

Artists of the Ideal and the Real; or, Poets and Inventors—Revival of an old mode of Carving.

BY THOMAS EWBANK.

The following article, which appeared in the Tribune two weeks ago, and now revised for the Scientific American will be read with no little interest by all our subscribers.

Every one has more or less of the Poet in him—even animals, it is believed, have their pleasures of imagination. The enviable appellative has been exclusively given to one class of men; yet it is equally applicable to another viz: Inventors. What is Poetry but the art of Invention? And what an Inventor but one who brings that into being which had no previous existence? And is there not poetry in things as well as thoughts? In forms, motions and results? Why! there is no species of metrical composition and no flights of genius in them that have not counterparts in tangible creations! Authors of verse and of mechanical novelties are, then, both children of inspiration, and differ only in the media of its manifestation. Appointed to separate missions, one occupies regions of the Ideal, the other realms of Realities. One portrays—the other goes farther and produces that which he imagines. The former reveals his conceptions in words—the latter casts them in iron and brass, or embodies them in other material, according to their natures, and then places them, instead of their pictures before us. Like his more etherialized brother, he indulges considerably in light and fugitive pieces, but every now and then rouses the world with specimens of sublimity and romance, as the Printing Press, Steam Motors, Telegraphs, Water and Land Locomotives, and other heroic poems in wood and metal avouch! And where's the soul so torpid that is not warmed into raptures by persuading them!

Both have their season of exaltation and prostration—spiritual intermittents. Their general feeling and fates are alike. As regards worldly honor and wealth they are commonly on a par—poor in possession and amazingly rich in expectation. Allied so intimately in their pursuits and destinies, their hopes, joys, sympathies and sorrows, a mutual attachment might be expected to bind them together; but such has not always been the case. The amateur of tropes used to look askant at him whose metaphors were springs and pulleys, but the feeling is yielding to a better one. The artist of realities is not now deemed 'mean' and 'servile,' nor his profession 'ignoble' and 'scandalous'—that is, except where rulers reign *jure divino*, for then people are ever slaves *de facto*.

There is no mistake about the pleasures of inventors. They have joys that common minds know little of. They live in a world and breathe an atmosphere peculiarly their own. Each one carries with him a magic elixir that enables him to rise into higher cycles than common mortals move in. Like those of other men, their bodies are seen in our shops and thoroughfares, but their souls, even then, are often soaring elsewhere, and sometimes become so perfectly abstracted that, one would think, Death might snatch the former away and leave the latter unconscious of their departure to wander about in quest of them.

A virgin thought flashes on them, or a long attempted problem is solved, and they are in a delirium of delight. Their pallid cheeks become flushed with joy, and their eyes expand in ecstasy. The new ideas or facts disclosed are not verily apples of gold in pictures of silver. They are about to receive their reward, and Hope, in her richest robes, steps in to reveal it. Waving her wand, she calls up mansions, lawns and equipages, bank books certificates of stocks, rent-rolls, and a long list, of other desirable miscellanea! Nor is the vision always evanescent. Frequently it endures till it 'come to pass,' or the smiling visionaire himself pass away. In either case the enjoyment is genuine—anticipation, as is well-known, being not one whit less exquisite than fulfilment.

Sometimes the lives of a Fitch and Chatterton have become extinguished with the scenes but only when they were unusually vivid and abruptly dissolved.

Verbal poets occasionally find their finest

images forestalled—already in the book market a like thing occurs, and not seldom neither, with inventors. Many a one has unwittingly given birth (a second one) to the child of another, cherished it with paternal solicitude and honestly ushered it into the world as his own! An unlucky contretemps truly! To undergo the labor of mental gestation, suffer the throes of giving it birth, and then have the darling torn from you by a stranger! Yea, and perhaps with the taunting remark that all other eggs in your brain had been laid by his maggots! (But that is bordering on a theme more exciting than the Quarrel of Authors.) Ten to one, if the unfeeling claimant had any right to the paternity, but had abandoned and would never have thought of acknowledging it but for its improved appearance and condition. Probably it had not lived but for its foster-parent's care.

Nothing but a careful examination and re-examination of the registers before undertaking to own and nurse such younglings, can enable any one to avoid such disappointments.

Recently, a novel mode of carving in wood, by first sinking the parts designed to be in relief, was announced. Unfortunately for its author, some unknown meddling person tampered with it long ago, when little could be made out of it either for himself or others. There could have been no harm in this had he done nothing more, but he impertinently filed a caveat in the public's archives. He cannot, however, appear in person to charge the reviver with kidnapping, nor yet apply for a quo warranto or injunction. Here's his declaration.

