut into strips, and tied

\* *Ulmus campestris.* † *Fraxinus excelsior.* ‡ *Tilia Europœa.*



together in the form of a book, this Latin appellation is the origin of the French word "*livre*," and the Italian "*libro*." From the same custom is derived our English expression "*book*," which is a corruption of the Saxon name for beech (*buech*;)—on the liber, or intermediate substance of which tree, most of the Northern nations wrote. To the use, indeed, made by the ancients of the leaves of plants, bark of trees, and other preparations from various vegetable substances, may be traced almost all the terms commonly used in the present day. The circumstance of the papyrus being united into large sheets at Charta, an ancient city of Tyre, gave rise to an appellation still in use; and leaves, volumes, and libraries are also familiar to us, though merely translations of "*folia*," "*volumen*," and "*libri*," the Latin terms for the leaves of plants, the rolls of papyrus, or the bundles of bark manuscripts preserved, or alluded to, in these early times.

A. But, mamma, you are now speaking of books, and not of writing; at least not as we generally employ the term?

M. Books, such as you allude to, my child, are very modern, compared to the period of which I was speaking; for I conclude you mean printed works, the introduction of which art, though it has greatly lessened the labour previously required for the transcribing of manuscripts, was not known until the year 1441; and a little reflection, dear Agnes, would also have con-

vinced you, that the terms I was mentioning were as applicable to *written*, as to *printed* works; for the originals of all compositions, whether books, charts, or pamphlets, must be in the hand-writing of the author; and in the early ages of the world, all manuscripts were necessarily in the epistolary form, which is by far the most ancient description of writing; printing, in short, being but the substitute of machinery for manual labour; or rather a mechanical mode of multiplying the works of individuals.

A. And when was paper first made? or rather when did writing on it first commence?

M. The present method of writing on paper does not appear to have been practised until the beginning of the fourteenth century; but paper of various kinds was known long previous to that period; for during the reign of the Emperor Claudius, the Romans manufactured paper from the Egyptian rush by soaking, pounding, and sizing it; and this preparation continued in use until the tenth century, when a method of making paper from cotton\*, reduced to a pulp, was introduced from China where it had long been manufactured, and in which country it still continues to be used even to the present day; but this sort of paper was coarse, rough, and brittle; and so liable to injury, that it was ill suited for the preservation of valuable manuscripts. Parchment therefore was generally pre-

\* *Gossypium herbaceum*.



ferred for public documents, laws, and affairs of importance. This substance was first invented, and made use of at Pergamos, in consequence of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, refusing to supply Eumenes, the monarch of the former country, with the papyrus rush, in order to prevent him from making a library as valuable as that of Alexandria; but Eumenes was not to be daunted, and this refusal led to the idea of preparing, and polishing the hides of animals as a substitute for it. It is rather a remarkable circumstance that these two rival collections of books,—the two most celebrated libraries of antiquity,—were eventually united; in consequence of Marc Antony having presented that of Pergamos to Cleopatra: but, alas! the whole of this valuable literary deposit, grievous to say, was burnt by the Saracens, and utterly destroyed, in the year of our Lord, 642. Parchment, as you must be aware, is still used where great durability is required; and it derives its name from *Pergamena*, the Latin appellation for the city where the production originally arose: it is prepared by softening the skins of goats and sheep, in lime-pits; and then rendering them fit for writing by the process of rubbing pounded chalk well into its moistened surface with pumice stones.

*A.* I remember now, mamma, that when we saw those very valuable old works at the British Museum, they were written upon parchment and not on paper.

*M.* No, my child, you are mistaken. They were merely *covered* with parchment. The beautiful illumi-

nated manuscripts to which you allude, were painted on vellum, which is a superior article much smoother, whiter, and finer, though I allow that in texture it approaches nearer to parchment than paper. Its name is taken from *vellus*, the Latin term for skin; being made from that of very young calves: and the process it undergoes is very similar to that required for the preparation of parchment. This article was that chiefly used until the invention of linen or *European* paper, as it is sometimes called, to distinguish it from the cotton or *Asiatic* paper, which was in the year 1319; but to whom the credit of this useful and valuable discovery is due, is not known; though its benefit to the whole world has been indescribable.

*A.* And in what way is this kind of paper made?

*M.* Simply by pounding linen rags, and reducing them to a pulp by means of sharp iron spikes rapidly worked in running water; by which process, dust, dirt, and impurities of all kinds are washed away. The pulp is then boiled in a vat, until it acquires a paste-like consistency: when a mould the size of the required sheet of paper, formed of five wires, is plunged into the vat: and the water running through the spaces between the wires leaves on the frame work the thin substance which eventually becomes a sheet of paper. It has to undergo a variety of other processes; such as pressing, drying, and rendering it fit for what is termed sizing, which means giving it the capability of receiving ink without blotting, by the application to its



surface of a glutinous substance composed of the shreds of leather or parchment; all which operations must be completed preparatory to the edges being cut, the different qualities sorted, and the several sizes so arranged as to be finally laid into sheets, quires, and reams;—the whole business occupying nearly a month from its first commencement to its final completion.

A. I hope I may some day be enabled to visit a paper manufactory. It must be so interesting to watch the whole process, and to witness the transformation of old rags into beautiful, new, smooth paper. Perhaps, too, I may be able to manufacture some myself, as you did, dear mamma; for I perfectly remember your bringing home three sheets from the paper mills at Guildford; and my thinking it so astonishing that you should have made them yourself. Is every description of paper fabricated in this way? Such, I mean, as wire and satin paper, brown and blotting paper.

M. Yes, my love; the principle pursued is alike in all; only that brown, blue, and packing papers are composed of coloured, coarse, and inferior materials: the finest white rags being reserved for the manufacture of *writing* paper. Blotting paper is the same material not sized, being left in a soft porous state, that the ink may be absorbed by it, when haste in turning a page is required. Wire-paper derives its striped appearance when held up to the light, from being formed in moulds, the bottoms of which are composed

of very fine and closely fixed wires. Satin, or hot-pressed paper is made by being simply pressed between very hot plates, which gives it that smooth, glossy, silken surface which distinguishes it from other kinds of letter paper, and also imparts to it the yellow tint that renders it so peculiar.

*A.* Note papers, mamma, of all sizes, are, I suppose, precisely the same thing on a smaller scale; but *fools-cap*, as the long paper is generally called, seems to me a most comical appellation; I suppose it has some particular meaning?

*M.* It is an odd sounding term, I allow, dear Agnes, and until explained, might almost appear absurd; but in the present case, as in most other things, we may generally discover a satisfactory reason for what at first appears unintelligible. The fact is, that at the early periods in which writing was first introduced, it was an article of luxury, and not one of necessity, as we consider it in the present day; and as the inferior descriptions predominated over the better kinds, it was customary for each manufacturer to denote the particular sort or size, he fabricated by some distinguishing badge or device; a custom at that time, more usual than the method which now prevails of marking the maker's name or initials, and which is easily apparent by holding up a sheet of writing paper to the light. The foolscap was a favourite device at the particular time when this large sort of paper was first produced; which sufficiently accounts for its being adopted by the



manufacturer; and although this emblem has long been discarded, and exchanged for a lion enveloped in an oval,—the term originally bestowed has always been retained, as the characteristic appellation of long paper, to distinguish it from the square size used for letters, and which, correctly speaking, is termed *post paper*, in consequence of its not having come into general use, until the establishment of the Post Office in 1531, from which its technical definition is derived. These distinctions to mark the superior kinds of writing papers, were more necessary than might at first appear, until we remember, that the manufacture of paper from cotton, and linen rags, was not the only sort invented after that from the papyrus first suggested the idea; for scarcely any article in general use has been produced from a greater variety of materials; the stems of the mallow,\* the pith of thistles,† the woolly catkins of the white poplar,‡ the tendrils of the vine;§ besides the stalks of the flax,|| the blue cabbage,¶ the clematis,\*\* the sun-flower,†† and the common broom,‡‡ have all been made into paper at different periods; and these kinds too were quite distinct from the bark paper which was fabricated from the willow,§§ the white-mulberry,|||| the horn-beam,¶¶ and the elm.\*\*\*

In the year 1800, a very superior description of

* Malva.	† Carduus.	‡ Populus alba.
§ Vitis vinifera.	Linum.	¶ Brassica oleracea.
** Clematis vitalba.	†† Helianthus.	‡‡ Spartium.
§§ Salix.	Morus-alba.	¶¶ Carpinus.
*** Ulmus.		

paper was made from barley-straw;\* and since that it has again been attempted from the maize, or Indian-corn;† but the success of the measure was not equal to the expense of the undertaking; for no sort of paper unites so many valuable properties as that produced from linen, or fine cotton rags; so that this latter kind is now finally established and universally adopted, not only throughout Europe, but in all European colonies. In Asia, the ancient custom of writing upon leaves is still maintained in many districts; the natives of Ceylon, of the Maldive islands, and several other countries continuing to write upon the large leaves of the talipot tree,‡ of the palm,§ and of the plantain.|| The Chinese also, continue the use of their ancient cotton paper; but another article manufactured from silk-and others from rice,\*\* and from the rind of the bamboo,†† rendered fitting for the reception of ink by a preparation of alum, are likewise occasionally used by that nation as well as in many parts of India.

In North America, a very curious discovery was made in the year 1792, of what was termed incombustible paper, being made from *Asbestos*, a mineral substance of a fibrous nature, and beautifully silken appearance, which possesses the extraordinary property of resisting the effects of fire. But although all these methods are ingenious, and many very admirable spe-

\* Hordeum.

† Zea-mays.

‡ Corypha.

§ Palma Malabarica.

|| Musa arbor.

\*\* Oryza sativa.

†† Bambusa arundinacea.



cimens of each have been produced, yet the increasing and continued demand in all countries for European paper, proves its superiority over all others, and appears likely to insure the duration of this useful discovery.

A. Well! this is certainly an interesting account of a very common article, and a very common occupation: so common indeed, that as you very justly observed, mamma, it seldom enters into one's head to think of it all. But now I must make some inquiries respecting pens; for when paper was unknown, quills of course could not have been required; since it must have been impossible to make any impression with such soft things on tables of stone, wood, or brass.

