

Our Young Authors — Melville
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"By the bye!" cried the General, in a loud voice, and leaning forward to his friends upon the piazza.

It was too late. The chaise was cutting round the corner.

Or it was Pyne Knott, who was in indifferent health, and would as soon buy a lot in Newfoundland as Newport—who wondered at the wild prices men paid for land, and especially how they could consent to pay an immense percentage to an agent. It was Pyne Knott who pshawed and pished, and wished people wouldn't make fools of themselves. The next day I saw him whisking along in the chaise, while F. M. waved his baton over him, in sign of subjugation.

You could as easily resist a fog as that chaise. It would surely encompass you. If you staid at the Bellevue, you were no better than a miserable prisoner of the Conciergerie, before whose door, with fatal regularity, the charette daily appeared, and the headsman cried, "the next batch."

The chaise was like the guillotine. Men tremblingly ate their breakfasts, momentarily expecting the summons; and after breakfast, it was always waiting—that horrible mockery of polished leather and green curtains!

Presently the mystery was explained. *No one was ever let out of the chaise until he had bought land!* F. M. Mr. Jones was an L. A. He was a land agent, and his baton was a map of the island. Mot sickened at the thought. He was sure that his name was written against some lot, in which case, Chaise, Jones, and map, would be brought to bear upon him, until he succumbed and purchased.

"Blast the chaise!" cried Mot, energetically.

Within a week I saw Jones putting him into it, hat and all. He waved his hand at me, feebly. The old hat had evidently suffered from a fresh jaundice, and hung heavily, like weepers, around his head. They drove rapidly away. Sad stories were told of Mot, that day.

He had been seen eating sponge-cake an hour before dinner—he had been posing to the "Daguerrean artist," half-nude, as the Dying Gladiator—he had professed willingness to buy a new hat!

"It's very strange," said I.

"Not at all," said J.; "he's had an attack of the chaise."

When, therefore, I saw the chaise, all the summer came driving back to me in it.

Why spin out my story? I went to Newport to find the winter, and surprised May lingering upon the island.

The afternoon I left, I wandered along the cliffs, and met an old fisherman, a friend of the past summer, sitting solitary upon the bass-rocks, and looking idly over the sea. After a surprised greeting upon his part, I told him that he was looking as if he expected to see the opposite shore of the ocean.

"No," said the old fisher; "I was only thinking of a story I read long ago—for I, too, have read books, though I've given it up for many years—of an island lying far to the north, and inhabited only by seals and white bears. Once every year, said the tradition, swarms of peacocks, buzzards, and birds of Paradise, find their way thither, and monopolize the island, so that for a month no seal nor bear is visible—nothing but a great fluttering and buzzing of these winged strangers. Suddenly they fly as mysteriously as they came, and totally disappear, leaving the quiet island to the contemplative bears and seals, who inhabit it throughout the year, who are adapted to its life by their organization, and whose history is the history of the island.

"It is a very remarkable fact in natural history, concludes the tradition, that the peacocks, buzzards, and birds of Paradise, conceive that their fluttering month gives the chief interest to the island."

"It is very singular," said I, to the old fisher.

"It is very true," said the old fisher to me, as I walked away.

OUR YOUNG AUTHORS—MELVILLE.

WHEN Typee first appeared, great was the enthusiasm. The oddity of the name set critics a wondering. Reviewers who were in the habit of writing an elaborate review of a work, from merely glancing over the heads of the chapters,

and thinking a little over the title-page, were completely at fault. TYPEE told nothing. It had no antecedents. It might have been an animal, or it might have been a new game, or it might have been a treatise on magic. Did they open the

and we sit for an instant a stride of Death's balance. Weight, unutterable weight presses upon our shoulders, and we seem as if about to be crushed into nothingness. Then a sudden change. A revulsion which is accompanied with soft, low music; and we float upwards. We seem gliding through an oiled ocean, so smoothly do we pass. It breaks, it parts above our head. The next moment we shoot out from a cloud of feathers, and are battling with the waves.

In *Redburn*, we find an account of the death of a sailor, by spontaneous combustion. Well described, poetically described, fraught with none of the revolting scenery which it is so easy to gather round such an end. In the last number of *Bleak House*, Mr. Dickens has attempted the same thing. He has also performed what he attempted. But, if ever man deserved public prosecution for his writing, he does, for this single passage. A hospital student could not read it without sickening. A ghoul, who had lived all his days upon the festering corruption of the grave-yard, could have written nothing more hideously revolting than the death of Krook. It is as loathsome to read it as to enter one of the charnels in London city. We do not believe that a woman of sensitive nerves could take it up without fainting over the details. For ourselves, we fling the book away, with an anathema on the author that we should be sorry for him to hear.

Mr. Melville does not improve with time. His later books are a decided falling off, and his last scarcely deserves naming; this however we scarce believe to be an indication of exhaustion. Keats says beautifully in his preface to *Endymion*, that "The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy, but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted."

