

healthy amusements which I have seen my companions enjoying here. For long weeks together, I have been without a penny in my pocket, and at such times I have felt much shame in view of extreme poverty. My father has given me two dollars—one when he left me here, one when he came to visit me. But what was that? Nearly all of it went for some small article which I absolutely needed. Lectures, concerts, and various other places of healthy entertainment, were visited by my companions, but I could not go. At length the fatal knowledge was mine, that others of my station had money for such things—money which they took from their employers without leave. I pondered upon it long and deeply—and in pondering I was lost. Yesterday I took—two—dollars.

Here the poor boy burst into tears, but the merchant said not a word. In a few moments Gilbert resumed:

"You know the worst now. I took it, and a part of it I used last night—but O, I want no more such hours of agony as I have passed since that time. Here is a dollar and a half, sir. Take it, and when I get home I will send you the rest. O, let me go, sir, for I cannot stay where temptation haunts me. Away in the solitude of my father's farm, I shall not want the money I cannot have. You may tell me that I have had experience—but, alas that experience only tells me that while I remain here the tempter must be with me. I would not long for what I cannot possess. While I have wants and desires, the wish must be present to gratify them. Let me go, sir—but O, tell not my shame."

The boy stopped and bowed his head. The merchant gazed upon him awhile in silence, and during that time a variety of shades passed over his countenance.

"Gilbert," he said at length, in a low kind tone, "you must not leave me. For a few moments I will forget the difference in our stations, and speak as plainly as you have spoken. I have been in the wrong. I freely confess. I should have known that temptation was thrown in your way—a temptation which should not be cast in the way of any person, much less in the way of an inexperienced youth. Since you have been so nobly frank, I will be equally so. Forgive me for the situation in which I placed you, and the past shall be forgotten. Until this moment I never thought seriously of this subject. I never before realized how direct was the temptation thus placed before the apprentices of our houses. But I see it all now. I know that to the boy who has money, the presence of both money and costly amusement must be too fearful a temptation for ordinary youths. But you shall not leave me. From this moment I shall trust you implicitly—and love you for your noble disposition and fine sense of honor. I shall not fear to trust you henceforth, for you shall have pecuniary recompense somewhat commensurate with the labor you perform. I have often blessed the hour that brought you to my store, for I have seen in you a valuable assistant, and if I have ever held a lingering doubt of your strict integrity I shall hold it no more, for it requires more strength of moral purpose to acknowledge, unasked, a crime, than it does to refrain from committing one. Never again will I accept the labor of any person without paying him for it, and then if he is dishonest no blame can attach to me. You will not leave me Gilbert?"

The boy gazed up into his employer's face but for a while tears and sobs choked his utterance. Mr Phelps drew him to his side, and laying his hand upon the youth's head he resumed—

"If I blame you for this momentary departure from strict honesty, the love I bear you for your noble confession vastly more than wipe it all away. Henceforth you shall have enough for your wants, and when the year is up we will make an arrangement which can but please you. What say you—will you stay?"

"If—if—I only knew that you would never abandon me for this!"

"Stop, Gilbert—I have spoken to you the truth, and you need have no fear. I will pay you three dollars a week for your own instruction and amusement, and when you want clothes or other matters of like necessity, if you speak to me you shall have them. All of the past is forgotten, save your many virtues, and henceforth I know you only for what you shall prove."

Gilbert tried in vain to tell his gratitude, but the merchant saw it all, and with tears in his own eyes he blessed the boy, and then bade him go about his work.

The year passed away, and then another boy came to take Gilbert's place, for the latter took his station in the counting-room. But the new boy came not as boys had come before. The merchant promised to pay him so much per week, enough for all practical purposes—and then he felt that he should not be responsible for the boy's honesty.

At the age of seventeen, Gilbert Goodwin took the place of one of the assistant book-keepers, and at the age of nineteen he took his place at the head of the counting-room—for, to an aptness at figures and an untiring application to his duty, he added a strength of moral integrity, which made his services almost invaluable.