M. Why, certainly, it would have been a somewhat difficult measure. It seems that a fine instrument formed of some hard substance, termed in many old writings, a bodkin, was the first delineator upon record; although the sentence from Job, which I just now quoted, proves that a pen formed of iron was early used for soft metals. The Greeks, and such nations as wrote upon waxen tablets, made use of a pointed iron instrument, termed a *style*, which I have already told you was flattened at one end to enable the writer to efface a mistake; and as these little articles differed in quality quite as much as do our modern pens and penknives, the expression of "a good or a bad style," was the foundation of a term now commonly adopted to express an elegant or inelegant mode of

writing. The Romans used a similar instrument composed of bone or ivory ; but when in after years liquid delineations succeeded to merely indented impressions, reeds were cut into the form of pens, in shape somewhat resembling those at present used ; only with a longer slit than would be suitable to quills. Pens made from this latter material were known as early as the year 635 ; but they do not appear to have been much used before the ninth century, when there arose a great demand for them in monasteries and convents for the advantage of small and close writing. Pens, however, of a superior description, formed from a peculiarly firm sort of reed,\* which grew abundantly in Egypt, and in some parts of Asia Minor, continued in use until the 16th century ; for we find that the celebrated theological writer Erasmus, made use of them so late as the year 1510, in his translation of the New Testament from the Greek. They somewhat resembled the cane in substance, and in size approached to that of a swan's quill ; but they were so prepared by heat as to be capable of a fine and delicate point ; and for a long time rivalled the invention of pens made from the feathers of birds ; nevertheless, after the introduction of letter paper, the superiority of quills began to be acknowledged ; and they soon became universally and exclusively used ; those of the swan † in particular were greatly esteemed ; and the peacock, ‡ and

\* *Arundo scriptoria.*      † *Anas Olor.*      ‡ *Pavo cristatus.*



crow,\* as well as many other birds, supplied these useful articles from their plumage. In the present day, the quills of the wild goose,† are chiefly used. They are obtained from the large feathers situated in the wings of this bird ; and are rendered hard and firm by being buried for a certain period in hot sand ; and afterwards smoothed and polished by friction.

A. Some pens are clear and very yellow, almost resembling amber. How comes this, mamma ?

M. Because, my love, they undergo a chemical preparation to produce that effect ; and the chief ingredient used, termed *aqua-fortis*, not only increases their firmness, but gives to them the golden hue which you have noticed. Of late years, steel, brass, and silver pens, have been introduced, besides a variety of ingenious substitutes for the common goose-quill : nevertheless, the latter yet retains its position, and is certainly the most agreeable material for writing.

A. Yes, indeed it is ; and I shall not let many hours elapse, dear mamma, before I make trial of those with which you have so amply furnished me ; for now that I possess a writing desk of my own, I shall be quite impatient to put into practice a little plan I have contemplated for some days ; which is, to insert in a book some of the many extraordinary things with which my new travels daily make me acquainted.

M. My gift will have been well bestowed, certainly,

\* Cornix.

† Anas anser.

most *seasonably*, if it has taught you, dear Agnes, that a desk is designed for use, and not for ornament. Well pleased, indeed, shall I be, if the possession of this little memorial of our rambles excites in you an increasing desire for information, and assists in preserving such as you have acquired, by inducing you carefully to note down every remarkable piece of intelligence, or such leading points connected with it, as your memory might fail to retain. I have often felt the justice of an observation made by the poet Gray, in one of his letters, that "we should not trust wholly to memory, which is ten times worse than a lead pencil: half a word fixed upon, or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection. When we trust to the picture that objects draw of themselves on our mind, we deceive ourselves; without accurate and particular observation, it is but ill-drawn at first, the outlines are soon blurred, the colours every day grow fainter; and at last, when we would produce it to any body, we are forced to supply its defects with a few strokes of our own imagination."

In order that your little head may not be bewildered by the medley of considerations, which may arise from reviewing the contents of a writing desk, the remaining articles of which are totally unconnected with that portion of it which we have just been considering, it will be as well, perhaps, to delay a further investigation of the subject until to-morrow.



## CHAPTER XII.

### CONTENTS OF A WRITING DESK EXAMINED.

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*A.* I HARDLY think I need make any particular inquiries respecting ink, mamma; for you have frequently told me that it derives its black colour from galls, a substance formed on the leaf or stem of the oak,\* by insects,† as a deposit for their eggs, and which is mixed in certain proportions with vitriol and gum-arabic. This composition, however, could not have been used, I should suppose, until parchment or paper was invented.

*M.* It is not at all known when writing-ink was first employed; but it certainly is not a recent invention, having been used in most European countries for many centuries. Ink, too, of a different description, was known to the Romans; but it was not so liquid a preparation as that at present used, being compounded

\* *Quercus cerris.*

† *Cynips quercus.*

of some thick, black matter, something similar to paint, or to Indian ink, when well rubbed on a pallet. This sort of ink is still employed by many oriental nations, as are also the reed pens, which I yesterday described. Prior, however, to the invention of ink,—I mean the composition now so called,—various coloured liquids were employed, which were laid on with a brush; and when the use of parchment and vellum had become universal in monasteries and convents, (where the art of writing was chiefly carried on before the Reformation,) the missals, or Roman Catholic prayer-books, were most elaborately tinted in this manner, with purple, scarlet, and other colours,—the letters being either altogether delineated in liquid gold and silver, or otherwise particular words were beautifully embellished in this way. But since the art of printing has been adopted, these superb decorations have gradually passed away; and black, blue, or red ink, are now the only sorts ordinarily used. The last-mentioned preparation is chiefly confined to public offices; and is simply produced by mixing a decoction of Brazil wood,\* with alum and gum-water, in lieu of galls and vitriol.

A. Really, mamma, there is something quite comical in the thought that pens, ink, and paper were once unknown; and only think, when *that* was the case, what a rarity a black-lead pencil must have been.

\* *Cæsalpinia Brasiliensis.*



M. Not greater, dearest child, than such an article would be in the present day; for though, in common parlance, the expression "black-lead pencil" is so constantly used that you may very naturally employ it; yet I must inform you that nothing in reality can be more incorrect; for the material of which pencils are made has no sort of connection with lead. They are composed of a natural compound mineral substance,\* in which iron ore is combined with a chemical element termed *carbon*, a term I cannot expect you to comprehend, but the nature of which you may somewhat understand, when I tell you that charcoal and coke are pure carbon, though rendered so by artificial means. The scientific name of this substance is *graphite*, or *plumbago*, though by the miners it is termed *wadd*. It is chiefly obtained from Borrowdale, in Cumberland; and for a considerable time, the wadd mines *there* were believed to be the only ones in the world: a few others have since been discovered elsewhere; but the quality is so inferior, so hard and gritty, that the English drawing-pencils are esteemed in all countries, and so sought after, that hundreds of thousands are yearly made for foreign exportation, as well as for home consumption. This rare but rich material is not found in regular veins, like most other minerals, but lies between two strata, or layers of slate, something in the form of a tree; and it is obtained in lumps, or large irregularly shaped masses, weighing frequently from three to four

\* Carburet of iron.

pounds each. It is soft and greasy to the touch, and though of an iron grey colour, has a very metallic lustre, and silvery appearance.

The mine is only opened once in three or four years; for so valuable is its produce, that in one hour a single workman can obtain two thousand pounds worth; and when a sufficient quantity has been procured to last the required period, so great is the value of the store, that it is considered necessary to send it under a strong guard to Kendal, whence it is forwarded by different conveyances, and under a guarantee for its safe delivery to the metropolis, where there is a regular place of sale assigned to it, and to which pencil manufacturers resort to procure supplies, on the first Monday in every month. Before it is made into pencils the mineral is boiled in oil, to render it fit for cutting; after which it is sawed into very thin square slips, which are inserted into little hollow spaces of the same shape and size cut for the purpose, in some soft wood, generally the red cedar,\* over which a second piece of the same wood is fastened before they receive the smooth circular form in which they reach our hands. *Red-lead* pencils, which no doubt you have occasionally seen, are quite as inaccurately named; for they have no connection with lead; but are composed of another compound of iron ore,† a metal, which in combination with different substances enters largely into the composition of many common and useful articles, especially some of

\* *Juniperus Virginiana.*

† *Ferrum ochra.*



those which we are now considering : for *vitriol*, which you yourself alluded to, when speaking of the ingredients of ink, is made from the crystals of iron and sulphur, obtained by a chemical process from a glittering substance commonly called *iron pyrites* ;\* and the same thing enters into the composition of the *aqua fortis*, which gives their amber hue to pens. But these particulars are connected with the two sciences of mineralogy and chemistry, both beyond your comprehension at present. You would be delighted, and astonished at the many wonderful things which the study of each would make known to you, but now it is better to confine ourselves to the consideration of such matters as are better suited to your age and capacity ; though at a future period I may possibly aid you in acquiring a moderate knowledge of these and other sciences, if I find that your taste leads you to delight in such investigations, and that you possess sufficient good sense to feel the value of the acquirement.

A. Now we come to the sealing-wax and wafers ; and I see you have ornamented my desk, dear mamma, with various colours of both : all very pretty, but I particularly admire this sort of wax, because it looks as if it were sprinkled with gold dust.

M. And so it indeed is, dear Agnes, for this glittering appearance is effected by scattering minute particles of leaf gold over the wax in its melted state. The chief ingredient of sealing-wax is lacca, or *gum-lac*

\* Sulphuret of iron.

as it is commonly called ; a resinous substance formed by very minute insects,\* on various trees in the East Indies, as a receptacle for their eggs ; and by the aid of which their young are nourished, until they gain sufficient strength to eat through their cells. The empty cases becoming hardened by exposure to the air are carefully collected by the natives in the vicinity, being used for varnishes, lacquer-work, japanning and dying. The quantity obtained in the province of Acham alone forms a source of great profit to its inhabitants. This substance is melted with certain proportions of rosin and chalk ; after which it is coloured red, black, green, blue, &c. by the addition of vermilion, lamp-black, verdigrise, smalt, or other chemical preparations. The gilded wax you admired is rendered transparent by substituting clarified rosin, turpentine and bees'-wax in lieu of the gum-lac and chalk of which the opaque kinds are made. The *scented* wax which pleased you so much when I allowed you lately to seal a note for me with it, is merely perfumed by adding to the ingredients I have named, certain oils or fragrant powders, before the composition is cast into the moulds requisite to give to sealing-wax the round or square forms in which we purchase it. These moulds are sometimes carved in various figures which give the embossed wax its raised ornamental appearance ; and within the mould whether plain or figured, it is also usual to have the maker's name or some device

\* *Coccus lacca*



stamped ; as you must often have observed when remarking the impressions upon the ends of the larger sticks. Wafers are made of a paste composed of flour, isinglass, the whites of eggs, and yeast, well beaten together, with the addition of such colouring matter as is necessary to give them their various pretty tints. The latter is rendered thin, but its consistency is preserved by the addition of gum-water ; and after being spread on a tin plate, is rapidly baked either over a charcoal fire, or in a stove prior to the wafers being cut into the different sized little circular forms used for notes, letters, or packets.

