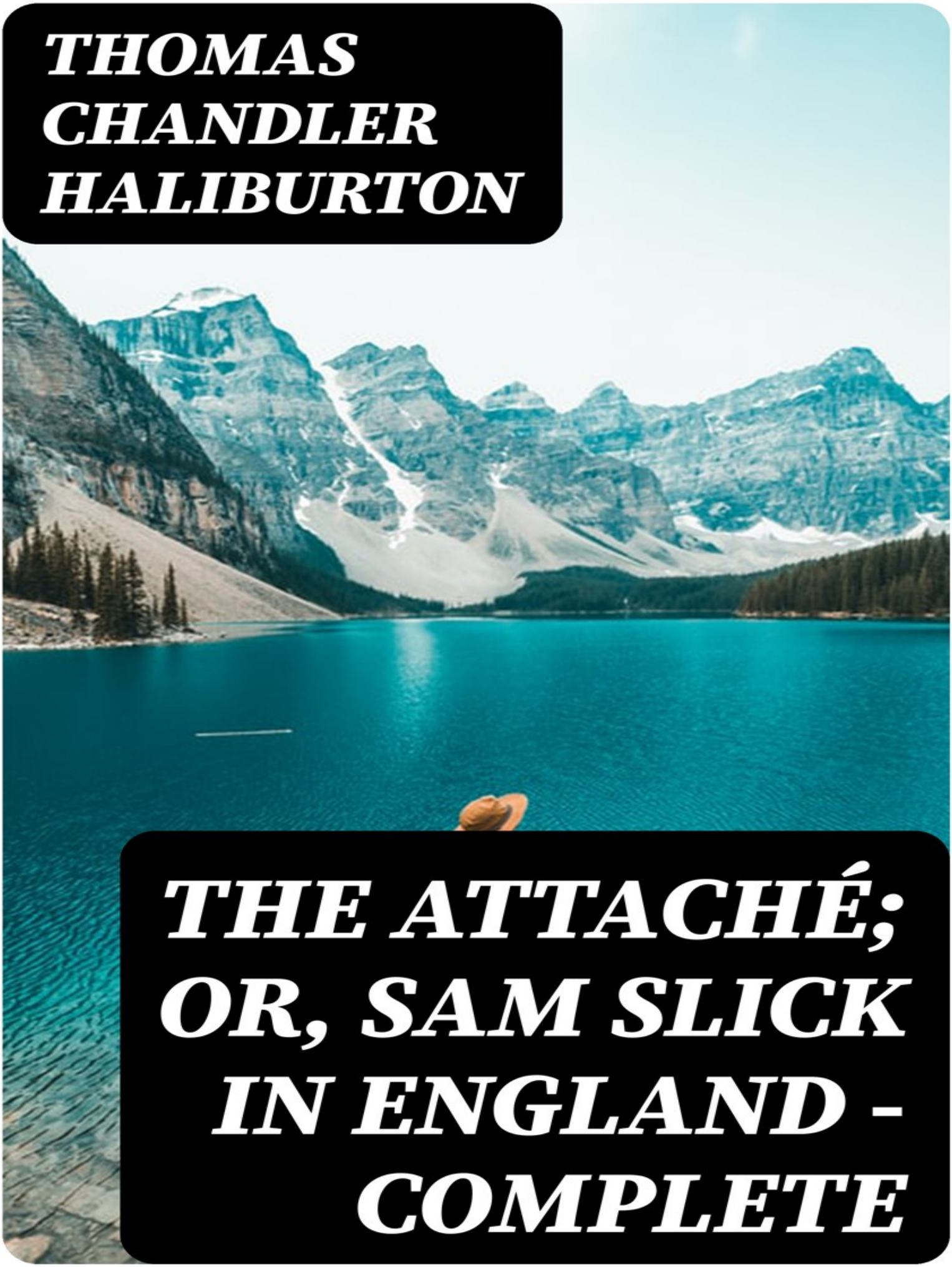
THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON



THE ATTACHÉ; OR, SAM SLICK IN ENGLAND - COMPLETE

Thomas Chandler Haliburton

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CHAPTER I. UNCORKING A BOTTLE.

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We left New York in the afternoon of — day of May, 184-, and embarked on board of the good Packet ship “Tyler” for England. Our party consisted of the Reverend Mr. Hopewell, Samuel Slick, Esq., myself, and Jube Japan, a black servant of the Attache.

I love brevity—I am a man of few words, and, therefore, constitutionally economical of them; but brevity is apt to degenerate into obscurity. Writing a book, however, and book-making, are two very different things: “spinning a yarn” is mechanical, and book-making savours of trade, and is the employment of a manufacturer. The author by profession, weaves his web by the piece, and as there is much competition in this branch of trade, extends it over the greatest possible surface, so as to make the most of his raw material. Hence every work of fancy is made to reach to three volumes, otherwise it will not pay, and a manufacture that does not requite the cost of production, invariably and inevitably terminates in bankruptcy. A thought, therefore, like a pound of cotton, must be well spun out to be valuable. It is very contemptuous to say of a man, that he has but one idea, but it is the highest meed of praise that can be bestowed on a book. A man, who writes thus, can write for ever.