Just at present we believe the author of *Pierre* to be in this state of ferment. *Typee*, his first book, was healthy; *Omoo* nearly so; after that came *Mardi*, with its excusable wildness; then came *Moby Dick*, and *Pierre* with its inexcusable insanity. We trust that these rhapsodies will end the interregnum of nonsense to which Keats refers, as forming a portion of every man's life; and that Mr. Melville will write less at random and more at leisure, than of late. Of his last book we would fain not speak, did we not feel that he is just now at that stage of author-life when a little wholesome advice may save him a hundred future follies. When first we read *Pierre*, we felt a strong inclina-

tion to believe the whole thing to be a well-got-up hoax. We remembered having read a novel in six volumes once of the same order, called "The Abbess," in which the stilted style of writing is exposed very funnily; and, as a specimen of unparalleled bombast, we believed it to be unequalled until we met with *Pierre*. In *Mardi* there is a strong vein of vague, morphinized poetry, running through the whole book. We do not know what it means from the beginning to the end, but we do not want to know, and accept it as a rhapsody. *Babbalanja* philosophizing drowsily, or the luxurious sybaritical King *Media*, lazily listening to the hum of waters, are all shrouded dimly in opiate-fumes, and dream-clouds, and we love them only as sensual shadows. Whatever they say or do; whether they sail in a golden boat, or eat silver fruits, or make pies of emeralds and rubies, or any thing else equally ridiculous, we feel perfectly satisfied that it is all right, because there is no claim made upon our practical belief. But if Mr. Melville had placed *Babbalanja* and *Media* and *Yoomy* in the Fifth Avenue, instead of a longitude and latitude less inland; if we met them in theatres instead of palm groves, and heard *Babbalanja* lecturing before the Historical Society instead of his dreamy islanders, we should feel naturally rather indignant at such a tax upon our credulity. We would feel inclined to say with the Orientals, that Mr. Melville had been laughing at our beards, and Pacha-like condemn on the instant to a literary bastinado. Now *Pierre* has all the madness of *Mardi*, without its vague, dreamy, poetic charm. All Mr. Melville's many affectations of style and thought are here crowded together in a mad mosaic. Talk of Rabelais's word-nonsense! there was always something queer, and odd, and funny, gleaming through his unintelligibility. But *Pierre* transcends all the nonsense-writing that the world ever beheld.

Thought staggers through each page like one poisoned. Language is drunken and reeling. Style is antipodal, and marches on its head. Then the moral is bad. Conceal it how you will, a revolting picture presents itself. A wretched, cowardly boy for a hero, who, from some feeling of mad romance, together with a mass of inexplicable reasons which, probably, the author alone fathoms, chooses to live in poverty with his illegitimate sister, whom he passes off to the world as his wife, instead of being respectably married to a legitimate cousin. Everybody is vicious in some way or other. The mother is vicious with pride. *Isabel* has a cancer of morbid, vicious, minerva-

saying that the philosophical parts are the worst. We do not for a moment pretend to say that we understand the system laid down by the author. Whether there be a system in it at all, is at least somewhat problematical, but when Mr. Melville does condescend to be intelligible, what he has to say for himself in the way of philosophy, is so exceedingly stale and trite, that it would be more in place in a school-boy's copy-book, than in a romance otherwise distinguished for splendor of imagery, and richness of diction. The descriptive painting in this wild book is gorgeous and fantastic in the extreme. It is a tapestry of dreams, worked with silken threads, dyed in the ocean of an Eastern sunset. Nothing however strange startles us as we float onwards through this misty panorama. King Media looms out from the canvas, an antique gentleman full of drowsy courtesy. Babbalanja philosophizes over his calabash, or relates the shadowy adventures of shadows in the land of shades. From out the woods, canopied with flowers, that let the daylight in only through courtesy, comes Donjalolo, the Southern Sardanapalus. Women droop over his pale enervate figure, and strive to light its exhausted fires with their burning eyes. He looks up lazily, and opens his small, red mouth to catch a drop of honey that is trembling in the core of some over-hanging flower. Fatigued with this exertion, he sinks back with a sigh into the soft arms interlaced behind. Then comes Hautia, Queen of spells that lie in lilies, and mistress of the music of feet. Around her float flushing nymphs, who love through endless dances, and die in the ecstasy of mingled motion. While far behind, throned in mist, and with one foot dabbling in the great ocean of the Future, stands the lost Yillah; problem of beauty to which there is no solution save through death.

All these characters flit before us in Mardi, and bring with them no consciousness of their unreality and deception. As shadows they come to us, but they are sensual shades. Their joys thrill through us. When they banquet in drowsy splendor—when they wander upon beaches of pearls and rubies—when they wreath their brows with blossoms more fragrant and luscious than the buds that grow in Paradise, our senses twine with theirs, and we forget every thing, save the vision of their gorgeous pleasures. It is this sensual power that holds the secret of Mr. Melville's first successes. No matter how unreal the scenery, if the pleasure be but truly painted, the world will cry "bravo!" We draw pictures of Gods and Goddesses, and hang them on our

walls, but we take good care to let their divinity be but nominal. Diana, Juno, Venus, are they known, but they loom out from the canvas, substantial, unadulterated women. Seldom does there live an Ixion who loves to embrace clouds. Call it a cloud if you will, and if it have the appearance of flesh and blood, the adorer will be satisfied. But we doubt if there is to be found any man enthusiast enough to clasp a vapor to his heart, be it schirri-shaped or cumulous, and baptized with the sweetest name ever breathed from the Attic tongue. Mr. Melville therefore deals in vapors, but he twines around them so cunningly all human attributes, and pranks them out so lusciously with all the witcheries of sense, that we forget their shadowy nomenclatures, and worship the substantial incarnation.

