

XLI. REDBURN ROVES ABOUT HITHER AND THITHER

I do not know that any other traveler would think it worth while to mention such a thing; but the fact is, that during the summer months in Liverpool, the days are exceedingly lengthy; and the first evening I found myself walking in the twilight after nine o'clock, I tried to recall my astronomical knowledge, in order to account satisfactorily for so curious a phenomenon. But the days in summer, and the nights in winter, are just as long in Liverpool as at Cape Horn; for the latitude of the two places very nearly corresponds.

These Liverpool days, however, were a famous thing for me; who, thereby, was enabled after my day's work aboard the Highlander, to ramble about the town for several hours. After I had visited all the noted places I could discover, of those marked down upon my father's map, I began to extend my roving indefinitely; forming myself into a committee of one, to investigate all accessible parts of the town; though so many years have elapsed, ere I have thought of bringing in my report.

This was a great delight to me: for wherever I have been in the world, I have always taken a vast deal of lonely satisfaction in wandering about, up and down, among out-of-the-way streets and alleys, and speculating upon the strangers I have met. Thus, in Liverpool I used to pace along endless streets of dwelling-houses, looking at the names on the doors, admiring the pretty faces in the windows, and invoking a passing

blessing upon the chubby children on the door-steps. I was stared at myself, to be sure: but what of that? We must give and take on such occasions. In truth, I and my shooting-jacket produced quite a sensation in Liverpool: and I have no doubt, that many a father of a family went home to his children with a curious story, about a wandering phenomenon they had encountered, traversing the side-walks that day. In the words of the old song, "I cared for nobody, no not I, and nobody cared for me." I stared my fill with impunity, and took all stares myself in good part.

Once I was standing in a large square, gaping at a splendid chariot drawn up at a portico. The glossy horses quivered with good-living, and so did the sumptuous calves of the gold-laced coachman and footmen in attendance. I was particularly struck with the red cheeks of these men: and the many evidences they furnished of their enjoying this meal with a wonderful relish.

While thus standing, I all at once perceived, that the objects of my curiosity, were making me an object of their own; and that they were gazing at me, as if I were some unauthorized intruder upon the British soil. Truly, they had reason: for when I now think of the figure I must have cut in those days, I only marvel that, in my many strolls, my passport was not a thousand times demanded.

Nevertheless, I was only a forlorn looking mortal among tens of thousands of rags and tatters. For in some parts of the town, inhabited

by laborers, and poor people generally; I used to crowd my way through masses of squalid men, women, and children, who at this evening hour, in those quarters of Liverpool, seem to empty themselves into the street, and live there for the time. I had never seen any thing like it in New York. Often, I witnessed some curious, and many very sad scenes; and especially I remembered encountering a pale, ragged man, rushing along frantically, and striving to throw off his wife and children, who clung to his arms and legs; and, in God's name, conjured him not to desert them. He seemed bent upon rushing down to the water, and drowning himself, in some despair, and craziness of wretchedness. In these haunts, beggary went on before me wherever I walked, and dogged me unceasingly at the heels. Poverty, poverty, poverty, in almost endless vistas: and want and woe staggered arm in arm along these miserable streets.

And here, I must not omit one thing, that struck me at the time. It was the absence of negroes; who in the large towns in the "free states" of America, almost always form a considerable portion of the destitute. But in these streets, not a negro was to be seen. All were whites; and with the exception of the Irish, were natives of the soil: even Englishmen; as much Englishmen, as the dukes in the House of Lords. This conveyed a strange feeling: and more than any thing else, reminded me that I was not in my own land. For there, such a being as a native beggar is almost unknown; and to be a born American citizen seems a guarantee against pauperism; and this, perhaps, springs from the virtue of a vote.

Speaking of negroes, recalls the looks of interest with which negro-sailors are regarded when they walk the Liverpool streets. In Liverpool indeed the negro steps with a prouder pace, and lifts his head like a man; for here, no such exaggerated feeling exists in respect to him, as in America. Three or four times, I encountered our black steward, dressed very handsomely, and walking arm in arm with a good-looking English woman. In New York, such a couple would have been mobbed in three minutes; and the steward would have been lucky to escape with whole limbs. Owing to the friendly reception extended to them, and the unwonted immunities they enjoy in Liverpool, the black cooks and stewards of American ships are very much attached to the place and like to make voyages to it.

