

suspense the mind of Hamlet. He wanders up and down, wearied, worried, bewildered, while a sort of contested election goes on in his brain, to be decided in an inverse ratio,—that is, in favour of the candidate who can show the *lowest* figures;—and happy is he (the man of perplexity) if, when he has at length purchased that which *appears* to be what he wanted, he be not doomed afterwards to make the unpleasant discovery that the money was worth the article—and considerably more. Where tradesmen are honest (and Englishmen happily are not yet so changed, but that honesty still characterizes the majority of dealers), there is less of injury than of inconvenience occasioned to the buyer by these embarrassments, since his faltering judgment can in the end be guided to a right choice by the vendor himself; neither is it to be denied that purchasers are in the long run gainers, and that to a most undue extent, by the prevailing competition. It is obvious, however, that the facilities towards fraud, as well as the temptations to it, are greatly multiplied by all this intricacy; and that tickety and trickery may be readily made to go hand in hand, when he who keeps a counter does not at the same time maintain a conscience. Then it is, that to get experience, is to be let down from expectation; then it is, that price and value are cunningly divorced, and the term cheapness, losing its fair meaning, comes to signify nothing but abstract humility of demand; then it is, that you may chance to buy, under the name of Yorkshire cloth, an ingenious intertexture of dirt and pig's-hair! Of the tickets that introduce to such results, what shall we say? They are tickets of admission to the pit of disappointment, and cause the public to feel indignantly that their money ought to be returned.

To the retailers themselves, the consequences of this state of affairs are fraught with evil. Competition, no longer a candid and wholesome emulation, wears the sterner face and harder heart of opposition. Business is carried on upon principles of attack and defence; and neighbours goes to work to knock one another down in the battle of prices. War rages on all sides; which every artifice of strategy is brought into play. Some throw their long shots by means of newspaper advertisements, and makes tickets their musketry and small arms; others double charge their tickets with the word *only*, which does great execution. Then there are the "tremendous sacrifice" people who do everything under prime cost, and, somehow, live by the loss, but, in doing so, prevent others from living. All this and a great deal more besides; resolves itself in the main into a contest of capital—a trial of the relative stamina of purses. The man who has the least money, lets his profits ooze away from him by degrees, till, after exhausting every resource, he is compelled to resign at once both strife and shop. He has arrayed his last figures; in his business he could go no longer; how much lower he may afterwards descend in the social scale, under the effects of his mortification and impoverishment, it were too painfully curious to consider. A competition that produces such results is surely mischievous and absurd. Too what can it be likened? It is the suicidal pig, attempting to swim, and cutting its own throat by its ill-directed struggles. In the present condition of trade, the even flow and distribution of public patronage is disturbed and broken up; large and ostentatious establishments are encouraged, to the neglect and ruin of small ones; some persons are driven into the *Gazette*, that others may drive their carriages; and thus a species of monopoly springs out of the very excess of competition.

The most injurious, oppressive, and deplorable of the results connected with this mistaken system remains to be touched upon. I allude to the way in which it affects the interests and condition of those beings on whose labour and industry the transactions of trade are based. While the race of rivalry is stripping the shop-keeper of his profits, it is taking the bread away from the mouth of the mechanic. The former, with that self preference to which he is subject in common with all mankind, is somewhat more solicitous to retain his own profits than to uphold his workman's wages; and when he finds that both must give way, he insists with a determination, alas! but too natural, that wages should take the precedence in the descent of the scale. To what depths of misery and degradation that descent has by this time brought the journeyman and artisan of every denomination, needs only to be hinted at, since the sad details are a part of men's daily reading and discourse. In most cases, the current rates of payment are such as to move surprise and pity at their inadequacy to the living wants of the unhappy beings who can but submit to them; while the sufferings of the overwrought and spirit broken women have an affecting prominence in the claims on our affecting sympathy. To the miseries of the poor shirt makers the press has lent a voice that has pervaded universal England—and that voice must have found an echo in every heart. These, and the whole train of similar calamities, though doubtless not produced without a variety of concurrent causes, owe much of their aggravation to the source which I have been endeavouring briefly to examine and expose.