Now, it is not only not my intention to write for ever, or as Mr. Slick would say “for everlastinly;” but to make my bow and retire very soon from the press altogether. I might assign many reasons for this modest course, all of them

plausible, and some of them indeed quite dignified. I like dignity: any man who has lived the greater part of his life in a colony is so accustomed to it, that he becomes quite enamoured of it, and wrapping himself up in it as a cloak, stalks abroad the “observed of all observers.” I could undervalue this species of writing if I thought proper, affect a contempt for idiomatic humour, or hint at the employment being inconsistent with the grave discharge of important official duties, which are so distressingly onerous, as not to leave me a moment for recreation; but these airs, though dignified, will unfortunately not avail me. I shall put my dignity into my pocket, therefore, and disclose the real cause of this diffidence.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, I embarked at Halifax on board the Buffalo store-ship for England. She was a noble teak built ship of twelve or thirteen hundred tons burden, had excellent accommodation, and carried over to merry old England, a very merry party of passengers, *quorum parva pars fui*, a youngster just emerged from college.

On the banks of Newfoundland we were becalmed, and the passengers amused themselves by throwing overboard a bottle, and shooting at it with ball. The guns used for this occasion, were the King’s muskets, taken from the arm-chest on the quarter-deck. The shooting was execrable. It was hard to say which were worse marksmen, the officers of the ship, or the passengers. Not a bottle was hit: many reasons were offered for this failure, but the two principal ones were, that the muskets were bad, and that it required great skill to overcome the difficulty occasioned by both, the

vessel and the bottle being in motion at the same time, and that motion dissimilar.

I lost my patience. I had never practised shooting with ball; I had frightened a few snipe, and wounded a few partridges, but that was the extent of my experience. I knew, however, that I could not by any possibility shoot worse than every body else had done, and might by accident shoot better.

“Give me a gun, Captain,” said I, “and I will shew you how to uncork that bottle.”

I took the musket, but its weight was beyond my strength of arm. I was afraid that I could not hold it out steadily, even for a moment, it was so very heavy—I threw it up with a desperate effort and fired. The neck of the bottle flew up in the air a full yard, and then disappeared. I was amazed myself at my success. Every body was surprised, but as every body attributed it to long practice, they were not so much astonished as I was, who knew it was wholly owing to chance. It was a lucky hit, and I made the most of it; success made me arrogant, and boy-like, I became a boaster.

“Ah,” said I coolly, “you must be born with a rifle in your hand, Captain, to shoot well. Every body shoots well in America. I do not call myself a good shot. I have not had the requisite experience; but there are those who can take out the eye of a squirrel at a hundred yards.”

“Can you see the eye of a squirrel at that distance?” said the Captain, with a knowing wink of his own little ferret eye.

That question, which raised a general laugh at my expense, was a puzzler. The absurdity of the story, which I

had heard a thousand times, never struck me so forcibly. But I was not to be pat down so easily.

“See it!” said I, “why not? Try it and you will find your sight improve with your shooting. Now, I can’t boast of being a good marksman myself; my studies” (and here I looked big, for I doubted if he could even read, much less construe a chapter in the Greek Testament) “did not leave me much time. A squirrel is too small an object for all but an experienced man, but a “*large*” mark like a quart bottle can easily be hit at a hundred yards—that is nothing.”

“I will take you a bet,” said he, “of a doubloon, you do not do it again?”

“Thank you,” I replied with great indifference: “I never bet, and besides, that gun has so injured my shoulder, that I could not, if I would.”

By that accidental shot, I obtained a great name as a marksman, and by prudence I retained it all the voyage. This is precisely my case now, gentle reader. I made an accidental hit with the Clockmaker: when he ceases to speak, I shall cease to write. The little reputation I then acquired, I do not intend to jeopardize by trying too many experiments. I know that it was chance—many people think it was skill. If they choose to think so, they have a right to their opinion, and that opinion is fame. I value this reputation too highly not to take care of it.

As I do not intend then to write often, I shall not wire-draw my subjects, for the mere purpose of filling my pages. Still a book should be perfect within itself, and intelligible without reference to other books. Authors are vain people, and vanity as well as dignity is indigenous to a colony. Like a

pastry-cook’s apprentice, I see so much of both their sweet things around me daily, that I have no appetite for either of them.

I might perhaps be pardoned, if I took it for granted, that the dramatis personae of this work were sufficiently known, not to require a particular introduction. Dickens assumed the fact that his book on America would travel wherever the English language was spoken, and, therefore, called it “Notes for General Circulation.” Even Colonists say, that this was too bad, and if they say so, it must be so. I shall, therefore, briefly state, who and what the persons are that composed our travelling party, as if they were wholly unknown to fame, and then leave them to speak for themselves.