An excellent Receipt to make a dainty, streight Walking-Staff, and to have knots where you please.—Get a streight piece of wood of the length you desire, of holly, ash, service-tree, walnut-tree or pear-tree; let it be free from knots, then plane into six or eight sides, a good deal bigger than your staff is to be. This done, get a short punch of iron and let the small end be filed to about the bigness that you intend your knobs shall be where you will have knobs, punch holes with a hammer therein, and so do on every side.—Then plane it over again till you have made the staff smooth that there be no dots [left by the punch] seen thereon. Next put it into a caldron of boiling water for a good space, and when you take it out, you shall see that it will be full of knobs, for by the heat of the water the bruises made by the punch are swelled out again.

You may file your punch like a star or other work [design] and it will show very pretty. I once saw a partisans or captain's leading-staff done in this manner, and being put into a dyer's caldron when he dyed blacks, and dried and rubbed well with linseed oil, it showed [shone] like ebony.—*A Rich Cabinet, with variety of inventions unlocked and opened for the recreation of Ingenious Spirits, &c. &c. Collected out of Alexis Mizaldus, Wecker, &c. By John White, a lover of Artificial Conclusions. Fifth Ed. Lon. 1684.*

* See Moxon's Preface to 'Mechanick Exercises'—London 1693, and any English Dictionary to Walker's inclusive.

The City of Bumbay East Indies.

Bombay contains a population of above three hundred thousand inhabitants, a large proportion of whom are Hindoos—the remainder are Mahomedans, Armenians, Jews, and about 8000 Parsees, or fire worshippers. The houses of the Parsees, many of whom are wealthy, are often of great extent; because, if a man has many sons, they all continue to live under the same roof, even when married—with their families, and uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and grandchildren, and remain together till the increase of numbers actually compels a portion of the family to remove, and to erect new dwellings for their own accommodation. The lower classes content themselves with small huts, mostly of clay, with the roofs made of the leaves Palmyra or cocconut trees.

Many people will be surprised to learn that the worshippers of fire still exist in the East, but they are still numerous in the Indian Archipelego, when many of them found refuge from the relentless Mahomedan.

Cultivation of Indigo.

Among dyers and color makers, the Bengal indigo is highest prized. It is far superior to any other kind. The Guitamala or South American is the next in quality, and then the various grades of Spanish float, &c. The best Bengal sells for \$2 per pound and it is a great source of revenue to the British Government. As this is at present the most valuable of all the dye drugs, selling for more than cochineal, the United States must consume more and more of it, as we increase in manufactures. The cultivation of the indigo plant should therefore arrest the attention of our Southern planters, as there can be no doubt of an open and ready sale at all times, if the quality is good. We say this because some may say that "there is not a good market for what is now made in the States," that which is raised in Louisiana and S. Carolina. But the reason of the American indigo being unsaleable in the market, is owing to its inferior quality. It is far easier to work, as it is called, a good than a bad quality of indigo. In making the sulphate of indigo, the inferior requires more sulphuric acid than the superior quality, while it does not yield one fourth the amount of coloring matter, and the labor to use them both is the same. It is therefore of the utmost consequence to pay attention and particular attention to the quality. Bengal exports more than eight million of pounds every year and the quality has been, steadily increasing. Indigo succeeds best near the tropics, where the mean temperature reaches 75° and 80° Fahrenheit. The soil should be light and rich. Sow in April 12 lbs. to the acre, in drills 15 to 20 inches apart. Moisture is requisite but undrained soil should be avoided—to be kept free from weeds and grass and thinned by hoeing. Cut with a reaping hook near the ground, when about the flower, or so soon as the lower leaves begin to turn: this period will be in July in South Carolina. A second crop is cut at the end of August, and a third in Guatemala and India. The first crop is the best. The excellence of indigo depends upon the brightness of the season—wet wether produces large plants, but a small quantity of coloring matter.

The culture is very precarious, both as regards the growth of the plant from year to year and the quantity and quality of the drug, even in the same season. Good indigo is known by its lightness or small specific gravity, indicating the absence of earthly impurities—by not readily parting with its coloring matter when a mass is drawn over a white surface; but above all, by the purity of the color itself.