The most inveterate hunters after cheap commodities can hardly fail, on cool reflection, to acknowledge themselves wrong in giving countenance and support to such a system as this. It demoralizes to no small extent the trading community—destroys the feeling of fraternity among them—and causes the injury or ruin of many, for the aggrandizement of a few. With a strange inconsistency it facilitates frauds upon the public, and it necessitates sacrifices to them; while in demonstration of its

folly, the sacrifices greatly outweigh the frauds. It operates, moreover, as a fearful instrument of depression upon those who had no share in its creation, and are least able to defend themselves against its effects—upon those very persons, namely, to whose poorly prized but invaluable hands most of the innumerable objects of sale owe their form and fabric. It comprises, in short, in its mischievous totality of error, one of those *false steps* which society has been induced to take, and should by all means seek to retrieve. Let the public look to it—let them set their faces against all *dead bargains*, professed or positive, nominal or real, and do all in their power towards inducing a return to the sound old principle of dealing, a good article for a fair price, neither more nor less. As for the direct practitioners of the system themselves—the labelling classes, as they may be designated—it is impossible to be too earnest in dissuading them from a course by which their own interests, and those of justice and humanity, are alike damned;—it is impossible to say to them too emphatically or too beseechingly, "*Tradesmen, withdraw your tickets.*"

THE PEASANT'S HOME.

DEEP blessings on the cottage home
Wherever it may stand,

Long may it seem to English hearts
A beauty in the land;

And long may flowers around it bloom,
And dark trees shade its walls,

And light and glad some be the steps
That near its shelter fall.

For ever be its humble hearth
A brightly honored shrine,

And often by its joyous light
May happy faces shine—

May words of love and tenderness
Be heard like music there

And hopes be felt that rise from earth
To mingle with the prayer.

Ah! there is much of splendour seen
Around us far and near,

And wealth and pride and pageantry
On every hand appear

But there is also much of woe,
Of poverty, and pain,

To meet us if we closely gaze
Into the world again.

We may find hearts of unknown worth
And spirits worn and weak,

In many a dim and lonely haunt
If for those hearts we seek;

In many a dim and lonely haunt
If for those hearts we seek,

While to our eye the stream of life
May seem all bright and clear.

The cottage home is one strong link
Found in our social chain,

Which if once broken carelessly
May ne'er unite again.

Alike in peace, and war, we ask
The peasant for his aid:

Oh! ever be his resting place
A sunny dwelling made.

THE TRIALS OF GENIUS:

Account of the Introduction of the Manufacture of Porcelain in France, by Bernard Palissy.

PALISSY was born in some village, the name of which is unknown, in the diocese of Agen, about the year 1500; he followed the humble calling of a land-surveyor, to which, as he advanced in years, he added that of painting on glass.

At that period the art of Porcelain-making was unknown. The discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii has enabled us to determine the progress made by the ancients in the arts of pottery; and in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the only manufactory of crockery which could pretend to the name of Porcelain, was at Faenza, in Italy, whither it is said to have been transported from China, by certain Venetian merchants. From this manufactory was derived the name of *faiency*, or *fayence*, still used in France.

It happened that, on a visit to Agen, Palissy, the painter on glass, obtained a sight of a specimen of Faenza, or of Oriental Porcelain, which inspired him with the hope of discovering some sort of white enamel, by which earthen-ware might be enriched; and from that moment he devoted fifteen years of his life to the pursuit of this single object. It appears a simple method to have proceeded at once to Faenza, and become a workman in the famous pottery. But means for so long a journey, were, probably wanting to the poor village geometer, and he accordingly gave to the enterprise all that was in his power, every moment of his days and every faculty of his mind.

As a painter on glass, the art of mixing and fixing colors was well known to him; but the difficulty of transferring these to pottery-ware and covering them by a transparent silicious varnish, seems to have baffled his most persevering endeavors. Scarcely able to provide for the maintenance of his wife and family, he had the greatest difficulty in procuring colors and pottery to effect his experiments. Half his time was lost in grinding and pounding materials, and the vain attempt to construct the necessary ovens; at length he contrived to interest the owner of a pottery, who undertook to bake for his experimental pieces; but partially from ignorance, partly from ill-will, the attempt was ineffectually made, and, ruined in fortune, health, and spirits, at the close of twelve years of incessant labor, Palissy was compelled, by the wants of his family, to abandon his pursuit, and resume his more thriving calling as an engineer. Having obtained from

the district a commission for the draining of certain salt marshes, he executed his task with credit and profit. No sooner, however, had he obtained the means of continuing his attempts, than he returned with greater diligence than ever to his enameling, and despatched the new samples of his skill to be baked in the furnace of a glass-house.