The Reverend Mr. Hopewell is a very aged clergyman of the Church of England, and was educated at Cambridge College, in Massachusetts. Previously to the revolution, he was appointed rector of a small parish in Connecticut. When the colonies obtained their independence, he remained with his little flock in his native land, and continued to minister to their spiritual wants until within a few years, when his parishioners becoming Unitarians, gave him his dismissal. Affable in his manners and simple in his habits, with a mind well stored with human lore, and a heart full of kindness for his fellow-creatures, he was at once an agreeable and an instructive companion. Born and educated in the United States, when they were British dependencies, and possessed of a thorough knowledge of the causes which led to the rebellion, and the means used to hasten the crisis, he was at home on all colonial topics; while his great

experience of both monarchical and democratical governments, derived from a long residence in both, made him a most valuable authority on politics generally.

Mr. Samuel Slick is a native of the same parish, and received his education from Mr. Hopewell. I first became acquainted with him while travelling in Nova Scotia. He was then a manufacturer and vendor of wooden clocks. My first impression of him was by no means favourable. He forced himself most unceremoniously into my company and conversation. I was disposed to shake him off, but could not. Talk he would, and as his talk was of that kind, which did not require much reply on my part, he took my silence for acquiescence, and talked on. I soon found that he was a character; and, as he knew every part of the lower colonies, and every body in them, I employed him as my guide.

I have made at different times three several tours with him, the results of which I have given in three several series of a work, entitled the “Clockmaker, or the Sayings and Doings of Mr. Samuel Slick.” Our last tour terminated at New York, where, in consequence of the celebrity he obtained from these “Sayings and Doings” he received the appointment of Attache to the American Legation at the Court of St. James’s. The object of this work is to continue the record of his observations and proceedings in England.

The third person of the party, gentle reader, is your humble servant, Thomas Poker, Esquire, a native of Nova Scotia, and a retired member of the Provincial bar. My name will seldom appear in these pages, as I am uniformly addressed by both my companions as “Squire,” nor shall I have to perform the disagreeable task of “reporting my own

speeches,” for naturally taciturn, I delight in listening rather than talking, and modestly prefer the duties of an amanuensis, to the responsibilities of original composition.

The last personage is Jube Japan, a black servant of the Attache.

Such are the persons who composed the little party that embarked at New York, on board the Packet ship “Tyler,” and sailed on the — of May, 184-, for England.

The motto prefixed to this work
(Greek Text)

sufficiently explains its character. Classes and not individuals have been selected for observation. National traits are fair subjects for satire or for praise, but personal peculiarities claim the privilege of exemption in right of that hospitality, through whose medium they have been alone exhibited. Public topics are public property; every body has a right to use them without leave and without apology. It is only when we quit the limits of this “common” and enter upon “private grounds,” that we are guilty of “a trespass.” This distinction is alike obvious to good sense and right feeling. I have endeavoured to keep it constantly in view; and if at any time I shall be supposed to have erred (I say “supposed,” for I am unconscious of having done so) I must claim the indulgence always granted to involuntary offences.

Now the patience of my reader may fairly be considered a “private right.” I shall, therefore, respect its boundaries and proceed at once with my narrative, having been already quite long enough about “uncorking a bottle.”

CHAPTER II. A JUICY DAY IN THE COUNTRY.

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All our preparations for the voyage having been completed, we spent the last day at our disposal, in visiting Brooklyn. The weather was uncommonly fine, the sky being perfectly clear and unclouded; and though the sun shone out brilliantly, the heat was tempered by a cool, bracing, westwardly wind. Its influence was perceptible on the spirits of every body on board the ferry-boat that transported us across the harbour.

“Squire,” said Mr. Slick, aint this as pretty a day as you’ll see atween this and Nova Scotia?—You can’t beat American weather, when it chooses, in no part of the world I’ve ever been in yet. This day is a tip-topper, and it’s the last we’ll see of the kind till we get back agin, *I* know. Take a fool’s advice, for once, and stick to it, as long as there is any of it left, for you’ll see the difference when you get to England. There never was so rainy a place in the univarse, as that, I don’t think, unless it’s Ireland, and the only difference atween them two is that it rains every day amost in England, and in Ireland it rains every day and every night too. It’s awful, and you must keep out of a country-house in such weather, or you’ll go for it; it will kill you, that’s sartain. I shall never forget a juicy day I once spent in one of them dismal old places. I’ll tell you how I came to be there.

“The last time I was to England, I was a dinin’ with our consul to Liverpool, and a very gentleman-like old man he was too; he was appointed by Washington, and had been

there ever since our glorious revolution. Folks gave him a great name, they said he was a credit to us. Well, I met at his table one day an old country squire, that lived somewhere down in Shropshire, close on to Wales, and says he to me, arter cloth was off and cigars on, ‘Mr. Slick,’ says he, ‘I’ll be very glad to see you to Norman Manor,’ (that was the place where he staid, when he was to home). ‘If you will return with me I shall be glad to shew you the country in my neighbourhood, which is said to be considerable pretty.’

“‘Well,’ says I, ‘as I have nothin’ above particular to see to, I don’t care if I do go.’

“So off we started; and this I will say, he was as kind as he cleverly knew how to be, and that is sayin’ a great deal for a man that didn’t know nothin’ out of sight of his own clearin’ hardly.

“Now, when we got there, the house was chock full of company, and considerin’ it warn’t an overly large one, and that Britishers won’t stay in a house, unless every feller gets a separate bed, it’s a wonder to me, how he stowed away as many as he did. Says he, ‘Excuse your quarters, Mr. Slick, but I find more company nor I expected here. In a day or two, some on ‘em will be off, and then you shall be better provided.’