*A.* And which is the most ancient,—wafers, or sealing wax ?

*M.* Wafers such as I have just described appear to be comparatively a recent invention—little is known respecting them ; but they do not appear to have been much used before the beginning of the seventeenth century—nevertheless, paste in a simple form was adopted to secure letters at a much earlier period ; as even the Romans employed a preparation from flour for the same purpose. An inferior description of sealing-wax was introduced into general use in the year 1556 ; but the origin of the better article now known to us, has usually been ascribed to a French merchant named Rousseau, who, having been reduced from opulence to penury by a destructive fire, re-established himself in life by making and selling sealing-wax for the use of Louis XIII. and his court. But

though the merit of the invention has thus been awarded to him, he is considered to have merely acted upon an idea derived from observing during his traffic in the East that gum-lac was applied to similar purposes in India and Persia. Sealing-wax, therefore, appears to be of older date in Asiatic countries, and merely to have been adopted in Europe at the time I have named. The securing of letters and packets however by some adhesive composition is a very ancient custom; for the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans secured their manuscripts by means of cement formed from bitumen, bees'-wax, or a kind of clay denominated "sealing-earth;" and even in England the sealing of deeds, charters, and grants was practised so early as the year 1065; but this was effected by means of a preparation termed soft-wax, which was a mixture of bees'-wax, turpentine, oil, and some colouring matter, made into rolls or cakes, for the use of public establishments, and which soon hardened on exposure to the air. Green was the royal colour; and red and yellow those of private individuals.

*A.* Then, mamma, the use of seals must be very old indeed.

*M.* Few things now in ordinary use are of higher antiquity than these common little articles, apparently so insignificant in themselves, yet, so important to church and state—so instrumental in cementing public faith, and enforcing the due observance of private treaties. One of the earliest substances of which this



instrument was composed appears to have been clay: for Job says, "It is turned as clay to the seal:" and this supposition is further supported from the remarkable fact of this material being so employed in Egypt, even at the present day. But seals made from precious stones or mineral substances of less value, must have been used by the inhabitants of ancient Babylon; for I can show you some impressions which I was permitted to take of one dug up not long since upon the site of that famous city, and which had separate devices on its four sides, as well as one at the base; likewise some casts of two very curious relics,—termed by antiquarians, *engraved cylinders*,—found at the same place, and which are supposed to have been worn as amulets or charms, although deeply engraven after the manner of seals, for which purpose they may possibly have been used on particular or important occasions. That seals were used for attesting the transfer of property at very early ages is evident from the statement of the prophet Jeremiah, who after purchasing a field of his cousin Hanameel, and paying him for it before witnesses, says, "So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which *was sealed according to the law and custom*, and that which was open." The royal seal also must have been equally the warrant for the execution of criminals in those days as in the present; for we gather from the same sacred source that Jezebel secured the condemnation to death of the innocent Naboth by sealing her letters with the King's seal. In short,

ENGRAVED CYLINDER.



( SHEWING ITS CIRCULAR FORM.)

ANTIQUÉ SEAL.



( WITH FIVE DESIGNS ENGRAVED.)



THE SUBJECT OF ANOTHER CYLINDER FULLY DISPLAYED.

ENGRAVED CYLINDERS AND ANTIQUÉ SEAL.

DISCOVERED AMONGST THE RUINS OF BABYLON.





seals appear to have been used in all countries, in all periods, and to have been made of almost every description of material; gems of various kinds—agate, jasper, cornelian, gold and silver; but especially the softer metals, of which lead was the most frequent. On these were engraved names, likenesses of kings and conquerors, or emblematical devices of places and events. It seems, however, that the seals of authority mostly used before the Christian era, were worn on the finger; and denominated seal-rings, or *signets*. They were often composed of the rarest jewels; and their construction must have greatly resembled the ornamental seal rings even now customary; for we find it is stated in Exodus that “They wrought onyx stones inclosed in ouches of gold, *graven, as signets are graven,* with the names of the children of Israel;” and the important purposes to which these signets were put, is evident from repeated passages throughout the Old Testament. Even you, my child, doubtless remember that the seal-ring of king Ahasuerus was the instrument wherewith the Jews had nearly been exterminated by Haman; and by which they were eventually saved from destruction, owing to Esther’s procuring the gift of this precious signet to be bestowed on Mordecai for the preservation of her people.

A. I remember that fact perfectly, mamma; and also, that when Daniel was cast into the lion’s den, King Darius, “sealed with his own signet,” the stone which secured the entrance to it; but I am very much



surprised to hear that these seals were ever made of precious stones, or rather that the ancients wrought names on them; as I should have imagined such fine workmanship would have required superior tools, and therefore to have been more suited to modern times.

*M.* On the contrary, my love, engraving on gems was an art in which the ancients so particularly excelled, that the names of some of their most eminent workmen have been handed down to posterity: one especially, Dioscorides, engraved the head of the Emperor Augustus in so exquisite a manner, that succeeding emperors adopted it for their seal. Their peculiar method of working, however, was afterwards lost; and for many years this branch of the art remained unknown. It was revived about the beginning of the 15th century, at Milan, where precious stones began to be again engraved; but though vast improvements have since been effected, both in Italy and elsewhere, yet I believe it is generally admitted that the productions of the ancients have never been equalled; and they are even now chosen as admirable models for imitation. Notwithstanding this ornamental branch of the art was lost for so considerable a period, the use of the seal itself has never ceased to operate on the actions of men, either by confirming the wills of individuals, or by ratifying the power of potentates and ministers: indeed, in modern times, perhaps, this instrument of authority has acted a more important part than any recorded at more ancient periods; whether in sacred, or profane

history; for the Papal *Bull*, a term which you must frequently have noticed, when reading of matters relative to the Romish Church, particularly in the early history of your own country, signified certain ecclesiastical letters, written on parchment, and to which was attached a leaden seal, to distinguish them from the Apostolic *Briefs*, or short letters on paper, which were sealed with red wax, and bore the impression of St. Peter in a fishing boat. The *Bulls* were never despatched, but by express order of the Pope, and *only* on occasions of great importance, the *briefs* being the ordinary mode of communication to laymen, as well as to the inferior ranks of priesthood.

A. Why were they called bulls? I have often thought it such a very extraordinary name.

M. Their singular appellation was derived from the circumstance of the leaden seals being *suspended from* the parchment, instead of being impressed *on* its surface; *bullæ*, being the term used by the ancient Romans to designate such seals as *hung* from their necks, to distinguish them from the signets which they wore *upon* their fingers. This all-powerful seal, was appended to the edict by a common cord, if the subject was justice; but if of favour, *then* it was attached by a silken thread; it bore the impression of St. Peter, and St. Paul; and on the reverse, the name of the pope, with the date of his pontificate: and during the many centuries that the church of Rome held, not only all crowned heads, but the whole Christian world in



subjection,—and might indeed be said to wield the destinies of nations as well as to decide the fate of individuals,—the power connected with this *leaden seal*, can hardly be imagined now that liberty of conscience, and freedom of action is enjoyed by the humblest person in most protestant communities; but more especially in our native and highly favoured land.

A. I think I remember having read of the *Golden Bull* too, mamma.

M. Very possibly you may, my love; for the edict so called, designates an event of great importance to Germany, being in fact the magna-charta of that empire; the document by which the Emperor Charles the Fourth regulated the rights, and secured the privileges of its princes and electors. The appellation of Bull was bestowed on this imperial mandate on account of its resemblance to the papal ordinances, only that the seal attached to the parchment, was made of gold, instead of lead, and it was suspended by a silken twist of yellow and crimson. The original deed is still in existence, being carefully preserved at Frankfort. Leaden seals appear to be very ancient; for they are known to have been used by the Romans at a late period of their dominion; and we read of their being employed in many other countries, particularly in China, where the community at large are wholly restricted from the use of any other material. The gradations of rank in that country are in fact regulated by the quality of the seals; the emperor's being made of

fine jasper, a stone so greatly prized there, that it is exclusively reserved for his use; those used by princes, or bestowed as marks of honour upon eminent persons, are composed of gold. The Mandarins and viceroys of provinces use silver; but the inferior magistrates are permitted copper only, or lead. Indeed, the historic peculiarities attached to this all-important instrument are almost as various as the materials of which they are made, or the purposes to which they are applied: amongst others sufficiently ludicrous, was the custom observed during the dynasty of the first race of French kings, of inserting three hairs of the royal beard, in the seal of all letters that emanated from the sovereign; for in those days, when the mere act of touching the beard was a sign of affection and respect, the addition of a portion of it to the seal was a peculiar pledge of friendly feeling, a sacred assurance of protection and security.

*A.* How strange were some of the ancient customs, mamma! I wonder what description of seals *our* early ancestors used.

*M.* The ancient Britons led too primitive a life, and were much too uncivilized to need either seals or signets; even the Saxons seem scarcely to have used them: their deeds and documents being simply signed before witnesses with the mark of a cross, to which in succeeding years, was added the impression of a leaden seal. The Normans first introduced waxen seals into *our* country; but that was by no means a new inven-



tion of theirs, for wax was known to the ancients ; both red and green, being used by the Greek emperors to seal their private letters to their families. The great state seal of England was first employed in the year 1050 ; it was chiefly applied to the granting of crown-lands, to the certifying of charters, and other such matters, and was impressed on the soft wax which I just now described, and this same description of wax must have continued in use for many years, because in some of the ancient grants of land, by John of Gaunt, instead of a seal, he says, "I bite the wax with my tooth." Nevertheless, when coats-of-arms became general amongst the nobility and military chieftains, which custom began to prevail shortly after the Norman conquest, a firmer, though still very coarse kind of wax, was gradually introduced, and certainly used occasionally for private as well as public purposes, but that no effectual security for letters was known until after the reign of Queen Elizabeth, appears certain, from the fact of a person named Arthur Gregory, a follower of her eminent minister, Sir Francis Walsingham, having acquired both fortune and notoriety by the discovery of a secret method of opening all letters, foreign and domestic, so ingeniously, that no one could imagine that the seal had been touched, even after the letters had been perused, re-closed, and forwarded to their destination : by this means, that celebrated statesman was enabled to discover private conspiracies, and to disconcert public plots, in a manner that at the time in which

he lived, was considered little less than marvellous ; and which, unprincipled as was the method, yet proved in some instances, most beneficial to the government. This plan so revolting to all upright feelings, has since his time been pursued in many other countries, but not so unsuspectingly ; for so vast an improvement has taken place both in the composition of sealing-wax, and the form and finish of seals, that such practices can scarcely be followed now without leaving some trace of violence behind.