It must not be imagined from this, that Mr. Melville is incapable of dealing with the events of more matter-of-fact life. He is averse to it, no doubt, and if we may judge by *Pierre*, is becoming more averse to it as he grows older. But he sometimes takes the vulgar monster by the shoulders and wields it finely. In *Omoo*, which by the way contains some exceedingly fine passages, occurs the following account of the attempt of a South sea savage named Bembo to run the ship ashore on a coral reef, because he had been insulted by one of the ship's crew is very graphic.

"Having remained upon deck with the doctor some time after the rest had gone below, I was just on the point of following him down, when I saw the Mowree (Bembo) rise, draw a bucket of water, and holding it high above his head pour it right over him. This he repeated several times. There was nothing very peculiar in the act, but something else about him struck me. However I thought no more of it, but descended the scuttle. After a restless nap, I found the atmosphere of the fore-castle so close, from nearly all the men being down at the same time, that I hunted up an old pea-jacket and went on deck, intending to sleep it out there till morning. Here I found the cook and steward, Wymontoo, Rope Yarn, and the Dane; who, being all quiet, manageable fellows, and holding aloof from the rest since the captain's departure, had been ordered by the mate not to go below until sunrise. They were lying under the lee of the bulwarks; two or three fast asleep, and the others smoking their pipes, and conversing.

"To my surprise, Bembo was at the helm; but there being so few to stand there now, they told me, he had offered to take his turn with the rest, at the same time heading the watch; and to this, of course, they made no objection.

It was over one hundred feet that I fell,—down, down,—with lungs collapsed as in death. Ten thousand pounds of shot seemed tied to my head, as the irresistible law of gravitation dragged me head-foremost and straight as a die toward the infallible centre of this terraqueous globe. All I had seen, and read, and heard, and all I had thought or felt in my life, seemed intensified in one fixed idea in my soul. But dense as this idea was, it was made up of atoms. Having fallen from the projecting yard-arm end, I was conscious of a collected satisfaction in feeling that I should not be dashed on the deck, but would sink into the speechless profound of the sea.

"With the bloody, blind film before my eyes, there was still a strange hum in my head, as if a hornet were there; and I thought to myself, Great God! this is Death! yet these thoughts were unmingled with alarm. Like frost-work, that flashes and shifts its scared hues in the sun, all my braided, blended emotions were in themselves icy, cold and calm.

"So protracted did my fall seem, that I can even now recall the feeling of wondering how much longer it would be ere all was over and it struck. Time seemed to stand still, and all the world seemed poised on their poles, as I fell, soul-becalmed, through the eddying whirl and swirl of the Maelstrom air.

"At first, as I have said, I must have been precipitated head-foremost; but I was conscious, at length, of a swift, flinging motion of my limbs, which involuntarily threw themselves out, so that at least I must have fallen in a heap.

"This is more likely, from the circumstance that when I struck the sea, I felt as if some one had smote me slantingly across the shoulder, and along part of my right side.

"As I gushed into the sea, a thunder-boom sounded in my ear; my soul seemed flying from my mouth. The feeling of death flooded over me with the billows. The blow from the sea must have turned me, so that I sank almost feet foremost through a soft, seething, foamy lull. Some current seemed hurrying me away; in a trance I yielded, and sank deeper down with a glide. Purple and pathless was the deep calm now around me, flecked by summer lightnings in an azure afar. The horrible nausea was gone; the bloody, blind film turned a pale green; I wondered whether I was dead, or still dying. But of a sudden some fashionless form brushed my side—some inert, coiled fish of the sea; the thrill of being alive again tingled in my nerves, and the strong stunning of death shocked me through.

"For one instant an agonizing revulsion came over me as I found myself utterly sinking. Next moment the force of my fall was expended; and there I hung, vibrating in the mid deep. What wild sounds then rang in my ear! one was a soft moaning, as of low waves on the beach; the other wild and

heartlessly jubilant, as of a sea in the height of a tempest. Oh, soul! thou then hearest life and death; as he who stands upon the Corinthian shore hears both the Ionian and the Ægean waves, the life and-death poise soon passed, and then I found myself slowly ascending, and caught a dim glimmering of light.

"Quicker and quicker I mounted: till at last I bounded up like a buoy, and my whole head was bathed in the blessed air.

"I had fallen in a line with the mainmast; I now found myself nearly abreast of the mizzen-mast, the frigate slowly gliding by like a black world in the water. Her vast hull loomed out of the night, showing hundreds of seamen in the hammock nettings; some tossing over ropes, others madly flinging overboard the hammocks; but I was too far out from them immediately to reach what they threw. I essayed to swim toward the ship, but I was instantly conscious of a feeling like being pinioned in a feather-bed, and, moving my hands, felt my jacket puffed out above my tight girdle with water. I strove to tear it off, but it was looped together here and there, and the strings were not to be sundered by hand. I whipped out my knife, that was tucked at my belt, and ripped my jacket straight up and down, as if I were ripping open myself. With a violent struggle I then burst out of it and was free. Heavily soaked, it slowly sank before my eyes.