“With that I was showed up a great staircase, and out o’ that by a door-way into a narrer entry and from that into an old T like looking building, that stuck out behind the house. It warn’t the common company sleepin’ room, I expect, but kinder make shifts, tho’ they was good enough too for the matter o’ that; at all events I don’t want no better.

“Well, I had hardly got well housed a’most, afore it came on to rain, as if it was in rael right down airnest. It warn’t just a roarin’, racin’, sneezin’ rain like a thunder shower, but it kept a steady travellin’ gait, up hill and down dale, and no breathin’ time nor batin’ spell. It didn’t look as if it would stop till it was done, that’s a fact. But still as it was too late to go out agin that arternoon, I didn’t think much about it then. I hadn’t no notion what was in store for me next day, no more nor a child; if I had, I’d a double deal sooner hanged myself, than gone brousing in such place as that, in sticky weather.

“A wet day is considerable tiresome, any where or any way you can fix it; but it’s wus at an English country house than any where else, cause you are among strangers, formal, cold, gallus polite, and as thick in the head-piece as a puncheon. You hante nothin’ to do yourself and they never have nothin’ to do; they don’t know nothin’ about America, and don’t want to. Your talk don’t interest them, and they can’t talk to interest nobody but themselves; all you’ve got to do, is to pull out your watch and see how time goes; how much of the day is left, and then go to the winder and see how the sky looks, and whether there is any chance of holdin’ up or no. Well, that time I went to bed a little airlier than common, for I felt considerable sleepy, and considerable strange too; so as soon as I cleverly could, I off and turned in.

“Well I am an airly riser myself. I always was from a boy, so I waked up jist about the time when day ought to break, and was a thinkin’ to get up; but the shutters was too, and it was as dark as ink in the room, and I heer’d it rainin’ away

for dear life. ‘So,’ sais I to myself, ‘what the dogs is the use of gittin’ up so airly? I can’t get out and get a smoke, and I can’t do nothin’ here; so here goes for a second nap.’ Well I was soon off agin in a most a beautiful of a snore, when all at once I heard thump-thump agin the shutter—and the most horrid noise I ever heerd since I was raised; it was sunthin’ quite onairthly.

“‘Hallo!’ says I to myself, ‘what in natur is all this hubbub about? Can this here confounded old house be harnted? Is them spirits that’s jabbering gibberish there, or is I wide awake or no?’ So I sets right up on my hind legs in bed, rubs my eyes, opens my ears and listens agin, when whop went every shutter agin, with a dead heavy sound, like somethin’ or another thrown agin ‘em, or fallin’ agin ‘em, and then comes the unknown tongues in discord chorus like. Sais I, ‘I know now, it’s them cussed navigators. They’ve besot the house, and are a givin’ lip to frighten folks. It’s regular banditti.’

“So I jist hops out of bed, and feels for my trunk, and outs with my talkin’ irons, that was all ready loaded, pokes my way to the winder—shoves the sash up and outs with the shutter, ready to let slip among ‘em. And what do you think it was?—Hundreds and hundreds of them nasty, dirty, filthy, ugly, black devils of rooks, located in the trees at the back eend of the house. Old Nick couldn’t have slept near ‘em; caw caw, caw, all mixt up together in one jumble of a sound, like “jawe.”

“You black, evil-lookin’, foul-mouthed villains,’ sais I, ‘I’d like no better sport than jist to sit here, all this blessed day with these pistols, and drop you one arter another, *I* know.’

But they was pets, was them rooks, and of course like all pets, everlastin’ nuisances to every body else.

“Well, when a man’s in a feeze, there’s no more sleep that hitch; so I dresses and sits up; but what was I to do? It was jist half past four, and as it was a rainin’ like every thing, I know’d breakfast wouldn’t be ready till eleven o’clock, for nobody wouldn’t get up if they could help it—they wouldn’t be such fools; so there was jail for six hours and a half.

“Well, I walked up and down the room, as easy as I could, not to waken folks; but three steps and a round turn makes you kinder dizzy, so I sits down again to chaw the cud of vexation.

“‘Ain’t this a handsum fix?’ sais I, ‘but it sarves you right, what busniss had you here at all? you always was a fool, and always will be to the eend of the chapter.—‘What in natur are you a scoldin’ for?’ sais I: ‘that won’t mend the matter; how’s time? They must soon be a stirrin’ now, I guess.’ Well, as I am a livin’ sinner, it was only five o’clock; ‘oh dear,’ sais I, ‘time is like women and pigs the more you want it to go, the more it won’t. What on airth shall I do?—guess, I’ll strap my rasor.’

“Well, I strapped and strapped away, until it would cut a single hair pulled strait up on eend out o’ your head, without bendin’ it—take it off slick. ‘Now,’ sais I, ‘I’ll mend my trowsers I tore, a goin’ to see the ruin on the road yesterday; so I takes out Sister Sall’s little needle-case, and sows away till I got them to look considerable jam agin; ‘and then,’ sais I, ‘here’s a gallus button off, I’ll jist fix that,’ and

when that was done, there was a hole to my yarn sock, so I turned too and darned that.