Thus you see, dear Agnes, that seals were not originally designed for ornament only, or, as mere appendages to a watch, or writing-desk, but that they have had connection with the actions of men as recorded in history from the earliest to the latest period ; nevertheless, it was very natural that you should be attracted on first opening your desk, by the bunch of seals I had placed there for your acceptance, and I quite allow, that as specimens of art, few things are more admirable in the present day, whether we look at the correct engraving of the arms, crests, and fanciful devices ; the high polish given to the amethysts, topazes, crystals, and other precious stones employed, or the rich chasing of the gold in which they are set, whether as signets, seals, or letter stamps.

A. Yes, indeed, dear mamma, I view them very differently, now that I have heard the important purposes to which they have been applied. And I must also acknowledge, that until to-day, I was quite



undeserving a desk, having had little idea of the important considerations attached to its contents, or the curious matter connected with its general history.

*M.* Many other appendages belonging to it would equally interest and amuse you, were I enabled to pursue the subject further without introducing topics quite distinct from that to which we must now limit our attention ; for instance, this pretty pencil case, the silver of which was probably obtained from the mines of South America, the most abundant in the world, but the exhalations of which are so poisonous, that thousands of our fellow-creatures have perished in them, and are yearly sacrificed to their noxious fumes. Very many are the hands, and numerous the operations through which a small lump of silver must pass before it is transformed from the shapeless ore, into a neatly wrought pencil-case like this, with its embossed tube, its perpetual almanack, and the fanciful wafer-stamp, which is attached to the upper part. Then, again, there is the Indian rubber, prepared from the sap of a tree,\* without which pencils would lose half their value : as by means of this vegetable substance, all erroneous black-lead marks may be effaced, and fresh ones inserted at pleasure. Yet although we constantly experience its useful properties, we seldom reflect upon the benefit of a discovery only made a century ago,—somewhere about the year 1736. The pen-wiper, and the green cloth linings of your desk, would lead us to the

\* *Siphonia elastica*.

consideration of wool and woollen manufactures; and the pen-knife would involve us in the interesting history of cutlery, in which art, England stands unrivalled; the productions of our artisans being esteemed the finest in the world.

*A.* And, dear mamma, you have overlooked the ivory-ruler, which is made of the tusk of an animal; the glass-inkstands, so prettily cut and neatly formed; the rose-wood\* of which the desk is made, and the brass-work with which it is inlaid, and so beautifully ornamented. Who would have imagined that a little writing-desk was connected with so many arts and sciences, or could afford subject for so much inquiry and such amusing information!

*M.* And these particulars, my love, interesting as they have been to you, and desirable as a knowledge of them must be to every one, are yet but trifling considerations compared to the more important associations which are connected with writing, and writing materials. The best specimens of any particular language, ancient or modern, as well as the most elegant compositions in it, are usually comprised in the correspondence of the learned, the wise, and the good. When you are a little older, you will find that the purest English, French, Italian, and German are contained in the letters of eminent literary characters connected with

\* *Amyris Balsamifera.*



these countries; examples of which are so abundant, that it would be impossible to enumerate even a small portion of the delightful works communicated in this pleasing style, or the names of such talented authors as have risen to fame by their epistolary correspondence. There is scarcely a subject from the most abstruse calculations to the simplest tale, but what has been produced in the form of letters—serious advice, encouraging examples, entertaining travels, valuable discoveries, scientific investigations, as also the past and present histories of most nations, are only a few of the topics comprised within this easy and pleasing species of composition. Your father also can tell you how successfully the Greeks and Romans cultivated the art, and that the purity of style of such of their works as have been handed down to posterity, excites the admiration of all classical scholars, even at this distant period of time. Nevertheless, these delightful productions of by-gone periods, are chiefly confined to the libraries of the wealthy, or are accessible only to the learned and studious, in public institutions and collegiate establishments. But all capacities, all ranks, all Christians may participate in the inestimable blessings preserved to them in the Holy Scriptures, by the aid of writing. With the finger of God were those commandments written, which children lisp and old age reveres. By the aid of writing were our Saviour's life, precepts, doctrines, and example made known to the Gentiles after He

had been rejected by the Jews. Through the medium of the same art, was the affecting history of his death, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension, communicated to succeeding generations; and to it are we also indebted for the preservation of that simple but comprehensive form of prayer which *He* vouchsafed to teach his disciples; and wherein he commanded *them* and *us*, to call on "Our Father who is in heaven,"—that perfect prayer, which ever since His appearance upon earth has been the constant support and solace, the daily refuge and resource, of the heavily afflicted, the sick and the sorrowful, the penitent and the desolate, who, whatever may be their trials, or their sufferings, are comforted in their morning and evening address to that heavenly Parent, by the remembrance that their Redeemer pronounced Him to be "His Father and their Father—His God, and their God!" In an epistolary form was the holy gospel delivered by the apostles, and in a similar manner were the Acts of these apostles rendered instructive to the convert and encouraging to the faithful. "Ye see how large a letter I have written to you with mine own hand," says St. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians; and for very many years after death had terminated his ministry, and deprived his followers of his zealous efforts for their eternal salvation, the blessed truths inculcated by the epistolary writings of himself and the other apostles, those rules of gospel faith and practice now



so universally diffused throughout all regions, and which were in the first instance addressed to the several churches whom they were intended to instruct and confirm by means of writing, could only have been transmitted to posterity by individual labour,—only renewed and perpetuated so as to be preserved in all their original purity for eighteen hundred years; only comprehended—revered—and applied to the endless comfort of thousands, and ten thousands of Christians—by the aid of such humble instruments as pens, ink, and paper.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

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*M.* YOUR smiling countenance, my dear child, makes me regret that I have any thing like a disappointment to communicate; for I feel persuaded, you *will be* disappointed to find, that our daily rambles are about to terminate for the present.

*A.* Oh! how sorry I am for that! Why, dear mamma! I have not yet traversed even one side of your room; and you promised that I should fully explore the whole apartment.

*M.* Did I so promise, my love? or did your own wishes lead you to suppose so? If I recollect right I merely intimated (and much to your astonishment), that it would take a month to travel *profitably round it!* And as a fortnight has elapsed since the commencement of our tour, you will allow that my assertion has at least not been exaggerated.

*M.* Oh yes! I have long felt the truth of that remark of yours, mamma; and even forgotten my wish of going



abroad in the pleasure I have experienced in travelling at home. Still if I could have foreseen how soon our excursions were to cease, I think I should have first commenced with the other side of the room, where the cabinet of fossils stands, and also your beautiful collection of shells; the sight of which always delights me so much, that I have frequently wished to become better acquainted with them. Then too there are the coins, minerals, corals, and madrepores—oh! so many things which I had anticipated examining with such pleasure.

M. And which you may still examine at a future time, my love; for although your father and myself are unexpectedly obliged to leave home the day after tomorrow—if at our return I find you have really travelled *profitably*, and can show me a record of our past proceedings according to your yesterday's plan,—we may again pursue our rambles; nevertheless, dearest Agnes, if you propose investigating my several collections in natural history, you must prepare yourself for many such disappointments as the present; as even a brief outline of each of the sciences of Geology, Conchology, Mineralogy, &c. would occupy separately more than a month: nay, the mere inspection of the specimens which you so much admire, accompanied by such trifling observations as would be necessary to satisfy you as to their names and localities—would require a period fully as long as that which has elapsed since we first proposed the survey of my apartment! However

we will not waste time now in arranging plans for the future,—but make the best use of the few hours before us : so choose quickly, my love, the article or object, relative to which you are most anxious to receive information.

*A.* If our tour is only to be *interrupted*, and not altogether to *terminate*,—I should prefer continuing with regularity the route I first chose : because I shall then feel satisfied not to have lost the opportunity of obtaining a knowledge of many subjects, respecting which I might not otherwise have thought of inquiring. Besides which, I perceive you have placed on the little table from whence I yesterday removed my desk, a very old Bible, which I should be sorry to pass without particular notice ; as I am quite sure, mamma, there must be many things connected with its history that would greatly interest me.

*M.* You have shewn judgment, my child, both in your decision and selection ; for this Bible *is* a valuable relic. It is one of the earliest translations of that holy book into the English language ; and though the cover is worm-eaten, and the pages discoloured by age ; yet on the whole it is a very perfect specimen of one of the first attempts at making the Holy Scriptures available to all classes : for previous to the Reformation, they remained in Europe, in their original languages of Hebrew and Greek, or were translated into Latin only ; consequently their precious contents were understood by the clergy alone ; and now that the Holy Scrip-



ture has been placed within the reach of the poorest classes, and that we all hear portions of it read every Sunday in our own language, besides possessing the before-mentioned privilege of daily perusing it at home, it is scarcely possible to imagine the troubles and persecutions which the early translators experienced whilst endeavouring to procure such an inestimable boon for their fellow-creatures.

*A.* From its shabby appearance, and the wooden sides which perpetually peep through the broken leather coverings, I should have taken this old Bible to have been much more ancient than from its date it appears actually to be ; for I see it was only printed in 1572, which is little better than 250 years ago ; but if you esteem this copy so curious, mamma, how astonishing is it that the *original* could be preserved for so many ages as must have elapsed since the period when it was first written ! I have often felt a great wish to know when the sacred book was first commenced, and how it has been preserved for so many, *many* centuries.

*M.* The treasured volume which we call the Bible is not *one* continued work, but a collection of *many* inspired writings, penned at different periods by various holy persons to lead mankind to a knowledge of their Creator and Redeemer, and to teach them the way of salvation by distinct rules as regards their duty to their God, and that to their neighbour. It consists of two parts, the old, and the New Testament ; and the whole is styled by way of pre-eminence, the Bible—that term

being derived from a Greek word signifying *The Book*,—or the *Book of Books!* It was begun by Moses, who is the most ancient of writers, sacred or profane. His miraculous preservation by the king of Egypt's daughter, and the finished education which she bestowed on her adopted son—for we are told that he was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”—peculiarly qualified him for the important task of compiling a history of mankind,—as far as it relates to the great work of redemption,—from the Creation of the world to the approach of the Israelites towards the promised land. Not only was he enabled, by reason of his favour at the Court of Pharaoh, to become acquainted with many interesting facts carefully preserved in the records of that ancient nation,—but his early association with the learned men who so profoundly studied the arts and sciences, and whose predecessors had devised means of perpetuating by hieroglyphical characters *their advancement* in the same,—must have fitted his mind in a peculiar manner for reconciling many of the wonderful events which had been delivered down from generation to generation as religious traditions amongst his own people; and which important truths he was eventually enabled by Divine Inspiration thoroughly to understand himself, and clearly to collect and narrate for the benefit of God's chosen people in all ages. This great Jewish legislator was born in Egypt, whilst the children of Israel were in bondage there, about 1571 years before the Christian era, and in the year



of the world 2454. His childhood being passed under the superintendence of his mother, who was engaged to be his nurse; she early impressed on his mind a veneration for the sacred truths known only to the descendants of Abraham: and as he approached manhood, his protectress, Pharaoh's daughter, spared no expense in endowing him with all the learning and knowledge of her nation:—but beyond doubt *that* which rendered Moses, as the apostle expresses it, “mighty in words and in deeds,” was the power and wisdom displayed through him by the immediate agency of the Almighty himself. Moses was 80 years of age before God selected him for the high office of delivering the Israelites from their oppressors, and receiving his commands for their future religious conduct. To effect this, God vouchsafed to speak to Moses, not only from the burning bush, but afterwards “face to face” at the door of the tabernacle. He also condescended to summon him to Mount Sinai, where he remained with the Lord forty days and forty nights; and when he returned with the “tables of the testimony,” written by the hand of the Deity, his countenance shone so brightly with the glory that marked the marvellous fact of converse between the creature and his Creator, that he was obliged to veil his face, to assuage the terror and awe with which the congregation beheld him. It is supposed that it was not until after the promulgation of the law that Moses commenced his sacred history of the world. *That*, and the events connected

with his own life and mission, are comprised in the five books which form the opening portion of the Bible. These are ordinarily termed the Pentateuch, from two Greek words, signifying *five* and *volume*; and in them is contained the only authentic record of the origin of the world, the creation of mankind, and all the important events that occurred both in the primeval ages and the patriarchal times.