"Sink! sink! thought I; sink for ever! accursed jacket that thou art!

"See that white shark!" cried a horrified voice from the taffrail, 'he'll have that man down his hatchway! quick! the *grains!* the *grains!*'

"The next instant that barbed bunch of harpoons pierced through and through the unfortunate jacket, and swiftly sped down with it out of sight.

"Being now astern of the frigate, I struck out boldly toward the elevated pole of one of the life-buoys which had been cut away. Soon after one of the cutters picked me up. As they dragged me out of the water into the air, the sudden transition of elements made my every limb feel like lead, and I helplessly sunk into the bottom of the boat.

"Ten minutes after I was safe on board, and springing aloft, was ordered to reeve anew the stun-sail-halyards, which, slipping through the blocks when I had let go the end, had unrove and fallen to the deck.

"The sail was soon set; and, as if purposely to salute it, a gentle breeze soon came, and the 'Never Sink' once more glided over the water, a soft ripple at her bows, and leaving a tranquil wake behind."

This is fine. We have often met with descriptions, some well painted enough, of dizzy aerial adventures, but never one like this. Our ears tingle as we read it. The air surges around us as we fall from that fearful height. The sea divides, the green mist flashes into a thousand hues,

"It was a fine, bright night; all moon, and stars, and white crests of waves. The breeze was light, but freshening; and close-hauled, poor little Jule, as if nothing had happened, was heading in for the land, which rose high and hazy in the distance.

"After the day's uproar, the tranquillity of the scene was soothing, and I leaned over the side to enjoy it.

"More than ever did I now lament my situation—but it was useless to repine, and I could not upbraid myself. So at last, becoming drowsy, I made a bed with my jacket under the windlass, and tried to forget myself.

"How long I laid there, I cannot tell; but as I rose, the first object that met my eye, was Bembo at the helm, his dark figure slowly rising and falling with the ship's motion against the spangled heavens behind. He seemed all impatience and expectation; standing at arm's length from the spokes, with one foot advanced, and his bare head thrust forward. Where I was, the watch were out of sight; and no one else was stirring; the deserted decks and broad white sails were gleaming in the moonlight.

"Presently, a swelling, dashing sound came upon my ear, and I had a sort of vague consciousness that I had been hearing it before. The next instant I was broad awake and on my feet. Right ahead, and so near that my heart stood still, was a long line of breakers, heaving and frothing. It was the coral reef, girdling the island. Behind it, and almost casting their shadows upon the deck, were the sleeping mountains, about whose hazy peaks the gray dawn was just breaking. The breeze had freshened, and with a steady, gliding motion, we were running straight for the reef.

"All was taken in at a glance; the fell purpose of Bembo was obvious, and with a frenzied shout to wake the watch, I rushed aft. They sprang to their feet bewildered; and after a short, but desperate scuffle, we tore him from the helm. In wrestling with him, the wheel—left for a moment unguarded—flew to leeward, thus, fortunately, bringing the ship's head to the wind, and so retarding her progress. Previous to this, she had been kept three or four points free, so as to close with the breakers. Her headway now shortened, I steadied the helm, keeping the sails just lifting, while we glided obliquely toward the land. To have run off before the wind—an easy thing—would have been almost certain destruction, owing to a curve of the reef in that direction. At this time, the Dane and the steward were still struggling with the furious Mowree, and the others were running about irresolute and shouting.

"But darting forward the instant I had the helm, the old cook thundered on the fore-castle with a handspike, 'Breakers! breakers close aboard!—bout ship! 'bout ship!'

"Up came the sailors, staring about them in stupid horror. 'Haul back the head-yards!' 'Let go the lee fore-brace?' 'Ready

about! about!' were now shouted on all sides; while distracted by a thousand orders, they ran hither and thither, fairly panic-stricken.

"It seemed all over with us; and I was just upon the point of throwing the ship full into the wind (a step, which saving us for the instant, would have sealed our fate in the end), when a sharp cry shot by my ear like the flight of an arrow.

"It was Salem: 'All ready for'ard; hard down!'

Round and round went the spokes—the Julia, with her short keel, spinning to windward like a top. Soon the jib-sheets lashed the stays, and the men, more self-possessed, flew to the braces.

"Main-sail haul!" was now heard, as the fresh breeze streamed fore and aft the deck; and directly the after-yards were whirled round.

"In half a minute more, we were sailing away from the land on the other tack, with every sail distended.

"Turning on our heel within little more than a biscuit's toss of the reef, no earthly power could have saved us, were it not that, up to the very brink of the coral rampart, there are no soundings.

"The purpose of Bembo had been made known to the men generally by the watch; and now that our salvation was certain, by an instinctive impulse they raised a cry, and rushed toward him.

"Just before liberated by Dunk and the steward, he was standing doggedly by the mizen-mast; and, as the infuriated sailors came on, his bloodshot eye rolled and his sheath-knife glittered over his head. 'Down with him!' 'Strike him down!' 'Hang him at the mainyard!' such were the shouts now raised. But he stood unmoved, and, for a single instant, they absolutely faltered.

"'Cowards!' cried Salem, and he flung himself upon him. The steel descended like a ray of light; but did no harm; for the sailor's heart was beating against the Mowree's before he was aware.