"'Now,' sais I, 'how goes it? I'm considerable sharp set. It must be gettin' tolerable late now.' It wanted a quarter to six. 'My! sakes,' sais I, 'five hours and a quarter yet afore feedin' time; well if that don't pass. What shall I do next?' 'I'll tell you what to do,' sais I, 'smoke, that will take the edge of your appetite off, and if they don't like it, they may lump it; what business have they to keep them horrid screetchin' infarnal, sleepless rooks to disturb people that way?' Well, I takes a lucifer, and lights a cigar, and I puts my head up the chimbly to let the smoke off, and it felt good, I promise *you*. I don't know as I ever enjoyed one half so much afore. It had a rael first chop flavour had that cigar.

"'When that was done,' sais I, 'What do you say to another?' 'Well, I don't know,' sais I, 'I should like it, that's a fact; but holdin' of my head crooked up chimbly that way, has a' most broke my neck; I've got the cramp in it like.'

"So I sot, and shook my head first a one side and then the other, and then turned it on its hinges as far as it would go, till it felt about right, and then I lights another, and puts my head in the flue again.

"Well, smokin' makes, a feller feel kinder good-natured, and I began to think it warn't quite so bad arter all, when whop went my cigar right out of my mouth into my bosom, atween the shirt and the skin, and burnt me like a gally nipper. Both my eyes was fill'd at the same time, and I got a crack on the pate from some critter or another that clawed and scratched my head like any thing, and then seemed to empty a bushel of sut on me, and I looked like a chimbly

sweep, and felt like old Scratch himself. My smoke had brought down a chimbly swaller, or a martin, or some such varmint, for it up and off agin' afore I could catch it, to wring its infarnal neck off, that's a fact.

"Well, here was somethin' to do, and no mistake: here was to clean and groom up agin' till all was in its right shape; and a pretty job it was, I tell you. I thought I never should get the sut out of my hair, and then never get it out of my brush again, and my eyes smarted so, they did nothing but water, and wink, and make faces. But I did; I worked on and worked on, till all was sot right once more.

"'Now,' sais I, 'how's time?' 'half past seven,' sais I, 'and three hours and a half more yet to breakfast. Well,' sais I, 'I can't stand this—and what's more I won't: I begin to get my Ebenezer up, and feel wolfish. I'll ring up the handsum chamber-maid, and just fall to, and chaw her right up—I'm savagerous.'* 'That's cowardly,' sais I, 'call the footman, pick a quarrel with him and kick him down stairs, speak but one word to him, and let that be strong enough to skin the coon arter it has killed him, the noise will wake up folks *I* know, and then we shall have sunthin' to eat.'

[* Footnote: The word "savagerous" is not of "Yankee" but of "Western origin."—Its use in this place is best explained by the following extract from the Third Series of the Clockmaker. "In order that the sketch which I am now about to give may be fully understood, it may be necessary to request the reader to recollect that Mr. Slick is a *Yankee*, a designation the origin of which is now not very obvious, but it has been assumed by, and conceded by common consent to, the inhabitants of New England. It is a name, though

sometimes satirically used, of which they have great reason to be proud, as it is descriptive of a most cultivated, intelligent, enterprising, frugal, and industrious population, who may well challenge a comparison with the inhabitants of any other country in the world; but it has only a local application.

“The United States cover an immense extent of territory, and the inhabitants of different parts of the Union differ as widely in character, feelings, and even in appearance, as the people of different countries usually do. These sections differ also in dialect and in humour, as much as in other things, and to as great, if not a greater extent, than the natives of different parts of Great Britain vary from each other. It is customary in Europe to call all Americans, Yankees; but it is as much a misnomer as it would be to call all Europeans Frenchmen. Throughout these works it will be observed, that Mr. Slick’s pronunciation is that of the Yankee, or an inhabitant of the *rural districts* of New England. His conversation is generally purely so; but in some instances he uses, as his countrymen frequently do from choice, phrases which, though Americanisms, are not of Eastern origin. Wholly to exclude these would be to violate the usages of American life; to introduce them oftener would be to confound two dissimilar dialects, and to make an equal departure from the truth. Every section has its own characteristic dialect, a very small portion of which it has imparted to its neighbours. The dry, quaint humour of New England is occasionally found in the west, and the rich gasconade and exaggerative language of the west migrates not unfrequently to the east. This idiomatic exchange is

perceptibly on the increase. It arises from the travelling propensities of the Americans, and the constant intercourse mutually maintained by the inhabitants of the different States. A droll or an original expression is thus imported and adopted, and, though not indigenous, soon becomes engrafted on the general stock of the language of the country."—3rd Series, p. 142.]

"I was ready to bile right over, when as luck would have it, the rain stopt all of a sudden, the sun broke out o' prison, and I thought I never seed any thing look so green and so beautiful as the country did. 'Come,' sais I, 'now for a walk down the avenue, and a comfortable smoke, and if the man at the gate is up and stirrin', I will just pop in and breakfast with him and his wife. There is some natur there, but here it's all cussed rooks and chimbly swallers, and heavy men and fat women, and lazy helps, and Sunday every day in the week.' So I fills my cigar-case and outs into the passage.