In the Delta of the Ganges, where the best and largest quantity of indigo is produced, the plant lasts for only a single season, being destroyed by the periodical inundations; but in the dry central and western provinces, one or two ratoon crops are obtained.

In South Carolina the following method is employed to extract the indigo from the plant, which answers well enough for domestic purposes, but it is time that greater attention was paid to the manufacture of a better article.

When the underbearers begin to dry, they are cut down and put into a barrel filled with rain water with boards and weights placed on them to keep them under water.

When bubbles begin to form on the top and the water begins to look of a reddish color, it is soaked enough, and must be taken out, taking care to wring and squeeze the leaves well, so as to obtain all the strength of the plant; it must then be churned (which may be done by means of a tolerable open basket, with a handle to raise it up and down) until the liquor is quite in a foam. To ascertain whether it is done enough a spoonful is taken out on a plate, and a small quantity of very strong lye put into it.

If the liquor curdles, it is a sign that it is churned enough, when potash lye of considerable strength is added by small quantities and the churning continued until it is all sufficiently curdled; care must be taken not to put in too much lye, as that will spoil it. When it curdles freely with the lye, it must be sprinkled well over the top with oil, which immediately causes the foam to subside, after which it must stand till the indigo settles to the bottom of the barrel. This may be dis-

covered by the appearance of water, which must be let off gradually by boring holes first near the top, and afterwards lower, as it continues to settle. When the water is all let off, and nothing remains but the mud, it is taken and put into a funnel bag, and hung up to drip, afterwards spreading it to dry on large dishes. None of the foam, which is the strength of the weed, should escape.

Hindoo Cavern Temple.

At Bombay, in the East Indies, there are interesting excavations named the Elephanta a name given by the Portuguese from a huge stone elephant found at the landing place. It is carved out of the solid rock on which it stands, but is now much broken and mutilated. The hewn entrance to the cave is from forty to fifty feet wide, and its height about twenty feet. It is supported by large columns carved from the solid rock. The sides of the cavern are ornamented with numerous figures, but the lower end of the cavern, opposite the entrance, is the most remarkable. In the centre is a God of colossal size, with three heads, representing the Destroyer, Giver and Preserver—these are decked with various ornaments. The features are all very good, with the exception of the under lip, which is amazingly thick. The length from the chin to the top of the head is about seven feet.

The parts of the figures are all perfect, with the exception of the two hands which are destroyed. On each side of the tri-headed god are two statues, about fifteen feet high, leaning on a dwarf; these are much defaced. To the right is a sculptured group, embracing a variety of figures, the largest of which is sixteen feet high.—It is a double statue, half male and half female, with four hands. Another portion of this design is filled with small figures in attitudes of worship, well executed. The columns and various portions of the sculpture have been much defaced by the Portuguese, in former times, when they made war upon the gods and temples, as well as upon the native inhabitants. No trace of the history of these caverns remains; their origin is unknown. They are supposed to be about two thousand years old, and must have been the work of a people far advanced in the arts.

Female Inquisitiveness Served Out.

The Roman Senators were in the habit of bringing into the senate their sons who had taken the Protecta, but they were enjoined not to divulge the secrets of an adjourned debate until it was concluded. The mother of young Papirius, who had accompanied his father to the senate house, inquired of her son what the senators had been doing. His silence inflamed her curiosity, and importunity at last drove him to the following pleasant fallacy to get rid of it. He told her that it was discussed which would be more beneficial to the state, for one man to have two wives or one woman two husbands? As soon as she heard this she left the house in great trepidation, and hastened to tell the other matrons what she had heard. The next day troops of matrons went to the senate and with tears and entreaties, implored that one woman might be allowed to have two husbands rather than one man be permitted to have two wives.—The senators were astonished at this interminate proceeding of their wives, and wondered what they could mean. Young Papirius soon explained the pardonable fallacy perpetrated and thus solved the puzzle presented to the senate. Delighted with the honour and ingenuity of the youth, the senate decreed that from that time no youth should be suffered to enter the senate, Papirius alone excepted. His discretion gained for him the cognomen of Pratextatus.

Real Wealth vs. Money.

Pitt carried the British nation through thirty years' war, and left it richer than he found it. He died poor, and was buried at the nation's expense. Peel carried the British nation through thirty year's peace, and left it poorer (taking the condition of the people as the test) than he found it. He will die worth millions of money, (for it is presumed he understands the working of his own system) and will be buried amid the execration of the people. Pitt's system was paper money Peel's system gold money."