"They both fell to the deck, when the knife was instantly seized, and Bembo secured. 'For'ard! for'ard with him!' was again the cry; 'give him a sea-toss!' 'over-board with him!' and he was dragged along the deck, struggling and fighting with tooth and nail.

"All this uproar immediately over the mate's head at last roused him from his drunken nap, and he came staggering on deck.

"'What's this?' he shouted, running right in among them.

"'It's the Mowree, zur; they are going to murder him, zur;' here sobbed poor Rope Yarn, crawling close up to him.

"'Avast! avast!' roared Jermin, making a spring toward Bembo, and dashing two or three of the sailors aside. At this moment the wretch was partly flung over the bulwarks, which shook with his frantic strug-

on their faces prostrate before what they believe to be the terrible Simoom. Still onward, onward! We have outrun our very breath, and left it miles behind, and, no longer panting, we race onward, unearthly calm. Every now and then we come to an oasis. Ho! pull up, good steed, and drink. We stop. Soft steals the moist fountain-wind through the tall, still palm-trees; tenderly the rich green grass sinks and rises as we tread. Coolly, freshly, diamonily, the desert-spring wells out and cools our parching lips. But waste not time. Again in saddle; again speeding along the desert we know not whither. A wide black gulf, deep and edgeless, bars our path. What! coward steed! Dost thou think to stop and tremble? No, not even if it were the gulf of Death, shored with dismal banks of night. On, on! Strike the stirrup-spurs deep into the flanks! lift the heavy golden bridle! Smite, smite heavily with the elastic lance-shaft! The quivering, frightened steed paws, and rears, and bounds. Down, down we sink through yielding air. Clouds, shapeless, formless clouds, fly up as we fly down. And the ocean that sounds below lifts up its billowy arms to receive us. Moonbeams cover the sea with a silver shroud. Caves murmur. Spirits float midway between the waves and heaven. We, steed and all, sail grandly onwards like an ocean centaur. But it is not always calm. Hoarse syllables of storm mutter in the North, and waves rise angrily to answer them.

What shall we do, with weary desert steed against the legion of winds?

Scatter them with our lance?

Out-blow them with a breath, and burst their lungs?

All vain! They are too strong. They pour upon us from every side. The star Arcturus frowns red disaster from the sky. If we seek not harbor we are lost. A golden hope looms upon us from the distance! Let us fly. Now desert-steed, paw the waves as once thou didst the sand. O'erleap the fencing billows, and make for that white spot that looms distantly. The winds gallop fast behind, and will smite us unseen. The sea-gulls ride before, like stewards of the airy course, to clear the way. The desert-steed strains every nerve, wave after wave clears he, and paws onward to the white island that is to be our Salvator. We near it just as the tempest scents us, and bays upon our track.

But what is this we see?

No island, no sheltering harbor, no white fortress to defend the fugitive:

But a great, white, world-wide placard,

with these words traced upon its surface:

M A R D I
AND
A VOYAGE THITHER.
BY HERMAN MELVILLE.

A greater difference could hardly exist between two men than between Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Melville, albeit we have chosen to link them together in our chain. Mitchell writes essentially from the heart. He is continually gazing inward, picking up what he finds there, and displaying it with a childlike, innocent pleasure to the world. From forms, and forms alone does Melville take his text. He looks out of himself, and takes a rich outline view of what he sees. He is essentially exoteric in feeling. Matter is his god. His dreams are material. His philosophy is sensual. Beautiful women, shadowy lakes, nodding, plummy trees, and succulent banquets, make Melville's scenery, unless his theme utterly preclude all such. His language is rich and heavy, with a plating of imagery. He has a barbaric love of ornament, and does not mind much how it is put on. Swept away by this sensual longing, he frequently writes at random. One can see that he uses certain words only because they roll off the pen lusciously and roundly, just as a child, who is entirely the sport of sense, grasps at the largest apple. In *Mardi* is this peculiarly obvious. A long experience of the South sea islanders has no doubt induced this. The languages of these groups are singularly mellifluous and resonant, vowels enter largely into the composition of every word, and dissyllabled words are rare. Mr. Melville has been attracted by this. Whenever he can use a word of four syllables where a monosyllable would answer just as well, he chooses the former. A certain fulness of style is very attractive. Sir Thomas Browne, from whom Mr. Melville copies much that is good, is a great friend of magnificent diction. And his tract on urn burial is as lofty and poetical as if Memnon's statue chanted it, when the setting sun fell aslant across the Pyramids. But we find no nonsense in Sir Thomas. In every thing he says there is a deep meaning, although sometimes an erroneous one. We cannot always say as much for Mr. Melville. In his latest work he transcended even the jargon of Paracelsus and his followers. The Rosetta stone gave up its secret, but we believe that to the end of time Pierre will remain an ambiguity.

Mardi, we believe, is intended to embody all the philosophy of which Mr. Melville is capable, and we have no hesitation in

pater-familias at *écarte*. Would that the world could be Typee-ized. Would that we could strip every vain pretender of the plumage that chance has given him, and turn him out upon the world with nothing to clothe him save his own merits. How your vulgar Argus, with a million of dollars on his tail, would find his level in Typee. The friends of the Grand Duke of Fiddeldedeestein, would not rise an inch higher in Mehevi's estimation for having known the ducal swindler, and then—then what do you say to the inexpressible, almost unimaginable, never-to-be-realized delight of paying off your tailor's bill for the last time, in cowrie-shells and Tappa!