"But here was a fix! One of the doors opened into the great staircase, and which was it? 'Ay,' sais I, 'which is it, do you know?' 'Upon my soul, I don't know,' sais I; 'but try, it's no use to be caged up here like a painter, and out I will, that's a fact.'

"So I stops and studies, 'that's it,' sais I, and I opens a door: it was a bedroom—it was the likely chambermaid's.

"'Softly, Sir,' sais she, a puttin' of her finger on her lip, 'don't make no noise; Missus will hear you.'

"'Yes,' sais I, 'I won't make no noise;' and I outs and shuts the door too arter me gently.

"'What next?' sais I; 'why you fool, you,' sais I, 'why didn't you ax the sarvant maid, which door it was?' 'Why I

was so conflastrigated,’ sais I, ‘I didn’t think of it. Try that door,’ well I opened another, it belonged to one o’ the horrid hansum stranger galls that dined at table yesterday. When she seed me, she gave a scream, popt her head onder the clothes, like a terrapin, and vanished—well I vanished too.

“‘Ain’t this too bad?’ sais I; ‘I wish I could open a man’s door, I’d lick him out of spite; I hope I may be shot if I don’t, and I doubled up my fist, for I didn’t like it a spec, and opened another door—it was the housekeeper’s. ‘Come,’ sais I, ‘I won’t be balked no more.’ She sot up and fixed her cap. A woman never forgets the becomins.

“‘Anything I can do for you, Sir?’ sais she, and she raelly did look pretty; all good natur’d people, it appears to me, do look so.

“‘Will you be so good as to tell me, which door leads to the staircase, Marm?’ sais I.

“‘Oh, is that all?’ sais she, (I suppose, she thort I wanted her to get up and get breakfast for me,) ‘it’s the first on the right, and she fixed her cap agin’ and laid down, and I took the first on the right and off like a blowed out candle. There was the staircase. I walked down, took my hat, onbolted the outer door, and what a beautiful day was there. I lit my cigar, I breathed freely, and I strolled down the avenue.

“The bushes glistened, and the grass glistened, and the air was sweet, and the birds sung, and there was natur’ once more. I walked to the lodge; they had breakfasted had the old folks, so I chatted away with them for a considerable of a spell about matters and things in general, and then turned towards the house agin’. ‘Hallo!’ sais I, ‘what’s this? warn’t that a drop of rain?’ I looks up, it was another shower

by Gosh. I pulls foot for dear life: it was tall walking you may depend, but the shower wins, (comprehens*ive* as my legs be), and down it comes, as hard as all possest. ‘Take it easy, Sam,’ sais I, ‘your flint is fixed; you are wet thro’—runnin’ won’t dry you,’ and I settled down to a careless walk, quite desperate.

“‘Nothin’ in natur’, unless it is an Ingin, is so treacherous as the climate here. It jist clears up on purpose I do believe, to tempt you out without your umbreller, and jist as sure as you trust it and leave it to home, it clouds right up, and sarves you out for it—it does indeed. What a sight of new clothes I’ve spilte here, for the rain has a sort of dye in it. It stains so, it alters the colour of the cloth, for the smoke is filled with gas and all sorts of chemicals. Well, back I goes to my room agin’ to the rooks, chimbly swallers, and all, leavin’ a great endurin’ streak of wet arter me all the way, like a cracked pitcher that leaks; onriggs, and puts on dry clothes from head to foot.

“By this time breakfast is ready; but the English don’t do nothin’ like other folks; I don’t know whether it’s affectation, or bein’ wrong in the head—a little of both I guess. Now where do you suppose the solid part of breakfast is, Squire? Why, it’s on the side-board—I hope I may be shot if it ain’t—well, the tea and coffee are on the table, to make it as onconvenient as possible.

“Says I, to the lady of the house, as I got up to help myself, for I was hungry enough to make beef ache I know. ‘Aunty,’ sais I, ‘you’ll excuse me, but why don’t you put the eatables on the table, or else put the tea on the side-board?

They’re like man and wife, they don’t ought to be separated, them two.’

“She looked at me, oh what a look of pity it was”, as much as to say, ‘Where have you been all your born days, not to know better nor that?—but I guess you don’t know better in the States—how could you know any thing there?’ But she only said it was the custom here, for she was a very purlite old woman, was Aunty.

“Well sense is sense, let it grow where it will, and I guess we raise about the best kind, which is common sense, and I warn’t to be put down with short metre, arter that fashion. So I tried the old man; sais I, ‘Uncle,’ sais I, ‘if you will divorce the eatables from the drinkables that way, why not let the servants come and tend. It’s monstrous onconvenient and ridikilous to be a jumpin’ up for everlastinly that way; you can’t sit still one blessed minit.’

“‘We think it pleasant,’ said he, ‘sometimes to dispense with their attendance.’