And now he has grown up to be a man,

and the bright-eyed girl who was so intimately connected with that one dark hour of his life has been his wife for several years. He is still in the house of Mr Phelps, and occupies the position of business partner, the old merchant having given up work, and now trusting all to his youthful associate. Gilbert Goodwin has seen many young men fall, and he has often shuddered in view of the wide road to temptation which is open to many more, and he has made one of the rules of his life, that he will have no persons in his employ to whom he cannot afford to pay a sum sufficient to remove them from inevitable destruction.

CHARACTER OF PETER THE GREAT.

BY SAMUEL M. SNUCKER, ESQ.

It has fallen to the lot of but few of the human family to mould the characters and control the destinies of millions of their fellow beings. This unenviable pre-eminence has belonged to such men as Mahomet, Charlemagne, Columbus, and Napoleon. In a degree almost equal to any of these, it was also the portion of the great man who has justly been termed the founder and creator of that vast, diversified and powerful empire, over which the house of Romanoff now sways such a despotic sceptre.

It is singular to observe how, in the written instructions which Peter left behind for the guidance of his successors, there is to be found designated the exact line of policy which they have ever since pursued. In these instructions he enjoins that the Russian nation must be constantly kept on a war footing; that the most able commanders from other countries must be invited to take service in the army of Russia; that no opportunity must be lost in interfering in the affairs and disputes of the rest of Europe; that Poland must be divided by internal feuds in order that she may ultimately be conquered, that the Imperial family must always marry among the German princes; and, especially that constant reference must ever be had to the ultimate and paramount purpose of subjugating the dominions of the Sultan to the sceptre of Muscovite kings. And the real intent of his ambition will be apparent from the following passage, with which he concludes these remarkable instructions: "When Sweden is ours, Persia vanquished, Poland subjugated, and Turkey conquered, when the Euxine and the Baltic are completely and exclusively subject to our control, overtures should be made to the Courts of Versailles and Vienna to divide with them the dominion of the world. If either of them accepts, we must make use of that one to assist us in subjugating the other. We may then on some specious pretext, quarrel with our only remaining rival, and subjugate him to our power!"

In a word the vast genius of Peter had projected the acquisition of universal Empire.—The same impossible but glorious chimera which had inflamed the ambitious mind of Napoleon, had also attracted the adventurous and daring genius of Peter: thus proving that between intellects of the highest and mightiest Calibre, there are often strange varieties and coincidences both of passion and of weakness.

The character of Peter the Great was a singular combination of adverse and incongruous qualities; but a combination in which the good and the great largely preponderated. His mind possessed extraordinary vigour and energy. Nothing was too minute and insignificant to escape his scrutiny if it either promoted his purposes or impeded them. Thus during one of his foreign tours, he sent back to Russia the model of a coffin. At another time he imported an immense number of brush makers, of basket makers, of rat catchers, and of Dutch cats, into his capital. At the same time, while he was descending to these insignificant details, the grandeur and magnitude of his enterprises were such as to excite the wonder of all men, and to rival those even of Charlemagne and Napoleon. The innumerable interests of nearly the half of two continents engrossed his attention, nor did they seem to be too great for the grasp of his comprehensive mind. The object of all his reforms and labors evidently was to do good, and to benefit his people. That he was a wise, sagacious, persevering prince cannot be denied. That, under any circumstances or in any position in life, he would have been a remarkable person, is unquestionable. But it is also true that he was deformed by several great defects. His passions were ungovernable; and he cared but little for the value and the worth of human life. It is true that he could found a vast empire; that he could infuse into a sluggish people active enterprise and life; that he could develop national resources; that he could build great cities; that he could skillfully organize and administer the machinery of government; that he could discipline armies, build navies, and gain victories. But nature, which had bestowed upon him in a liberal measure all these high qualities, had withheld from him that nobler and more exalted attribute, without the possession of which no man ever reaches the sublimest niche in the pantheon of immortal fame—the power to conquer and civilize himself. Until the day of his death, Peter the Great, in this respect, eminently deserved the title of Peter the Little. Until his latest hour, he remained a rough hewn Colossus, in some respects as savage as

Attila, as bloodthirsty as Tiberius, as implacable as Alva. Nor was he himself devoid of the discernment necessary to see, or of the candor necessary to confess the existence of these great defects. He confessed openly once, to his friends, after one of his terrible outbursts of passion, that he could civilize others, but himself he could not civilize. But he was eminently the man for the age in which he lived, and for the people over whom he ruled; and we cannot blame him for not having done more or for not having been greater, just as we cannot censure Columbus for not having discovered the virgin glories of this western world, in stately ships propelled by steam!