*A.* But, though Moses penned this great work under such peculiar advantages, yet I almost wonder it obtained belief, at least beyond a short period; because even in his life-time we read of such ingratitude to *him* from the Israelites, and such opposition to *them* as a tribe from the heathen kingdoms.

*M.* When God wills, my child, all things are possible; nevertheless he often vouchsafes to lead to important ends, by means suited to the comprehension of our limited capacities. Such appears to have been the case, as regards the promulgation of that knowledge which it pleased him to communicate to man, through his inspired and chosen servant Moses, who was not called upon to commence his history until the period had arrived when the Almighty designed to establish the Israelites as a distinct nation, and to fulfil by their means not only his promise to the patriarchs, but also his denunciations against the idolatrous descendants of Canaan. Moses had acquired great power over the people by reason of the miracles he wrought, and his interviews with the Most High God; and, as he did



not complete the Pentateuch until he was in the plains of Moab, or communicate its contents until shortly before his death, that event secured for his work the sentiments of respect and veneration which naturally attaches to the last efforts of our benefactors. In addition also to the circumstantial details connected with their history as a peculiar people, this composition of Moses embraced a statement of the laws and customs enjoined by God for the particular observance of the Israelites. The longer these laws were observed, the more sacred did the original code become to them ; and as many of the events were recorded within the remembrance of the older Israelites, their children's children were impressed with the firm belief of facts which their forefathers, had not attempted to deny. The five books of Moses, indeed, carry with them every probability of truth. Exclusive of the divine authority so evident throughout his sublime compositions, they are likewise invaluable as containing the most remote, and authentic accounts of antiquity,—the truth of which accounts is corroborated by frequent reference made to them, by the prophets and inspired writers of after times, and also by the respect paid to their contents by the wisest and greatest of heathen philosophers, who borrowed from the words of Moses many valuable precepts, and made his sacred doctrines the basis of their most rational tenets. Even in the present day, the works of this inspired historian are chosen by the learned in most nations as their text-book, their

reference, their standard authority for reconciling abstruse reasonings and establishing difficult theories,—selecting it as the basis on which to rest with confidence the accuracy of many valuable discoveries in Astronomy, Geography, Chronology, and Geology,—and in accounting for many phenomena otherwise inexplicable, both in the natural and moral world.

*A.* Yes, that is, indeed, most true; for I can remember how often the book of Genesis is alluded to in works which treat of ancient periods: and I also perfectly recollect, when some friends of papa's were looking over your fossils, listening with a great deal of interest to their explanation of the first chapter of the Bible, as connected with the science to which those specimens belonged; though, of course, I could not understand all that they said on the subject.

*M.* The aid of God is no where more apparent than in the minute but clear account contained in this most interesting portion of the Bible. Without his direct inspiration, we could neither have become informed of our origin, or of our fall; nor been led to lament the introduction of sin and disobedience; or to appreciate the benefit and accomplishment of our redemption;—and though the truths thus made known to us are too clear, too detailed, too simply but expressively told, to need confirmation from any other source; yet even that satisfaction has not been denied to us: for it is remarkable, that the facts narrated by Moses form the key by which the most marvellous and extravagant



mysteries of the heathen may be deciphered; and their fabulous records are now proved to be built on the same early traditions, and to be merely distorted and corrupted versions of the facts recorded in our Old Testament;—thus serving as confirmatory proofs of the exactness and faithfulness of Moses, the great Lawgiver of the Jews,—the inspired narrator of the early history of the world,—the agent chosen by a merciful God to separate fact from fiction,—to compile a code of laws, that, like a deep gulf, was to divide the Jew from the Gentile; until in the fulness of time the prophecies, types, promises, and covenants of God were to be fulfilled by the appearance of One “worthy of more glory than Moses,”—the coming on earth of His only Son, the great High Priest of the Christian; the Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour of the whole World, Jesus Christ our Lord.

*A.* And how did the Israelites contrive to preserve this code of laws during the unsettled state in which they continued for so many years after Moses’ death?

*M.* The same good providence that originally dictated them, my love, provided also for their preservation, and this too, by means of the same inspired agent whom he had selected for enforcing the first observance the same: as we find it expressly stated in Deuteronomy, that after Moses had made an end of writing, he said to the Levites, or priests, “Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a

witness against thee." The Israelites were imbued with so great a love for their religion, their kindred, and their peculiar rites and ceremonies, that in spite of the idolatrous habits in which most of the tribes indulged from time to time, yet as a *nation*, they were generally remarkable for their careful preservation of their holy writings, and for their frequent perusal of them, both in public and private. To guard against any accidental loss of the original book of which I have just spoken, Moses also enjoined the people,—when in the spirit of prophecy, he foretold they would ask for a king,—that they should select one from their own kindred, one whom "God should choose;" and that when he sat upon the throne of his kingdom, "he should write him a copy of the law in a book out of that which was before the priests, the Levites," and "read therein all the days of his life." To this circumstance, and to that of the sons of Levi being constituted hereditary priests, and exclusively reserved from the beginning for taking charge of the ordinances of the Jewish religion, are we and all believers indebted for the preservation of the book of the law, in all its original purity. When Solomon had finished the temple, he directed that these books should be removed into it, and also that the future compositions of inspired men should be secured in the same holy place. In process of time, however, as had been foreseen by Moses, the corruption of the Jews became very great. They neglected the public reading of the word of God, gave themselves



up to idolatry; and not only suffered their beautiful temple to go to decay, but finally, so wholly forsook the ordinances of their religion, that in the reign of Josiah, (nearly the last king of Judah,) there appeared to be no other book of the law remaining, but that which was discovered by Hilkiyah, the priest, in the house of the Lord, when by desire of this good and pious king, he was superintending the repairs of the sacred building. After this joyful discovery, Josiah caused copies to be immediately taken, and further search to be made for the scriptures: by which means the original composition of Moses was revived, multiplied, and disseminated amongst the people, and consequently carried with them into Babylon, and there preserved during their captivity; which captivity occurred in the reign of Zedekiah, the son of the excellent Josiah, whose truly religious career was so appreciated by his subjects, that the "Lamentations of Jeremiah," that sublime composition, were written on the occasion of his death.

A. It appears to me still more wonderful, mamma, that the Jews should have contrived to preserve any portion of the scriptures during their long captivity: for the temptations to idolatry which then occurred, must have been great, since Shadrach, Mesech, and Abednego, were cast into the burning fiery furnace, for refusing to worship the idol that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

*M.* It is wonderful, my love, and the miraculous preservation of the scriptures throughout such perils is a strong proof of the interposition of the Deity to save from destruction those divine truths which he had vouchsafed to make known to his unworthy servants. Even the dispersion of the Israelites, and the almost entire destruction of their tribes, tended still more to this important end ; for while they were in prosperity, and great as a nation, they forgot God, forsook that High and Omniscient Being who had so wonderfully supported them, and delivered them from the hands of their enemies ; but “ at the waters of Babylon, they sat down and wept, when they remembered Zion.” In their affliction they clung to Jerusalem ; and their whole soul turned in the bitterness of remorse to their God, whose anger they had so justly kindled against them. “ How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land ?” said the heart-stricken captive ; yet to that gracious Lord did they in secret lift up their prayers, and He in mercy remembered his people, and lent an ear to their earnest supplication. Then too it was that they sought comfort from the holy writings they had carried into captivity ; and made the doctrines inculcated by the prophets the rule and guide of their amended lives.

*A.* Poor creatures ! how often they must have sighed for their own land, and lamented the wickedness of their forefathers. And yet, mamma, calamity in this



instance effected the preservation of the law ; whereas, the prosperity which caused them to be so blind, had well nigh occasioned its being irrecoverably lost.

*M.* It did so. And herein we may perceive, my child, what we are all, and each of us bound to believe, that God's judgments are winged with mercy. And that, however grievous may be our affliction, there is for ever comfort at hand for the truly penitent ; although thick clouds and darkness may shadow us for a time amidst dispensations, the result of which is wisely, and perhaps in tenderness hidden from our view. Frequently are such designed as trials of faith and resignation ; and possibly, as in the case we are now considering, to save us from heavier calamities. After the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and about fifty years after the temple was rebuilt, Ezra, a priest, and one of the elders of their race, whose zeal for the glory of the Lord had greatly contributed towards the re-establishment of their ancient worship, and the restoration of their former rites and ceremonies, procured as many copies as possible of such sacred writings as had been carried by them into captivity, and from thence he made a collection, not only of the Pentateuch, but of all the inspired works which had been written from the death of Moses to his own time, including an account of their late dispersion, and the return of the remnant which he was permitted to conduct back to the ruins of Jerusalem, after the conquest of Babylon, by Cyrus, King of Persia. The

additional writings he divided into three distinct parts, the Historical, the Doctrinal, and the Prophetical.