“‘Exactly,’ sais I, ‘then dispense with sarvants at dinner, for when the wine is in, the wit is out.’ (I said that to compliment him, for the critter had no wit in at no time,) ‘and they hear all the talk. But at breakfast every one is only half awake, (especially when you rise so airly as you do in this country,’ sais I, but the old critter couldn’t see a joke, even if he felt it, and he didn’t know I was a funnin’.) ‘Folks are considerably sharp set at breakfast,’ sais I, ‘and not very talkat*ive*. That’s the right time to have sarvants to tend on you.’

“‘What an idea!’ said he, and he puckered up his pictur, and the way he stared was a caution to an owl.

“Well, we sot and sot till I was tired, so thinks I, ‘what’s next?’ for it’s rainin’ agin as hard as ever.’ So I took a turn in the study to sarch for a book, but there was nothin’ there, but a Guide to the Sessions, Burn’s Justice, and a book of London club rules, and two or three novels. He said he got books from the sarkilatin’ library.

“‘Lunch is ready.’

“‘What, eatin’ agin? My goody!’ thinks I, ‘if you are so fond of it, why the plague don’t you begin airly? If you’d a had it at five o’clock this morning, I’d a done justice to it; now I couldn’t touch it if I was to die.’

“There it was, though. Help yourself, and no thanks, for there is no sarvants agin. The rule here is, no talk no sarvants—and when it’s all talk, it’s all sarvants.

“Thinks I to myself, ‘now, what shall I do till dinner-time, for it rains so there is no stirrin’ out?—Waiter, where is eldest son?—he and I will have a game of billiards, I guess.’

“‘He is laying down, sir.’

“‘Shows his sense,’ sais I, ‘I see, he is not the fool I took him to be. If I could sleep in the day, I’de turn in too. Where is second son?’

“‘Left this mornin’ in the close carriage, sir.’

“‘Oh cuss him, it was him then was it?’

“‘What, Sir?’

“‘That woke them confounded rooks up, out o’ their fust nap, and kick’t up such a bobbery. Where is the Parson?’

“‘Which one, Sir?’

“‘The one that’s so fond of fishing.’

“‘Ain’t up yet, Sir.’

“‘Well, the old boy, that wore breeches.’

“Out on a sick visit to one of the cottages, Sir.’

“When he comes in, send him to me, I’m shockin’ sick.’

“With that I goes to look arter the two pretty galls in the drawin’ room; and there was the ladies a chatterin’ away like any thing. The moment I came in it was as dumb as a quaker’s meetin’. They all hauled up at once, like a stage-coach to an inn-door, from a hand-gallop to a stock still stand. I seed men warn’t wanted there, it warn’t the custom so airly, so I polled out o’ that creek, starn first. They don’t like men in the mornin’, in England, do the ladies; they think ‘em in the way.

“‘What on airth, shall I do?’ says I, ‘it’s nothin’ but rain, rain, rain—here in this awful dismal country. Nobody smokes, nobody talks, nobody plays cards, nobody fires at a mark, and nobody trades; only let me get thro’ this juicy day, and I am done: let me get out of this scrape, and if I am caught agin, I’ll give you leave to tell me of it, in meetin’. It tante pretty, I do suppose to be a jawin’ with the butler, but I’ll make an excuse for a talk, for talk comes kinder nateral to me, like suction to a snipe.’

“‘Waiter?’

“‘Sir.’

“‘Galls don’t like to be tree’d here of a mornin’ do they?’

“‘Sir.’

“‘It’s usual for the ladies,’ sais I, ‘to be together in the airly part of the forenoon here, ain’t it, afore the gentlemen jine them?’

“‘Yes, Sir.’

“‘It puts me in mind,’ sais I, ‘of the old seals down to Sable Island—you know where Sable Isle is, don’t you?’

“‘Yes, Sir, it’s in the cathedral down here.’

“‘No, no, not that, it’s an island on the coast of Nova Scotia. You know where that is sartainly.’

“‘I never heard of it, Sir.’

“‘Well, Lord love you! you know what an old seal is?’

“‘Oh, yes, sir, I’ll get you my master’s in a moment.’

And off he sot full chisel.

“Cus him! he is as stupid as a rook, that crittur, it’s no use to tell him a story, and now I think of it, I will go and smoke them black imps of darkness,—the rooks.’

“So I goes up stairs, as slowly as I cleverly could, jist liftin’ one foot arter another as if it had a fifty-six tied to it, on pupus to spend time; lit a cigar, opened the window nearest the rooks, and smoked, but oh the rain killed all the smoke in a minite; it didn’t even make one on ‘em sneeze. ‘Dull musick this, Sam,’ sais I, ‘ain’t it? Tell you what: I’ll put on my ile-skin, take an umbreller and go and talk to the stable helps, for I feel as lonely as a catamount, and as dull as a bachelor beaver. So I trampousses off to the stable, and says I to the head man, ‘A smart little hoss that,’ sais I, ‘you are a cleaning of: he looks like a first chop article that.’

“‘Y mae’,’ sais he.

“‘Hullo,’ sais I, ‘what in natur’ is this? Is it him that can’t speak English, or me that can’t onderstand? for one on us is a fool, that’s sartain. I’ll try him agin.

“So I sais to him, ‘He looks,’ sais I, ‘as if he’d trot a considerable good stick, that horse,’ sais I, ‘I guess he is a goer.’