In this primitive valley of Typee we meet with Fayaway. Charming, smooth-skinned siren, around whose sun-browned form the waves lap and dimple, like the longing touches of a lover's fingers. What luxury untold it must have been to live with thee beneath the shady places of Typee. To dance with thee in the moonlight in front of the deep-caved hut; to hunt with thee for strange flowers in the deep, silent woods, or sail with thee on the lake when the sunset painted our tappa sail with finer hues than the work of Gobelins. How Tom could ever have left thee, surpasseth human understanding. Left thee, graceful, artless child of the forest and the stream, to dwell among civilized women—dancing machines; flirting machines, built of whalebone and painted red.

And sadly we leave Fayaway lamenting her white lover.

White Jacket is a pure sea-book, but very clever. It is a clear, quiet picture of life on board of a man-of-war. It has less of Mr. Melville's faults than almost any of his works, and is distinguished for clear, wholesome satire, and a manly style. There is a scene describing the amputation of a sailor's leg by a brutal, cold-blooded surgeon, Patella, that Smollett might have painted. We would gladly quote it, but that it rather exceeds the limits usually afforded in an article so short as ours.

There is one chapter in which the hero details the loss of the White Jacket, from wearing which, he and the book take their name, that strikes us as a very fine piece of descriptive writing. We give it entire.

"Already has White Jacket chronicled the mishaps and inconveniences, troubles and tribulations of all sorts brought upon him by that unfortunate but indispensable garment of his. But now it befalls him to record how his jacket, for the second and last time, came near proving his shroud.

"Of a pleasant midnight, our good frigate, now somewhere off the Capes of Virginia, was running on bravely, when the breeze, gradually dying, left us slowly gliding towards our still invisible port.

"Headed by Jack Chase, the quarter-watch was reclining in the tops, talking about the shore delights into which they intended to plunge, while our captain often broke in with allusions to similar conversations when he was on board the English line-of-battle-ship, the 'Asia,' drawing nigh to Portsmouth, in England, after the battle of Navarino.

"Suddenly an order was given to set the main-topgallant-stun'-sail, and the halyards not being rove, Jack Chase assigned to me that duty. Now this reeving of the halyards of a main-topgallant-stun'-sail is a business that eminently demands sharp-sightedness, skill and celerity.

"Consider that the end of a line, some two hundred feet long, is to be carried aloft, in your teeth if you please, and dropped far out on the giddiest of yards, and after being wormed and twisted about through all sorts of intricacies—turning abrupt corners at the abruptest of angles—is to be dropped, clear of all obstructions, in a straight plumb line, right down to the deck. In the course of this business, there is a multitude of sheave-holes and kocks through which you must pass it; often the rope is a very tight fit, so as to make it like threading a fine cambric needle with rather coarse thread. Indeed, it is a thing only to be deftly done even by day. Judge then what it must be to be threading cambric needles upward of a hundred feet aloft in air.

"With the end of the line in one hand, I was mounting the top-mast shrouds, when our Captain of the Top told me that I had better off jacket; but though it was not a very cold night, I had been reclining so long in the tops that I had become somewhat chilly, so I thought it best not to comply with the hint.

"Having reeved the line through all the inferior blocks, I went out with it to the end of the weather-topgallant-yard-arm, and was in the act of leaning over and passing it through the suspended jewel-block there, when the ship gave a plunge in the sudden swells of the calm sea, and, pitching me still further over the yard, threw the heavy skirts of my jacket right over my head, completely muffling me. Somehow I thought it was the sail that had flapped, and, under that impression, threw up my hands to drag it from my head, relying upon the sail itself to support me meanwhile. Just then the ship gave another sudden jerk, and, head-foremost, I pitched from the yard. I knew where I was from the rush of the air by my ears, but all else was a nightmare.

"A bloody film was before my eye, through which, ghost-like, passed and repassed my father, mother, sisters. An unutterable nausea oppressed me; I was conscious of gasping; there seemed no breath in my body.

gles. In vain the doctor and others tried to save him; the men listened to nothing.

"Murder and mutiny, by the salt sea!" shouted the mate; and dashing his arms right and left, he planted his iron hand upon the Mowree's shoulder.

"There are two of us now; and as you serve him, you serve me," he cried, turning fiercely round.

"Over with them together, then," exclaimed the carpenter, springing forward; but the rest fell back before the courageous front of Jermin, and, with the speed of thought, Bembo, unharmed, stood upon deck. "Aft with ye!" cried his deliverer; and he pushed him right among the men, taking care to follow him up close. Giving the sailors no time to recover, he pushed the Mowree before him, they came to the cabin scuttle, when he drew the slide over him and stood still. Throughout, Bembo never spoke one word.

"Now for'ard where ye belong!" cried the mate, addressing the seamen, who by this time rallying again, had no idea of losing their victim.