From Mitchell's Maritime Register. A SKETCH OF LLOYD'S.

WHEN London past was to London present what a second rate country town is to the now metropolis, the contrast of manners among Merchants to those of our day was as marked as any other distinction. Merchants and traders of that were citizens, strictly speaking. Homes and counting-houses were combined and intermingled. Ambitions and pleasures were home-spun, and were, for the most part, bounded by the circle within which trade was carried on. In short, there was a domesticity about London, of which the few last traces are preserved in the City Companies. "The sweet security of streets" was loved by our grandfather burghers. Their narrowness, and crookedness, and darkness, made them seem warm, comfortable, and homelike. Different rendezvous were selected, or accidentally determined, where persons engaged in the same pursuits could meet one another without the bustle of the Exchange, or the strict formality of the office. Whilst the learned and the gay had their taverns and coffee-houses between St. Paul's and Templebar—the latter the Pillars of Hercules to the City Mediterranean—other coffee-houses sequestered themselves in frequented alleys and courts eastward, for the special advantage of Merchant's and Tradesmen. A favorite waiter in one of these places of resort generally became the proprietor or nominal head of a new undertaking of the same character, or of the old one itself. If successful, his name lasted long after his life, and sometimes even identified and localised some particular branch of Commercial enterprise. With regard to the name, the Christian name was, and still is, more frequently selected, though not invariably. Thus Will's, Tom's, Dolly's, &c. At other times they were denominated from a political, a humorous, or an accidental circumstance; and sometimes, as in the case of Lloyd's, they were called by the surname of the tavern or coffee-house keeper.

Lloyd's Coffee-house, *eo nomine*, has been connected with the Marine Insurance system of this country for, certainly, one hundred and sixty years—perhaps longer, but the tradition of Lloyd and his concern has not been preserved. It has not, indeed, been fixed to the same precise spot the whole time; but the two or three removes it has made have always been within a stone's throw of the same centre. The actual coffee-house, with sanded floor, where originally the Merchant found the Underwriter sitting in a bay window over his cup of fragrant Mocha, has become almost a fiction, the coffee-room of the present Lloyd's being merely an adjunct of a large establishment—a restaurant-adjointing rather than forming part of Lloyd's itself. Mr Mabey, however, conducts his department with so much attention, and his waiters, from the genial, Shakspeare-loving assistant at the bar to the elderly boy with buttons, are so assiduous and well-liked, that the refreshment-room is frequented by many persons unconnected with the establishment—"outsiders"—who come to lunch although they do not stop to insure.

Of Lloyd's as a body incorporate, and the centre of a wide system, we must defer to speak at present, and rather give a brief description of the external part of its interior—an expression paradoxical only in appearance.

If we enter the east gateway of the Royal Exchange—that work of a Tite, but not a Titan—we find a door, the large valves of which, during business hours, come near the idea of perpetual motion. Through it we reach a large stone staircase, and as we ascend we become aware of Lloyd's. Without turning to the right hand, which would lead us to a mazzonino, we pursue our way up flights of cheerful steps, pause for a moment on the landing-place—a sort of Grand Mulets—and, with Mr Albert Smith, make one violent struggle up the Dome du Goute, and find ourselves, without accident, on the summit of i. e., the vestibule of Lloyd's. The view from this lofty eminence more than repays us. Dropping metaphor, we are standing in a handsome entrance-hall, with columns, and windows, and statues—one being another Titan, with the name of Huskisson; the other H. R. H. Prince Albert, who appears to have stood to the artist with a robe de nuit half off. Opening upon this vestibule, and gaining length from its uninterrupted junction with it, is the Subscription-room, a finely-proportioned, airy, and well-lighted apartment, in length about 130 feet, the vestibule included. At right angles with the Subscription-room opens the Merchants'-room, similar in charac-

ter, and remarkable for the art with which its trapezoid form is concealed from the eye. The Captains' or Coffee-room, is en suite with it.