“Y’ mae, ye un trotter da,’ sais he.

“‘Creation!’ sais I, ‘if this don’t beat gineral trainin’. I have heerd in my time, broken French, broken Scotch, broken Irish, broken Yankee, broken Nigger, and broken Indgin; but I have hearn two pure gene*wine* languages to-day, and no mistake, rael rook, and rael Britton, and I don’t exactly know which I like wus. It’s no use to stand talkin’ to this critter. Good-bye,’ sais I.

“Now what do you think he said? Why, you would suppose he’d say good-bye too, wouldn’t you? Well, he didn’t, nor nothin’ like it, but he jist ups, and sais, ‘Forwelloaugh,’ he did, upon my soul. I never felt so stumpt afore in all my life. Sais I, ‘Friend, here is half a dollar for you; it arn’t often I’m brought to a dead stare, and when I am, I am willin’ to pay for it.’

“There’s two languages, Squire, that’s univarsal: the language of love, and the language of money; the galls onderstand the one, and the men onderstand the other, all the wide world over, from Canton to Niagara. I no sooner showed him the half dollar, than it walked into his pocket, a plaguy sight quicker than it will walk out, I guess.

“Sais I, ‘Friend, you’ve taken the consait out of me properly. Captain Hall said there warn’t a man, woman, or child, in the whole of the thirteen united univarsal worlds of our great Republic, that could speak pure English, and I was a goin’ to kick him for it; but he is right, arter all. There ain’t one livin’ soul on us can; I don’t believe they ever as much as heerd it, for I never did, till this blessed day, and there are few things I haven’t either see’d, or heern tell of. Yes, we can’t speak English, do you take?’ ‘Dim comrag,’ sais he, which in Yankee, means, “that’s no English,” and he stood,

looked puzzled, and scratched his head, rael hansum, ‘Dim comrag,’ sais he.

“Well, it made me larf spiteful. I felt kinder wicked, and as *I* had a hat on, and I couldn’t scratch my head, I stood jist like him, clown fashion, with my eyes wanderin’ and my mouth wide open, and put my hand behind me, and scratched there; and I stared, and looked puzzled too, and made the same identical vacant face he did, and repeated arter him slowly, with another scratch, mocking him like, ‘Dim comrag.’

“Such a pair o’ fools you never saw, Squire, since the last time you shaved afore a lookin’ glass; and the stable boys larfed, and he larfed, and I larfed, and it was the only larf I had all that juicy day.

“Well, I turns agin to the door; but it’s the old story over again—rain, rain, rain; spatter, spatter, spatter,—‘I can’t stop here with these true Brittons,’ sais I, ‘guess I’ll go and see the old Squire: he is in his study.’

“So I goes there: ‘Squire,’ sais I, ‘let me offer you a rael gene*wine* Havana cigar; I can recommend it to you.’ He thanks me, he don’t smoke, but plague take him, he don’t say, ‘If you are fond of smokin’, pray smoke yourself.’ And he is writing I won’t interrupt him.

“‘Waiter, order me a post-chaise, to be here in the mornin’, when the rooks wake.’

“‘Yes, Sir.’

“Come, I’ll try the women folk in the drawin’-room, agin’. Ladies don’t mind the rain here; they are used to it. It’s like the musk plant, arter you put it to your nose once, you can’t smell it a second time. Oh what beautiful galls they be!

What a shame it is to bar a feller out such a day as this. One on ‘em blushes like a red cabbage, when she speaks to me, that’s the one, I reckon, I disturbed this mornin’. Cuss the rooks! I’ll pyson them, and that won’t make no noise.

“She shows me the consarvitery. ‘Take care, Sir, your coat has caught this geranium,’ and she onhitches it. ‘Stop, Sir, you’ll break this jilly flower,’ and she lifts off the coat tail agin; in fact, it’s so crowded, you can’t squeeze along, scarcely, without a doin’ of mischief somewhere or another.

“Next time, she goes first, and then it’s my turn, ‘Stop, Miss,’ sais I, ‘your frock has this rose tree over,’ and I loosens it; once more, ‘Miss, this rose has got tangled,’ and I ontangles it from her furbeloes.

“I wonder what makes my hand shake so, and my heart it bumps so, it has bust a button off. If I stay in this consarvitery, I shan’t consarve myself long, that’s a fact, for this gall has put her whole team on, and is a runnin’ me off the road. ‘Hullo! what’s that? Bell for dressin’ for dinner.’ Thank Heavens! I shall escape from myself, and from this beautiful critter, too, for I’m gettin’ spoony, and shall talk silly presently.

“I don’t like to be left alone with a gall, it’s plaguy apt to set me a soft sawderin’ and a courtin’. There’s a sort of nateral attraction like in this world. Two ships in a calm, are sure to get up alongside of each other, if there is no wind, and they have nothin’ to do, but look at each other; natur’ does it. “Well, even, the tongs and the shovel, won’t stand alone long; they’re sure to get on the same side of the fire, and be sociable; one on ‘em has a loadstone and draws ‘tother, that’s sartain. If that’s the case with hard-hearted