"The Mowree! the Mowree!" they shouted. Here the doctor, in answer to the mate's repeated questions, stepped forward, and related what Bembo had been doing; a matter which the mate but dimly understood from the violent threatenings he had been hearing.

"For a moment he seemed to waver; but, at last, turning the key in the padlock of the slide, he breathed through his set teeth—"Ye can't have him; I'll hand him over to the consul; so for'ard with ye, I say; when there's any drowning to be done, I'll pass the word; so away with ye, ye bloodthirsty pirates!"

"It was to no purpose that they begged or threatened; Jermin, although by no means sober, stood his ground manfully, and before long they dispersed, soon to forget every thing that had happened.

"Though we had no opportunity to hear him confess it, Bembo's intention to destroy us was beyond all question. His only motive could have been a desire to revenge the contumely heaped upon him the night previous, operating upon a heart irreclaimably savage, and at no time fraternally disposed toward the crew.

"During the whole of this scene the doctor did his best to save him. But well knowing that all I could do, would have been equally useless, I maintained my place at the wheel. Indeed, no one but Jermin could have prevented this murder."

Typee, the first and most successful of Mr. Melville's books, commands attention for the clearness of its narrative, the novelty of its scenery, and the simplicity of its style, in which latter feature it is a wondrous contrast to *Mardi*, *Moby Dick*, and *Pierre*. The story of Typee is plain enough. The hero becomes discontented

with his ship, while among the Marquesas islands, and comes to the determination of effecting his escape. This he does in company with Toby, a fellow-sailor, a rough, jolly mortal, who grumbles and enjoys himself all the time, as most grumblers do. The island on which they effect their escape is divided into two great clans, who each occupy a valley, and between whom a deadly enmity exists. These are the Typees and the Happers. Like our own Christian sects they are not given to speaking well of each other. The Happers call the Typees cannibals, and the Typees vow that the amount of babies consumed annually in Happer is quite incredible. Tom and Toby fall into the hands of the Typees, where their position is very precarious, until Tom discovers that the way to their affections is to abuse the Happers. He accordingly launches out against this unfortunate race, of whom he knows nothing, and is in consequence treated with the utmost courtesy and affection by their foes. In this valley of savages, where the flowers and the women are beautiful beyond conception, Tom and Toby pass their days pleasantly. Swimming in the clear lakes with Typee girls, who cleave the water like dolphins; feasting in sacred temples off of sucking pig, lolling beneath the bread-fruit trees with Fayaway, or making "Tappa" with the housekeepers and matrons, they spend as agreeable a life as ever town-imprisoned merchant's clerk sighed for. In Typee there were no debts, consequently no duns. The charming inhabitants dispensed with all clothing, and tailors were unknown. No detestable bills to mar one's new year's pleasures with items of "seven fancy vests, \$85; three coats, \$120; gloves, ties, &c., &c., &c., &c., \$200." Tom had no hotel bill to pay. A piece of Tappa, or a quid of tobacco was current coin, and if the girls of the valley got up a ball, there was no subscription list, no lady patronesses, and no enmities gathering out of rejected applications for tickets.

It does not appear either that there were any "sets," or *cliques* in Typee. Mr. Melville does not mention that they had their Fifth Avenue, or their Bleecker Rubicon. Society was not divided into petty circles, each revolving round some insignificant centre, and fancying themselves the central sun of the universe of fashion. Typee ladies did not receive their visitors in drawing-rooms resplendent with gilt vulgarity, and if they had ever been so fortunate as to travel, we doubt if they would have talked one down with the Grand Duke of Fiddeldedeestein "whom they met at Baden-Baden," and who—let it be whispered *sub-rosa*—cheated the

press-romance, eating into her heart. Lucy Tartan is viciously humble, and licks the dust beneath Pierre's feet viciously. Delly Ulver is humanly vicious, and in the rest of the book, whatever of vice is wanting in the remaining characters, is made up by superabundant vicissitudes of style.

Let Mr. Melville stay his step in time.

He totters on the edge of a precipice, over which all his hard-earned fame may tumble with such another weight as Pierre attached to it. He has peculiar talents, which may be turned to rare advantage. Let him diet himself for a year or two on Addison, and avoid Sir Thomas Browne, and there is little doubt but that he will make a notch on the American Pine.

FROM VENICE TO VIENNA.

"It is time to get up," shouted Bison, my western friend, shaking me vigorously by the shoulders, as I snored under the sheets of the *Albergo Reale* at Venice. "But why get up?" muttered I, rubbing my eyes which had only an hour or two before closed upon the brilliant promenades of the *piazza* of St. Mark. But I sprang out of bed and made the matutinal ablutions by lamp-light, without waiting for his reply.

Bison was in full rig, with a mackintosh and Kossuth hat, and an immense pair of boots. "The Archie duco Frederico," said he, "sails at four o'clock, and it now wants five minutes."

We were soon in the gondola pushing towards the steamer, which stood champing its bits and pawing the water, half-way over towards the Lido.

It was a raw drizzly morning,—though there had been nothing but sunshine in Venice for more than a month. As the passengers came on board, they looked blue and dismal, and a steam of unsavory vapors curled out of their overcoats.

"Ugh! what shocking nasty weather!" exclaimed an Englishman, addressing no one in particular, and shaking his bear-skin like a poodle who had just emerged from a duck-pond.