At the farther end of the Subscription, a Underwriters'-room, another room opens upon it; or, it is rather a bay or angle of the same apartment. Here the throne was placed for her Majesty when she re-opened the Royal Exchange in person. A staircase leads to map galleries, book-rooms, lavatories, and other offices. In the vestibule which we have described red cloaked porters syllable men's names all day in loud but mellow voices, and the sound is repeated by waiters within the rooms, dressed in the quiet livery of the establishment—personifications of Echo—wandering voices, of the most obliging manners and tolerably substantial form.

Of the life within the rooms, the men, their manners and customs, and all things of and concerning the premises, we must take another opportunity of speaking.

THE SNOW.

THE snow was proverbially called the 'poor farmer's manure,' before scientific analysis had shown that it contained a larger per centage of ammonia than rain. The snow serves as a protecting mantle to the tender herbage and the roots of all plants against the fierce beasts and cold of winter. An examination of snow in Siberia showed that when the temperature of the air was seventy two degrees below zero, the temperature of the snow a little below the surface was twenty nine degrees above zero, over one hundred degrees difference. The snow keeps the earth just below its surface in a condition to take on chemical changes, which would not happen if the earth were bare and frozen to a great depth. The snow prevents exhalations from the earth, and is a powerful absorbent, retaining and returning to the earth gases arising from vegetable and animal decomposition. The snow, though it falls heavily at the door of the poor, and brings death and starvation to the fowls of the air and beasts of the field, is yet of incalculable benefit in a climate like ours, and especially when the deep springs of the earth were failing and the mill streams were refusing their motive powers to the craving appetites of man. If the clouds dropped rain instead of snow, we might have pumped and bored the earth in vain for water; but, with a foot of snow upon the earth and many feet upon the mountains, the hum of the mill-stones and the harsh notes of the saw will soon and long testify of its beneficence. Bridges, earth-works and the fruits of engineering skill and toil may be swept away, but man will still rejoice in the general good and adore the benevolence of Him who orders all things aright. The snow is a great purifier of the atmosphere. The absorbent power or capillary action of snow is like that of sponge or charcoal. Immediately after snow has fallen, melt it in a clean vessel and taste it and you will find immediate evidences of its impurity. Try some a day or two old, and it becomes nauseous, especially in cities. Snow water makes the mouth harsh and dry. It has the same effect upon the skin, and upon the hands and feet produces the painful malady of chilblains. The following easy experiment illustrates beautifully the absorbent property of snow: Take a lump of snow (a piece of crust answers well) of three or four inches in length, and hold it in the flame of a lamp; not a drop of water will fall from the snow, but the water as fast as formed, will penetrate or be drawn up into the mass of snow by capillary attraction. It is by virtue of this attraction that the snow purifies the atmosphere by absorbing and retaining its noxious and noisome gases and odors.—[New York Observer.]

SUNSET IN THE ALPS.

ANON the evening came, walking noiselessly upon the mountains, and shedding on the spirit a not unpleasant melancholy. The Alps seemed to grow taller. Deep masses of shade were projected from summit to summit. Pine forest and green vale, and dashing torrent, and quiet hamlet, all retired from view, as if they wished to go to sleep beneath the friendly shadows. A deep and reverent silence stole over the Alps, as if the stillness of the firmament had descended upon them. Over all nature was shed this spirit of quiet and profound tranquillity. Every tree was motionless. The murmur of the brook, the wing of the bird, and creak of our diligence, the voices of the postilion and conductor, all felt the softening influence of the hour. But mark! what glory is this which begins to burn up the crest of the snowy Alps? First, there comes a flood of rosy light, and then a deep bright crimson, like the ruby's blush or the sapphire's blaze, and then a circle of flaming peaks stud the horizon. It looks as if a great conflagration were about to begin. But suddenly the light fades, and piles of cold, pale white rises above you. You can scarce believe them to be the same mountains. But quick as lightning, the flash comes again. A flood of glory rolls once more along their summits. It is a last and mighty blaze. You feel as if it were a struggle for life—as if it were a war waged by the spirits of darkness against these celestial forms. The struggle is over; the darkness has prevailed. These mighty torches