The Historical follows immediately after the Pentateuch, and is comprised in the respective books from Joshua to Esther. It embraces the civil and political history of the Jews, after their entrance into the promised land; their position, under the fourteen Judges, or lawgivers, who succeeded to their first great legislator, Moses; their selection of a king; the revolt of the ten tribes, which occasioned the separation between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, with an account of the monarchs who governed each, until the entire destruction of the former under Hosea, the last King of Israel, by Shalmanezar, King of Assyria; and a description of the calamitous destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple, with an account of the carrying of the Jews into captivity under Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. The Doctrinal books chiefly consist of the sublime and beautiful compositions of King David, and his son Solomon. The Prophetical books include those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of those holy men who wrote at the express command, and by the direct inspiration of God. These works speak for themselves; as their pious authors never pretend to write otherwise than by divine authority; but commence invariably with "Thus saith the Lord," or "The word of the Lord came unto me saying;" and to whose remonstrances, had the stiff-necked Jews but



lent an attentive ear, they had been spared those dreadful judgments which doomed thousands to an early grave; and tens of thousands to misery, suffering, wretchedness, and bondage.

A. Ezra must surely have received divine aid to complete such a stupendous work.

M. He did, my child; for it *was* a stupendous work, whether we look to the distracted state of his own country, the obstacles and persecutions from surrounding nations, or the ruinous dispersion of all things, and all monuments so dear to the Jews. Nevertheless, under the protection of the Most High God, Ezra and other holy men were permitted to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, and to establish their race again as a nation, under the government of High Priests, by whom they continued to be ruled for many succeeding years. By degrees, also, he collected copies of the several Scriptural works I have enumerated, which according to former custom were placed in the Temple; and to this genuine collection was afterwards annexed the sacred compositions of Ezra himself, as well as the later ones of Nehemiah and Malachi. Thus was completed what is called the *Canon of the Old Testament*; consisting, as now divided, of thirty-nine books, all written in Hebrew; and they are the only writings extant in that language. For nearly five hundred years after the time of Ezra, and as long as the Jewish government existed, a complete and faultless copy of the Hebrew Scripture was

kept in the Temple, at Jerusalem, with which all others might be compared; and it is a fact well deserving our attention, that although our Saviour frequently reproved the rulers and teachers of the Jews, for their erroneous and false doctrines, yet he never accused them of any corruption in their written law or other sacred books.

A. I do not quite understand, mamma, the meaning of the word Canon.

M. That term, my love, when applied to the Holy Scriptures, signifies such books of the Bible as were written under the authority or by the express command of God; and it is used more especially to distinguish such sacred writings as are acknowledged to be of divine origin, from such as are doubtful, or which have been altogether rejected by the church as counterfeit. These latter are termed *Apocryphal*, in contradistinction to the inspired writings, which are denominated *Canonical*. The Hebrew Canon was commonly divided into three parts, "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms;" under which three-fold division it is referred to by our blessed Lord himself. The Law comprehended the five books of Moses; the Prophets included the Historical as well as the Prophetical books; and under the name of Psalms, were comprised Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The Law was portioned into sections corresponding with the weeks, one of which was enjoined to be read every Sabbath day; so that by this method the congregation heard



the whole read in the course of the year. When, in after times, the free exercise of their religion was still further restored to the Jews by the Maccabees, who assumed the title of Princes as well as High Priests, they read a section of the Law for the first lesson in the service of their synagogues, and a portion of the Prophets for the second. From this practice of reading the Law and the Prophets, arose the custom observed by the early Christians, of reading portions of the Old and New Testaments every Sabbath-day, which contributed constantly to prove the connection between the two; for the Law of Moses prefigured the Gospel of Christ, and the Gospel fulfilled those things that were foreshewn in the Law.

A. But how did the early Christians become acquainted with this custom of the Jews, or obtain a knowledge of the sacred books? for I thought that the Hebrews were strictly enjoined to avoid all intercourse with strangers, especially on matters relating to their religious institutions.

M. Your observation is very just, my love, for the Hebrews were a singularly reserved people, and so remarkable for their dislike to strangers, and for the cautious manner in which they avoided all communication relative to their peculiar laws and ceremonies, that had it not been for their several captivities, curiosity would not have been excited, or information sought, relative to them or their holy records. But as the time approached when the barrier between Jew

and Gentile was to be broken down, and that all nations were to be reconciled to their offended Maker under the banner of the promised Messiah, it pleased the Lord gradually to open the eyes of the heathen to the singularity of the Jewish rites and customs, and to infuse among their philosophers and wise men a desire to become better acquainted with the records and traditions of so peculiar a people. The Hebrew Scriptures were diffused throughout the Babylonish Empire by the captivity of the ten tribes, and this dispersion of the contents of the Sacred books was some years afterwards more completely effected by Ptolemy Philadelphus, a king of Egypt, who possessed so great a passion for books, that he determined on having the Old Testament translated into the Greek language, which was his native tongue: for though a *king* of Egypt, he was a Grecian *prince* by descent; and if not the actual founder of the celebrated Alexandrian library, is known to have considerably enlarged and added to it. Amongst other valuable additions was this Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, which he employed seventy elders of that persuasion faithfully to translate, and which obtained the name of the *Septuagint* from that circumstance. The correctness of the translation is evident; not only from its having been used in many Jewish Synagogues before the Christian era, but from its being quoted by the Evangelists and Apostles in after times. The promoter of this valuable work reigned about 280 years before the birth of our



Saviour, at whose appearance upon earth, its importance became still more apparent; for the Greek tongue, by reason of the conquests of that powerful nation, was familiar to the principal inhabitants of Asia; and also to many places in Europe and Africa, where they had either planted colonies, or which they had wholly subdued. The Greeks, too, excelled in the art of writing; and as they were indefatigable in transcribing works of interest, they did not suffer these valuable records of ancient times to remain hidden, when once their important contents were open to their contemplation; but, struck with the sublimity of the narration, though not then alive to the divine truths they contained,—they became the instruments of making known the Word of God amongst the Gentiles, and thus preparing them to perceive the fulfilment of the prophecies, which was manifest at the appearance of the Messiah.

*A.* Then I dare say, what I have heard termed the *Greek church*, is the most ancient of Christian churches?

*M.* That part of the Christian church which was first established in Greece, is most assuredly of great antiquity, having been planted there by the Apostle St. Paul, who dwelt some time in each of the cities of Athens, Corinth, and Thessalonica, and addressed many of his Epistles to the Grecian converts. But the particular appellation to which you allude, did not originate altogether from this circumstance, but was adopted several centuries after, to distinguish the

*Eastern* from the Romish or *Western* church; in consequence of a serious difference which prevailed for many years, and ended at last in a total separation: the Eastern or Greek church rejecting the worship of images, and denying the supremacy of the Pope. The head of their Establishment is termed the Patriarch of Constantinople, and he is a personage of great power; as in the present day, what is termed the Greek church is spread over a greater extent of country than any other. It includes also the chief part of those ancient towns and cities where the gospel was first preached; amongst others that of Antioch, in which place the followers of our Saviour were first called Christians, instead of Nazareens, by which appellation they had previously been distinguished.

*A.* And did the Greek church adopt that version of the Old Testament, which you just now described, Mamma? I should think that a translation in their own language, especially one of so many years standing, must have been invaluable to the early Grecian converts.

*M.* The Septuagint *was* the version adopted by the fathers of the Greek church; but its antiquity does not constitute its sole value; its importance is increased by its elucidating many remarkable passages in the gospel to which indeed it serves as a key; in consequence of both being written in the same language: for after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Grecian dialect became so universal throughout the district adjacent to



Judæa, that the fundamental principles and truths of Christianity were entirely promulgated in that tongue. The New Testament, as well as the Old, consists of historical, doctrinal, and prophetic books. But I believe, dear Agnes, I must defer a more particular consideration of them until to-morrow; for I have letters to write, and many little arrangements to make, consequent on my sudden departure from home; but I will endeavour so to contrive matters as to spare you a few hours to-morrow. If you like to remain a little while alone in my room at present, you may peruse the particular Scriptural passages to which I have this afternoon alluded, and which I have marked in my Bible, to save you any difficulty in finding them.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE PRESERVATION AND PURITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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*A.* I WAS so fearful, dear mamma, that you would not have leisure to attend to me to-day, for which I should have been very sorry, as you left me yesterday in the midst of such an interesting explanation: for you were about to describe more particularly the three divisions into which the New as well as the Old Testament is divided.

*M.* The first of the three, which is the Historical, contains the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, and it embraces the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, as taught to his followers by the great Author of our salvation. It describes the particulars of his ministry on earth,—of his birth, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost, the opening of the gates of mercy to the Gentile world,—the forgiveness of sins, and the promises of life everlasting, which the disciples were commanded by their Lord and Master to go forth and



“preach to all nations.” The second division, which is the Doctrinal, contains the several Epistles, from that of Romans to that of Jude; which, like the inspired writings of old, were designed to warn us against besetting sins, and to lead our hopes to the second Advent, the re-appearance of our Saviour and Lord to “judge both the quick and the dead.” The third division consists of the prophecies, which are comprised in the Book of Revelations, a great portion of which remains still unfulfilled, and are as yet hidden from our comprehension. Now, the greatest part of all these writings, both Gospels and Epistles, was penned in the Greek tongue, because it was the one most generally understood at the time they appeared. Even the Gospel of St. Mark, which was written by that Evangelist for the use of the Romans, was penned in Greek; for that language was so universal, that in the imperial city it was commonly used even by many of the Roman Emperors themselves; for, like the French tongue in the present day, it formed a sort of universal means of communication between the learned, and well-educated of surrounding nations. The importance therefore of a version of the Old Testament in a language so generally understood, must have been beyond measure great to the early Christians; and from the method observed by the Jews of reading a portion of the Law and the Prophets, arose the custom pursued in our churches *at this present time*, of reading the Epistle and Gospel, as well as the lessons; for

they comprehend portions of two divisions of scripture equally important in the *new* covenant, as were the others to the observers of the *old* law, which, the former was sent, not to destroy, but to fulfil.

A. I suppose, however, that the Scriptures were soon translated into other languages, even though we are so much indebted to these early Greek versions; for the Romans were masters of the world long after the greatness of Greece had faded away: surely, therefore, mamma, that proud nation would not have been contented without Latin versions also.