And now, for the first time, the composition he had invented proved fusible. Out of three hundred specimens of various experiments submitted, at the same time, to the action of the furnace, a single one presented, on cooling, a hard, white, vitreous, brilliant surface; and the joy of poor Palissy, in the discovery, may be easily conceived.

"I was, however, at that time of my life, so simple," says he, in his narrative of his experiments, "that the moment I had hit upon the real enamel, I set about making the pottery-ware to which it was to be applied; and, after losing eight months in the task, I had next to construct a furnace similar to those of the glass-houses in which it was to be baked. No one can conceive the trouble, for I had to do all by the single labor of my hands—to sift the mortar, and even to draw the water with which it was to be mixed. I had not so much as the help of a single man in fetching the bricks; my own back bore all!"

"My first baking prospered pretty well; but when it came to the second, after the enamel had been spread over the pottery, I was unable to produce the heat necessary for the fusion. Six days and nights did I remain feeding and watching the furnace, half-distracted, and almost stupefied by the intense heat, and my own bitter disappointment. At last it occurred to me that the composition contained an insufficient proportion of the substance which had produced fusion in the former instance; and I accordingly set about grinding and pounding, though still obliged to keep up the fire of the oven, so that I had treble labor on my hands."

"The former pieces being now spoiled. I was forced to go out and purchase new pots to be covered by the fresh composition; and, on my return, I had the misery of discovering that my stock of wood was exhausted! What was to be done? I rushed into the garden, and tore the trellises; and these, being insufficient, was obliged to sacrifice the dressers, stools, tables, and boarding of my house! All these were successively thrust into the furnace, in the hope of melting the enamel!"

The reader will probably recall to mind the account given by Benvenuto Cellini, in his memoirs, of having contributed all his pewter dishes and household utensils to the metal he prepared for his noble statue of Perseus, which proved slow and difficult of fusion. But the Italian protegee of princes makes a vaunt of his sacrifice, whereas the meek Palissy couches his statement in the terms of a confession.

"Scorched by the heat of the furnace," says he, "and reduced to a skeleton by the perspiration arising from this prodigious heat, I had now a new vexation in store for me. My family having indiscreetly circulated the report of my taking up and burning the flooring of my house, I was considered insane by my neighbors, and my precarious credit totally destroyed. I had then died, I should have left behind me the name of a madman who had ruined his family by a frantic speculation. But though sick and dispirited, I cheered myself with the certainty that the discovery of that which I had been so long in pursuit was effected; and that henceforward I had only to preserve in my labors. The difficulty of maintaining my family for five, or six months longer, till a satisfactory result could be obtained, was the first consideration; but in order to hasten the period, I hired a potter to assist me in my work, furnishing him with models and materials."

"A cruel drawback it was, that I was unable to maintain this man in my dismantled home, for I was forced to run up a bill for his board at a neighboring tavern. Nay, when, at the end of six months, he had made me the articles of crockery according to my designs so that nothing remained to be done but to cover them with my enamel, and submit them to the furnace; being forced to dismiss my workmen I had no means of paying him his wages, except by giving him my clothes, which I accordingly did; and my person was now as thoroughly dismantled as my house!"

All the rest of his labor poor Palissy had to encounter alone, though his hands were so out and bruised with his work, that he was obliged, he says, to cat his pottage as well as he could with his hands wrapped in linen rags. The hand mill, in which he ground his materials, required the power of two strong men to work it, yet he was wholly without assistance. Nor were his disappointments yet at an end. After having, with infinite pains and at considerable cost constructed a new oven, it turned out that the mortar he had used was full of flints, probably the refuse of his materials; and when the furnace was heated, these flints flew, and attached themselves to his pottery, so that it was completely spoiled.

"On passing the hand over my vases," says he, "little fragments of flint were perceptible which cut like a razor. I instantly determined to break them up, rather than sell them in a deteriorated state for what they would fetch which might have injured the reputation of my discovery. But no sooner had I done so, than I was beset by the maledictions of my starving family, and the mockery of my neighbors, who treated me as a madman for not having realized a few crowns by my damaged goods."