Being so young and inexperienced then, and unconsciously swayed in some degree by those local and social prejudices, that are the marring of most men, and from which, for the mass, there seems no possible escape; at first I was surprised that a colored man should be treated as he is in this town; but a little reflection showed that, after all, it was but recognizing his claims to humanity and normal equality; so that, in some things, we Americans leave to other countries the carrying out of the principle that stands at the head of our Declaration of Independence.

During my evening strolls in the wealthier quarters, I was subject to a continual mortification. It was the humiliating fact, wholly unforeseen by me, that upon the whole, and barring the poverty and beggary, Liverpool, away from the docks, was very much such a place as New York.

There were the same sort of streets pretty much; the same rows of houses with stone steps; the same kind of side-walks and curbs; and the same elbowing, heartless-looking crowd as ever.

I came across the Leeds Canal, one afternoon; but, upon my word, no one could have told it from the Erie Canal at Albany. I went into St. John's Market on a Saturday night; and though it was strange enough to see that great roof supported by so many pillars, yet the most discriminating observer would not have been able to detect any difference between the articles exposed for sale, and the articles exhibited in Fulton Market, New York.

I walked down Lord-street, peering into the jewelers' shops; but I thought I was walking down a block in Broadway. I began to think that all this talk about travel was a humbug; and that he who lives in a nut-shell, lives in an epitome of the universe, and has but little to see beyond him.

It is true, that I often thought of London's being only seven or eight hours' travel by railroad from where I was; and that there, surely, must be a world of wonders waiting my eyes: but more of London anon.

Sundays were the days upon which I made my longest explorations. I rose bright and early, with my whole plan of operations in my head. First walking into some dock hitherto unexamined, and then to breakfast. Then a walk through the more fashionable streets, to see the people going to

church; and then I myself went to church, selecting the goodliest edifice, and the tallest Kentuckian of a spire I could find.

For I am an admirer of church architecture; and though, perhaps, the sums spent in erecting magnificent cathedrals might better go to the founding of charities, yet since these structures are built, those who disapprove of them in one sense, may as well have the benefit of them in another.

It is a most Christian thing, and a matter most sweet to dwell upon and simmer over in solitude, that any poor sinner may go to church wherever he pleases; and that even St. Peter's in Rome is open to him, as to a cardinal; that St. Paul's in London is not shut against him; and that the Broadway Tabernacle, in New York, opens all her broad aisles to him, and will not even have doors and thresholds to her pews, the better to allure him by an unbounded invitation. I say, this consideration of the hospitality and democracy in churches, is a most Christian and charming thought. It speaks whole volumes of folios, and Vatican libraries, for Christianity; it is more eloquent, and goes farther home than all the sermons of Massillon, Jeremy Taylor, Wesley, and Archbishop Tillotson.

Nothing daunted, therefore, by thinking of my being a stranger in the land; nothing daunted by the architectural superiority and costliness of any Liverpool church; or by the streams of silk dresses and fine broadcloth coats flowing into the aisles, I used humbly to present myself before the sexton, as a candidate for admission. He would stare a

little, perhaps (one of them once hesitated), but in the end, what could he do but show me into a pew; not the most commodious of pews, to be sure; nor commandingly located; nor within very plain sight or hearing of the pulpit. No; it was remarkable, that there was always some confounded pillar or obstinate angle of the wall in the way; and I used to think, that the sextons of Liverpool must have held a secret meeting on my account, and resolved to apportion me the most inconvenient pew in the churches under their charge. However, they always gave me a seat of some sort or other; sometimes even on an oaken bench in the open air of the aisle, where I would sit, dividing the attention of the congregation between myself and the clergyman. The whole congregation seemed to know that I was a foreigner of distinction.

It was sweet to hear the service read, the organ roll, the sermon preached--just as the same things were going on three thousand five hundred miles off, at home! But then, the prayer in behalf of her majesty the Queen, somewhat threw me back. Nevertheless, I joined in that prayer, and invoked for the lady the best wishes of a poor Yankee.

How I loved to sit in the holy hush of those brown old monastic aisles, thinking of Harry the Eighth, and the Reformation! How I loved to go a roving with my eye, all along the sculptured walls and buttresses; winding in among the intricacies of the pendent ceiling, and wriggling my fancied way like a wood-worm. I could have sat there all the morning long, through noon, unto night. But at last the benediction would come; and appropriating my share of it, I would slowly move away, thinking how

I should like to go home with some of the portly old gentlemen, with high-polished boots and Malacca canes, and take a seat at their cosy and comfortable dinner-tables. But, alas! there was no dinner for me except at the sign of the Baltimore Clipper.