M. The importance of Greece, as far as power and dominion are concerned, did subside certainly, and sink beneath the overwhelming conquests of its great rival, Rome; but in all that appertains to art and science, wisdom and knowledge, learning and refinement, the superiority and greatness of the Greeks remains even still unrivalled; for all nations from the powerful Romans to those modern states that have since risen to fame and importance on the ruins of both these ancient empires, have sought their models amongst the Grecian relics, and have been content to imitate the unequalled productions of that enlightened people. Nevertheless, you were right in your conjecture as regards a Latin version of the Bible, several of which soon succeeded to the Greek; and although the Old Testament was merely a translation of the ancient Septuagint, the Latin edition contributed still more to the spreading of the Law and the Gospel, because the



latter language was more generally understood in the West, by reason of the conquests of the Romans, and the many provinces under their subjection in that part of the world. The chief of these editions obtained the name of the Vulgate, from *vulgus*, a Latin word which means popular or common. In the year 384, a very noted version in this language was executed by St. Jerome at the desire of Pope Damasus, by whose order nearly the whole of the scriptures were freshly translated, and corrected from the original texts. Another, and still more celebrated version founded chiefly on this, was greatly esteemed in the primitive times when it appeared, and soon became universally adopted in all the Western churches. It is known by the name of the *ancient vulgate* to distinguish it from other editions, and was so celebrated in after years, that copies were multiplied beyond number; until at length it acquired such repute, that by command of succeeding popes, it became the exclusive version of the Romish Church. When you advance sufficiently in your course of reading, to enter more particularly into the consideration of these sacred works, you will often find allusion made to the "ancient vulgate," for in after-times, other translations were made, and great corruptions crept in, either by reason of the carelessness of those who transcribed them, or from the different sectarian views entertained by those who superintended the new editions.

A. And is this ancient version, mamma, the one still used by the Romish Church?

M. No, my love; another copy of the Bible, published by order of Pope Clement the Eighth, in 1592, is now the authorized Latin version amongst the Roman Catholics; and, although the adherents of this church are *still* prohibited, even in England, from reading the Scriptures in their native tongue, a translation of the Bible, into the English language, was made at Douay, in 1609, which may be inspected by special permission from the priests: both these editions, however, are considered very inferior to the ancient ones I have before alluded to. But though I so particularly called your attention to the Greek and Latin versions, on account of the celebrity which attaches to the terms *Septuagint*, and *Vulgate*, you must not imagine that these were the only translations of the Old and New Testaments, or that they are the sole existing memorials of the ancient Bible; for, in the earlier ages of Christianity, copies of the Holy Scriptures were quickly promulgated in most nations. Both the Old and New Testaments were very accurately translated, immediately from the Hebrew and Greek originals, into the Syriac language, before the end of the first century. This translation is very highly esteemed. Other translations were also early made into the Chaldee, Armenian, Coptic, Arabic, Gaelic, French, Spanish, German, Saxon, and many more languages, several of which



are still extant. So wonderful, indeed, was the increase of Christianity, that before the termination of the *second* century, in spite of the opposition of the heathen, the prejudices of the Jews, and the irreligious practices of the Gentiles,—the sublimity of the gospel truths, and the simple but pure doctrines inculcated by its professors, had extended over the whole Roman empire, which at that time included nearly all the known world. Even in Great Britain, a remote province far removed from that famous city, (the mistress of the world, as Rome was then called,) there are yet in being portions of Welsh, Irish, and Saxon translations of the Scriptures, made at a very early period of Christianity; and, independent of the tradition handed down to posterity, that King Alfred and the venerable Bede translated the *whole* Bible into our own tongue, there is a manuscript copy of the gospel in the ancient Saxon dialect, more than 800 years old, actually preserved at the present day in the Bodleian library, at Oxford. A still more curious relic of this kind, is a Latin copy of the Gospel, translated by Eadfrid, the learned Bishop of Lindisfarne,\* in 698, and interlined with a Saxon version, which was added after his death, by a zealous priest named Adred: it is beautifully illuminated, and was originally highly decorated with gold and jewels. This valuable work is now carefully preserved in the British Museum, among the Cottonian Manuscripts; but, during the

\* The Ancient British name for Holy Island.

removal of the body of St. Cuthbert, it was actually *lost in the sea*, (about the year 876,) though shortly afterwards discovered on the shore, whither of course it must have been *immediately washed* by the *waves*, as it was found to have suffered little injury.

*A.* If *that* were the case, mamma, how came the Reformers to undergo such perils, to procure for us the privileges which our ancestors enjoyed; for did you not tell me that, before their time, the Scriptures were only made known in Greek and Latin?

*M.* I did, my love; because the purity of the true Christian faith, as originally taught by the Apostles, became sadly corrupted, and its promulgation grievously impeded, by the rise of a spiritual power, which proved far more formidable to Christianity than all the efforts to crush it, previously practised by its temporal opponents. I have before told you, that the truths of the Gospel were universally acknowledged throughout the Roman empire, in an incredibly short space of time. Many of the Emperors had privately felt the full force of the sublimity of the Christian faith; but none openly professed themselves converts to the same, until the year 306, when Constantine the Great publicly embraced Christianity. He transferred the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople; but, as his successors were chiefly Christians, their patronage was still continued to the professors of the new faith in the ancient capital, notwithstanding the removal of the temporal government from it. This latter circumstance, indeed, contributed still more to increase the



spiritual dominion early assumed by the *Bishops of Rome*, the title borne by the heads of the Apostolic Church in that city. During the decline of the Roman empire, and its dismemberment, the States of the Church were for the most part held sacred; until, by degrees, the strength of this spiritual power increased to such a height, that almost all the crowned heads of Europe became subservient to it. Elated by such implicit submission, and actuated by the most ungovernable pride and ambition, these mis-named *Christian pastors* sought still farther to enslave those followers, which the ignorance of a barbarous and superstitious age bound to their mandates by fear and terror,—not respect and love.

Sad and serious innovations, on the pure Apostolic Creed which they professed to follow, was the result; until at length towards the end of the eighth century, the worship of saints and images was actually sanctioned, nay, enjoined by Pope Adrian, at the council of Nice; and very shortly afterwards, towns, churches, and societies, were called by their names, and placed under their special protection. Pomp, ceremony, and worldly grandeur, now usurped the place of the evangelical simplicity so strictly enjoined to Christian bishops; and ultimately, about the end of the eleventh century, Gregory the Seventh, commanded that the title of Pope, which signifies in the Greek language, *Father*, (and which appellation was anciently given to

all Christian Bishops,) should exclusively belong from henceforth to the See of Rome. The Popes represented themselves as the immediate successors of St. Peter, because he resided many years in that city, and there suffered martyrdom. In consequence likewise of our Saviour's having been supposed to consign to that Apostle, the chief superintendence of his flock, they assumed the sovereign authority of the whole Christian church, which they termed Catholic, or Universal; and bestowed it on all such followers as adhered *implicitly* to its decree. From this period, the absolute dominion, unbounded power, and tyrannical oppression of the Roman Pontiffs, is unexampled in the history of mankind! They early discovered that to preserve their usurped authority, they must keep the perusal of *the scriptures* from the people; there being in *them* no sanction for the almost divine homage they exacted from their misguided flock: and accordingly, at another ecclesiastical council, held at Toulouse, in the year 1228, the circulation of the Bible was positively forbidden, and its perusal strictly limited to the Clergy alone. The Vulgate (or authorized Latin version) *only*, was permitted to *them*; whilst the *possession even* of the Old or New Testament in any tongue, was **STRICTLY prohibited** to laymen. The Rosary, as the prayer beads were styled, which was adopted in 1093, was to be their guide as to a form of devotion, which they repeated without understanding it; and auricular con-



fession to the priests was substituted in 1215, for the penitential confession which the Bible enjoins to be made to God alone.

*A.* How very unjust ! and how excessively tyrannical ! No wonder that so many good men struggled hard to deliver themselves and their fellow-creatures, from such oppression !

*M.* Our heavenly Father, who never forsakes his faithful servants, did not permit this bigotted decree to take full effect ; for in the valleys of Piedmont, amongst inaccessible wilds, and enclosed by snow-clad heights, dwelt a Christian people, called the Waldenses, who not only courageously opposed the Pope's decree, but asserted the free use of the Bible. Amidst persecutions, poverty, and unexampled sufferings, they preserved it in all its purity ; and in spite of every cruelty that ingenuity could devise, perseveringly continued the primitive worship handed down from the Apostles ; St. Paul, and St. James, being said to have preached the tidings of salvation in their isolated, but interesting valleys. The trials and struggles of this courageous and persecuted race, formed the basis of those bold measures which stimulated to successful opposition the daring spirits of those great men, whose efforts finally effected the vast work of the reformation ; amongst the earliest of whom was Wickliffe, who flourished during the reign of Edward the Third, and about the year 1360, translated the Bible into English : his work has never been printed, but manuscript copies of it are

still extant. The arrogance of the Romish Pontiffs continuing to increase, their oppressions became at length insupportable *even* to their own followers, many of whom began to rebel, and to perceive how inconsistent with Christian meekness was their unbounded pride, and the degrading servility they exacted. These feelings finally caused the dauntless efforts of Luther, Calvin, Huss, Melancthon, Knox, and a host of others; who succeeded in opening the eyes of the multitude, and restoring that freedom of opinion and primitive form of worship originally practised by the early Christians, and followed in the present age by the Protestant community.

A. Ah! now I clearly see the whole matter. This change of opinion operated in other countries much in the same way as it did in England, by what *we* term the Reformation; and it also procured for us most of those privileges which belong to the members of the established church.

M. Exactly so. But the struggle between the Papists and Protestants was long and severe; and the inestimable benefits obtained for us, and other reformed churches, were only purchased by the martyrdom of many excellent divines, and exemplary Christians; and secured by the practice of cruelties, which I will not shock either you, or myself by relating. It is sufficient for our present purpose to state, that about fifty years after Wickliffe's translation of the Bible, the discovery of the art of printing was made; which con-



tributed greatly to lessen the labours of the Reformers, and to aid them in circulating the Scriptures in various languages. After that period, innumerable translations of the New Testament, and also of the Pentateuch, and other portions of the Sacred writings were rendered into English, as well from the Vulgate, as from the Septuagint, and ancient Hebrew texts; until at length, in the year 1535, the *whole Bible*, was printed in our Mother tongue.

This great work was accomplished by William Tyndale, aided by Miles Coverdale, (afterwards Bishop of Exeter) but most of the copies were seized or bought up by the Papists and publicly destroyed; and Tyndale himself was burned for heresy. A few years afterwards, 1540, another fine translation of the Bible, fit for the public use of churches, appeared under the denomination of *Cranmer's Bible*; because it was especially favoured by that Archbishop, who wrote a Preface to it. This was the first English Bible that was published *by authority*. It was dedicated to King Henry VIII., who, in the year 1541, ordered a copy to be placed in every parish church throughout his dominions; which order was repeated by his successor Edward VI. But during the re-establishment of popery on the accession of Queen Mary, this version *also* was suppressed; and Rogers, the chief translator, (better known by his feigned name of Matthews) was the first martyr who was burned at Smithfield, in her cruel reign. His death was speedily

followed by that of his patron and coadjutor, Cranmer, who also paid the forfeit of his life in a similar manner at Oxford, in consequence of his zeal for the Protestant cause. The only portion of this work now in use, is that portion of the Psalms which appears in the book of Common Prayer.