Nevertheless the man of genius toiled resolutely on!—Satisfied of the strength that was in him, and of the importance of his discovery, he went to work again, with an injured credit and constitution, an object of hatred to some,

and contempt to others. From the exhausting nature of his labors, his arms and legs had become like sticks, so that, according to his own brief description, there was nothing to keep up his garters, and his stockings came upon his heels as he walked, till he was the picture of wretchedness and destitution. Between the action of the prodigious heat of his furnace, and the influence of the rain and frost on his ill-constructed works, the place was frequently unroofed, compelling him to borrow the materials for its reparation. But this was not always to be accomplished; and he tells us that he often remained watching his oven through the winter nights, exposed to wind and weather, with the owls hooting on one side, and the dogs howling on the other.

"Wet to the skin with the beating in of the heavy rains, and groping about in the dark, for want of a candle, I have often retired to rest at midnight, or even at day-break," says he, "looking like some drunken wretch who had been roaring in a gutter. But the worst I had to suffer was from the accusations of my family, who treated me as a selfish lunatic."

This is but a faint outline of the miseries and fatigues sustained by poor Bernard Palissy, in bringing to perfection an art which has proved so highly beneficial to his own and other countries. The furnaces and ovens of his invention are still in use at Sevres, and have been closely copied in our own and other porcelain works. The moulds in which the vases are baked to secure them from ancient, were devised by Palissy, after his unlucky loss from the flying of the flints; and his recipes for the mixing of colors are still patent.

The porcelain of Palissy soon attained a prodigious reputation, and few museums, or collections of objects of *virtu*, in our own time, but contain specimens of his works, under the name of Raphael-ware, or China in the middle ages. The embossed dishes exhibiting reptiles and animals, in great perfection, were the invention of Palissy; and several of his dishes and vases present copies after celebrated pictures, executed in relief. Table services, to replace the wooden and pewter vessels then in use, were the chief objects to which he devoted his art; and with so much taste and skill, that many of the original designs exhibit the genius of a first rate sculptor.

The fame of this discovery extended rapidly through France, and orders were given him by all the nobles of the court of Henri II; among others, by the Duc de Montmorency, who employed him to decorate his stately chateau of Ecouin. One of the chambers was paved with tiles of Palissy's porcelain, which still remain perfect, useless where the design has been destroyed by the introduction of one of those huge ungraceful N's, which, during the empire, were made to disfigure all the ancient public edifices of France.

United Service Magazine.

FATAL HOT WIND OF INDIA.

One of the most awful scenes I have ever witnessed occurred at this place. One of the tents, during the march, was used as a carpenter's shop, where the saddle trees for the regiment were made and repaired as the occasion required. Whilst the poor fellow who performed this duty was at his work, about mid-day, he was struck by one of the "hot-winds" so common in India. It instantly deprived him of the power of speech. He was carried to the hospital, and the veins of both arms opened, leeches applied to his chest, and every remedy tried, but in vain. I saw the poor fellow laid on his guthrie, besmeared with blood from head to foot, and in this state, within the hour, he was a corpse.

Featherstonhaugh's Excursions.

LOVE OF TITLES IN AMERICA.

A well-known gentleman at Winchester, in this state (Virginia), related an amusing anecdote to me on this subject. Crossing to Potomac into Virginia, with his horse, in a ferry-boat, the ferryman said, "Major, I wish you would lead your horse a little forward," which he immediately did, observing to the man, "I am not a major, and you need not call me one." To this the ferryman replied, "Well, Kurnel, I ax your pardon, and I'll not call you so no more." Being arrived at the landing-place, he led his horse out of the boat, and said, "My good friend, I am a very plain man, I am neither a colonel nor a major; I have no title at all, and I don't like them. How much have I to pay you?" The ferryman looked at him and said, "You are the first white man ever crossed this ferry that war'n't jist nobody at all, and I'll not charge you nothing."

LAUGABLE MISTAKE.

A carrier in the neighbourhood of Bolton recently had to convey a barrel of Roman cement to a gentleman, and a barrel of Guano to a farmer, each of which he delivered to the wrong party. A plasterer commenced preparing the guano, which was given to him as Roman cement, and after much difficulty, owing to the bad smell, he succeeded in plastering a few yards of the gentleman's house, but the stench becoming past his endurance, he called out to the gentleman, and said, "I am very sorry but I must beg of you to get some person to finish this job, for I never met with such Roman cement before. I am quite sick, and the smell will poison me if I go on; besides, (continued the plasterer,) did you ever see Roman cement so yellow?" The gentleman said there must be some mistake, for it evidently was not cement, and accompanied the plasterer to the carrier's, where they found the farmer complaining about the barrel of stuff he had got. It was like sand, but when mixed with water, it turned into stone, and would flag his field,