Yet the Sunday dinners that Handsome Mary served up were not to be scorned. The roast beef of Old England abounded; and so did the immortal plum-puddings, and the unspeakably capital gooseberry pies. But to finish off with that abominable "swipes" almost spoiled all the rest: not that I myself patronized "swipes" but my shipmates did; and every cup I saw them drink, I could not choose but taste in imagination, and even then the flavor was bad.

On Sundays, at dinner-time, as, indeed, on every other day, it was curious to watch the proceedings at the sign of the Clipper. The servant girls were running about, mustering the various crews, whose dinners were spread, each in a separate apartment; and who were collectively known by the names of their ships.

"Where are the Arethusas?--Here's their beef been smoking this half-hour."--"Fly, Betty, my dear, here come the Splendids."--"Run, Molly, my love; get the salt-cellars for the Highlanders."--"You Peggy, where's the Siddons' pickle-pat?"--"I say, Judy, are you never coming with that pudding for the Lord Nelsons?"

On week days, we did not fare quite so well as on Sundays; and once we came to dinner, and found two enormous bullock hearts smoking at each end of the Highlanders' table. Jackson was indignant at the outrage.

He always sat at the head of the table; and this time he squared himself on his bench, and erecting his knife and fork like flag-staffs, so as to include the two hearts between them, he called out for Danby, the boarding-house keeper; for although his wife Mary was in fact at the head of the establishment, yet Danby himself always came in for the fault-findings.

Danby obsequiously appeared, and stood in the doorway, well knowing the philippics that were coming. But he was not prepared for the peroration of Jackson's address to him; which consisted of the two bullock hearts, snatched bodily off the dish, and flung at his head, by way of a recapitulation of the preceding arguments. The company then broke up in disgust, and dined elsewhere.

Though I almost invariably attended church on Sunday mornings, yet the rest of the day I spent on my travels; and it was on one of these afternoon strolls, that on passing through St. George's-square, I found myself among a large crowd, gathered near the base of George the Fourth's equestrian statue.

The people were mostly mechanics and artisans in their holiday clothes; but mixed with them were a good many soldiers, in lean, lank, and

dinnerless undresses, and sporting attenuated rattans. These troops belonged to the various regiments then in town. Police officers, also, were conspicuous in their uniforms. At first perfect silence and decorum prevailed.

Addressing this orderly throng was a pale, hollow-eyed young man, in a snuff-colored surtout, who looked worn with much watching, or much toil, or too little food. His features were good, his whole air was respectable, and there was no mistaking the fact, that he was strongly in earnest in what he was saying.

In his hand was a soiled, inflammatory-looking pamphlet, from which he frequently read; following up the quotations with nervous appeals to his hearers, a rolling of his eyes, and sometimes the most frantic gestures. I was not long within hearing of him, before I became aware that this youth was a Chartist.

Presently the crowd increased, and some commotion was raised, when I noticed the police officers augmenting in number; and by and by, they began to glide through the crowd, politely hinting at the propriety of dispersing. The first persons thus accosted were the soldiers, who accordingly sauntered off, switching their rattans, and admiring their high-polished shoes. It was plain that the Charter did not hang very heavy round their hearts. For the rest, they also gradually broke up; and at last I saw the speaker himself depart.

I do not know why, but I thought he must be some despairing elder son, supporting by hard toil his mother and sisters; for of such many political desperadoes are made.

That same Sunday afternoon, I strolled toward the outskirts of the town, and attracted by the sight of two great Pompey's pillars, in the shape of black steeples, apparently rising directly from the soil, I approached them with much curiosity. But looking over a low parapet connecting them, what was my surprise to behold at my feet a smoky hollow in the ground, with rocky walls, and dark holes at one end, carrying out of view several lines of iron railways; while far beyond, straight out toward the open country, ran an endless railroad. Over the place, a handsome Moorish arch of stone was flung; and gradually, as I gazed upon it, and at the little side arches at the bottom of the hollow, there came over me an undefinable feeling, that I had previously seen the whole thing before. Yet how could that be? Certainly, I had never been in Liverpool before: but then, that Moorish arch! surely I remembered that very well. It was not till several months after reaching home in America, that my perplexity upon this matter was cleared away. In glancing over an old number of the Penny Magazine, there I saw a picture of the place to the life; and remembered having seen the same print years previous. It was a representation of the spot where the Manchester railroad enters the outskirts of the town.