*A.* Then I dare say, that accounts for the Psalms read during divine service, differing a little from those in the Bible.

*M.* It does so, my love. For as the different versions were usually new translations from the original texts, and seldom mere editions of former copies, every fresh attempt was likely to vary a little in the wording, though the *meaning* in *all* was the same; added to which, the frequent destruction of the early versions, and the difficulties attendant on the concealment of the few that were preserved, rendered it easier for the earliest reformers to renew their labours from the original Hebrew and Greek, than to refer to the prohibited modern versions. Happily, however, this wretched state of things was but of short duration; for Protestantism was revived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, never again to be extinguished. The exiles who had fled from England, and sought protection from Mary's bigoted and cruel persecution amongst their brethren in Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, soon flocked round the banner of their Protestant queen; and a fresh supply of Bibles being eagerly desired by the people, Parker, Archbishop of



Canterbury, issued orders for a new version of the Scriptures into English, to be made by the Bishops, assisted by the most learned divines in the kingdom. This occurred in the year 1568; and it was published, like all the preceding versions, in the old English character, commonly termed *black letter*. In this edition, a great improvement occurred; for the chapters were for the first time divided into verses; as formerly the sacred books were written without any break, excepting the sections which Ezra made for insuring the complete perusal of the whole to the Jews within the year.

A. Do you really mean, Mamma, that the ancient Bibles had no divisions at all?

M. I do, my love. The separation of the Scriptural books into chapters, such as we now find them, was not made until the middle of the 13th century, when this important arrangement was effected by Cardinal Hugo-di-Sancto-Caro, to further the completion of a Concordance, (or alphabetical reference to remarkable words and passages in the Bible,) and of which valuable work he was the first projector.

The subdivisions of the chapters into verses, was the work of a Jewish Rabbi, somewhere about the year 1445, who perceiving the advantage of the first division, improved still further upon it. Prior to these two periods, the holy writings formed one unbroken narrative, an example of which you may *even now* perceive in that version of the Epistle and Gospel, which is retained in the Prayer Books; and which is the only remnant of the ancient style at present in

use amongst us ; though it was that which was chiefly followed long after the improvements that I have mentioned were invented ; from the circumstance of the ancient text being considered so preferable by the early translators, to those of more recent date. But on the appearance of the Bishops' Bible, which first introduced this great improvement into England, it became so popular, that another and larger edition for the use of churches in the same style, was printed in 1572.

A. Oh then ! mamma, your old Bible must be a copy of the Bishops' Bible ! And I see what you mean by *black letter*, for the printing is so curious, that I can scarcely read it, though I have contrived to understand that the preface by Archbishop Cranmer was retained. The date too is so clear, that it made me discover directly that it was the version you were describing ; for it says, " a description of the yeeres, from the creation of the worlde, until this present yere, 1572."

M. Your conjecture is correct, my love, this *is* a copy of the Bishops' Bible ; and a short time since, I had the gratification of seeing one of the same kind in a still more perfect state of preservation ; and which was rendered peculiarly interesting from having belonged to the great circumnavigator, Sir Francis Drake, and been the companion of that celebrated man, in several of his voyages ; for upon the edges of the leaves, and supposed to be in his own hand-writing, are the words, " The Bible Sir F. Drake had about ye worlde,



1577." This curious and precious relic, is in the possession of his descendant, the present highly respected baronet, at whose residence during a recent visit, I contemplated with excessive pleasure and interest, many other things that marked the piety, as well as the loyalty, and undaunted courage of this enterprising man : thus exemplifying how thoroughly compatible in every station of life, however responsible or distinguished, is the most zealous attention to our duties, with an uncompromising devotion to the commandments and delight in the word of our Creator.

A. And is this version of the Bible the one that is now in use ?

M. No, my child. The last and standard translation of the English Bible was made in the reign of King James the First, in 1603, who, not being quite satisfied with any previous edition, caused fifty-four of the most learned persons in the realm to form a new version out of the many that had previously appeared ; commanding that the Bishops' Bible should be followed as nearly as was consistent with truth : but stipulating that all fresh corrections should be made from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. It occupied *seven years* ; and so faithfully was it executed, that it is at this time allowed even by foreigners, to be the clearest, and best translation of the Bible in the world. All possible pains indeed were taken to render it perfect ; for a certain portion only was allotted to each individual : at particular periods the whole number met, and whilst

one read aloud the English translation, each of the other learned members examined some version in another language, such as Latin, French, Spanish, &c., by which means the new edition was compared, not only with all previously received translations, but where the slightest discrepancy appeared, or any difference of opinion prevailed, reference was made to the original Hebrew and Greek texts. This was termed *King James' Bible*; and it is the one now read by authority in every church throughout Great Britain. After its appearance, all other editions gradually fell into disuse; and though more than two hundred years have since elapsed, it still continues equally intelligible to all classes, in consequence of the clearness, and simplicity of the language; and the vast pains bestowed on its completion by the learned men employed on the occasion.

*A.* I suppose then I must have been mistaken; but I certainly imagined that I heard you ask papa the other evening to lend you a version of the Bible with a very different name from any you have mentioned.

*M.* You have a good memory, my dear, and you are right to exercise it, whenever you are in doubt as to the meaning of terms which you may chance to hear used without comprehending their signification. I perfectly remember asking your father to lend me his *Polyglott Bible*. This term, however, does not imply a *different* version from those I have been describing, but rather a *compendium of the whole*. The word



Polyglott is derived from two Greek words, signifying *many tongues*; consequently a Polyglott Bible, *strictly speaking*, is one which contains COMPLETE versions in different languages; but the term is also applied to an edition of the Holy Scriptures in which reference is made to the Hebrew, Chaldee, Samaritan, Syriac, Greek, Latin and other ancient texts, by means of marginal notes or a column placed by the side of the English version; so as to enable divines and learned persons to perceive the original meaning of such terms as are difficult to translate *literally* in a modern language. Thus you see, my dear Agnes, that no change of time or place, no alteration of nation, or dialect, has effected any material change in the sacred scriptures! Notwithstanding the ages who have elapsed since the time of Moses, and the many centuries that have passed away, since the promulgation of the glorious truths of Christianity, notwithstanding the captivities of the ancient Jews, and the persecutions of the early Christians, the Bible has come down to our own times, entire and genuine, free from any material alteration, and nearly in its original purity; having ever continued under the especial protection of the Most High God, *who*, after he had vouchsafed by this means to communicate His WILL to man, caused it also to be preserved uninjured amidst those unruly passions, and calamitous events, which so often threatened, but never effected its destruction.

*A.* It is indeed most evident, dear mamma, that nothing short of Divine Interposition could have preserved for so many years, and in so miraculous a manner, the genuine version of the scriptures; and I cannot describe to you the pleasure I have felt in listening to the means by which, under the Almighty's permission, they have been handed down to posterity.

*M.* As I before told you, my child, all things are possible with God; but frequently, indulgent to our limited capacities, He graciously permits us the power of discerning the apparent means which he deemed it fitting to employ for the accomplishment of his own wise ends. In few instances is this doctrine more clearly exemplified than in the preservation of the Bible,—so often hidden and secreted, but never lost or wholly destroyed. The hatred existing before the Christian era between the Jews and Samaritans was so great, that had the former made the slightest change in the Law or the Prophets, the other party would eagerly have exposed the deception; and in after years, when the Gospel of Jesus Christ was made known to the Gentile world, the jealousy that existed between the Jew and the Christian, tended equally to preserve uninjured the purity of the Old Testament. Had any material change taken place in it, immediate exposure would have been the consequence; and the variety of sects into which the Christian Church was early divided, contributed as strongly to preserve the original



text of the Gospel, as the division of Jew and Gentile did that of the Law and the Prophets, in more ancient times.

The connection between the Old and the New Testament is one of the most interesting subjects on which the contemplative mind can dwell. Its history has occupied the pens of many learned divines; and I always feel pleasure in recollecting, that by none has it been more forcibly or ably traced than by an ancestor of *my own*, whose works\* are esteemed such standard authority, that when you are old enough to appreciate their merits, you shall peruse them with me, and you will there obtain far more complete and efficient information than I could possibly afford you, in the present brief consideration of such an important subject.

*A.* That will, indeed, be a *real* gratification to me, mamma; and I shall like to seek for those references which give such force to the events that connect the New with the Old Law.

*M.* The benefits attending the free exercise of Christianity, in the pure form in which it is practised in this country, can only be appreciated by reviewing the distracted state of society, in those dismal periods that preceded the peaceable enjoyment of the true and pure faith, as secured to us by the inestimable bless-

\* Prideaux's Connection of the Old and New Testament, published 1715.

ings of our established and *truly venerable* apostolic Church.

Thanks be to God, under the safeguard of England's Protestant banner, all nations upon earth who seek protection from her, may experience comfort, consolation, encouragement, and repose. To the Jew, the propagation of the Scriptures gives confirmation of the past, and promises that excite hope for the future. To the Gentile, they prove that, even whilst he walked in darkness, and in the shadow of death, he was neither forsaken nor forgotten; but that crumbs from the Master's table were permitted to fall to the faithful, and the bread of Life to be distributed to the heathen convert, though he was not called to partake the same until the eleventh hour. To the whole world they proclaim tidings of salvation, of peace, and of joy. There is no sorrow they cannot soothe,—no grief they cannot assuage,—no anguish they cannot calm,—no wound they cannot heal. The Bible is the Word of God! From it we learn how to live; and what is more important, from it we also learn how to die:—for, if we bestow on its sacred contents that attention which its divine origin demands, we may comfort ourselves under every evil, fortify ourselves against every temptation, and by pondering on the hopes of a joyful resurrection, may rob even death of its sting, and the grave of its victory;—by anticipating re-union in a more blissful state of things, with the departed spirits of those we have loved on earth, and whom we are



permitted to hope we may meet again in the company of Saints and Angels, including those holy Martyrs who sealed their belief in the Bible with their deaths,—who rejoiced to shed their blood in defence of those inspired records, the love of which gave them courage to disregard the stake, to endure the tortures of the fire, and to triumph over every temptation rather than deny the truth, or abandon the faith they had embraced. Above all things, therefore, my child, reverence your Bible. Open it always with pleasure and thankfulness, but never without awe and solemnity; for remember, it contains the revealed will of God,—that its precious contents proceeded from the Divine Being, who is the same “yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” who hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm; whose judgments are shewn in the earthquake and in the hurricane; but whose “still small voice,” breathing pardon and peace, may ever be heard, found, and felt,—whether in tribulation, sorrow, sickness, or woe, if sought out of that inspired record,—that holy and sublime volume,—that “pearl of great price,”—the inestimable Book of Books,—

### THE BIBLE.