"Very," remarked Bison, disposed to scrape an acquaintance, at the same time taking out a segar, nine inches long, and black as a stick of liquorice, which he had purchased in the Estates of the Church, with no probable prospect of smoking it, but as a kind of distant memento of the native American weed.

As for myself, I spread my paletot in the cabin, and slept profoundly—one, two, three hours, when the waiters removed me for breakfast.

In the meantime the clouds had cleared away, and a day like the first dawn in Paradise, shimmered far and wide over the blue waters of the Adriatic. Venice, with its islands and palaces, was still in sight. It rose dreamily out of the waters, in

green, and golden, and red, like a wavering many-colored exhalation of the morning.

"Heavens!" I ejaculated, emerging from the cabin, and joining Bison and the Englishman, who seemed to be in conversation—"how beautiful is this!"

"A fairy scene, sir," remarked John, with a positive emphasis, as if somebody was going to dispute his opinion, and he was ready to defend it,— "a fairy scene, the nicest in the world."

"Then you have seen the Bay of Naples," I modestly interposed.

Or, continued Bison, "the Bay of New-York, which I hold to be the most glorious ever invented."

"The towering cone of Vesuvius may lend a single superiority to Naples," the Englishman replied in a milder tone, perhaps discovering that we, too, had travelled; "but for my part, these broad lagunes, with their thousand islands, bristling with forts, or laughing in the midst of rich luxuriant gardens—imposing structures rising on every side, and the bright blue skies bending down to the embrace of waters as blue and bright as themselves, have an indescribable enchantment."

"Yes," rejoined I, chiming in, much to the discomfort of Bison, who looked at me with an ill-concealed sneer, as though I were turning traitor to the first duties of patriotism, "New-York or Naples may be grander or fairer than this, but here surely is the very home and cradle of romance. Does it not seem, now, as the slant sun comes up out of the waves, and we wind about among these sparkling islands, each a gem on the bosom of the sea, as if we were leaving some ideal world, and hurrying back to stern and cold realities?"

Bison turned away disgusted; and yet, I had a deeper reason than he saw for that last remark. I was leaving Italy, never perhaps to look upon it again, and my soul, not unmoved by the immediate

book, and look over the chapters, they were not much wiser. Barbarous congregations of syllables, such as Kory-Kory, Nukuheva, Moa Artua, met their eyes. The end of it was, that the whole tribe of London and American critics had to sit down and read it all, before they dared speak of a book filled with such mysterious syllables. From reading they began to like it. There was a great deal of rich, rough talent about it. The scenes were fresh, and highly colored; the habits and manners described had the charm of novelty; and the style, though not the purest or most elegant, had a fine narrative facility about it, that rendered it very pleasurable reading, after the maudlin journeys in Greece—travels in the Holy Land, full of Biblical raptures, and yacht-tours in the Mediterranean, where monotonous sea-dinners and vulgar shore-pleasures were faithfully chronicled, with such like trash that had been inundating the literary market for years previous. Typee was successful. It could scarcely be otherwise. Prosy to the last degree, in some portions, there yet were scenes in it full of exquisite description, and novel characters, who, like Fayaway, were in themselves so graceful, that we could not help loving them. Mr. Melville found that he had opened a fertile field, which he was not slow to work. Sea novels had, as it were, been run into the ground by Marryatt, Chamier, and Cooper. People were growing weary of shipwrecks and fires at sea. Every possible incident that could occur, on board men-of-war, privateers, and prizes, had been described over and over again, with an ability that left nothing to be desired. The whole of a sailor's life was laid bare to us. We knew exactly what they ate, what they drank, and at what hours they ate and drank it. Their language, their loves, their grievances, and their mutinies, were as familiar as the death of Cock Robin. Even staid, sober, land-lubbering people, who got sea-sick crossing in a Brooklyn ferry-boat, began to know the names of ropes and spars, and imagined no longer that a "scupper" was one of the sails. Mr. Melville came forward with his books, to relieve this state of well informed dulness. By a happy mixture of fresh land scenery, with some clever ship-life, he produced a brilliant amalgam, that was loudly welcomed by the public. Who does not relish Dr. Long-ghost all the better, for leaving the Julia, albeit prisoner-wise, and going ashore to that funny Calabooza Beretanee where he has epileptic fits, in order to get a good dinner, and makes a fan out of a paddle, to keep off the mosquitoes. Does not the wild voluptuous dance of the "back-slid-

ing girls," in the Valley of Martair, contrast magnificently with that terrible night off Papeete, when the Mowree tried to run "Little Jule" ashore upon the coral breakers. In this contrast, which abounds in Mr. Melville's books, lies one of his greatest charms. Sea and shore mingling harmoniously together, like music-chords. Now floating on the wide blue southern seas—the sport of calms and hurricanes—the companion of the sullen Bent, the Doctor and Captain Guy. Anon clasping to our bosoms those jaunty, impassioned creatures, yclept Day-born, Night-born, and the Wakeful; or watching Fayaway laving her perfect, shining form in the cool lake, by whose green bank the cocoa sheds its fruit, and the bread-fruit tree towers. All this is delicious, to those who have been playing vulgar midshipman's tricks with Chamier and Marryatt, and comes to us pleasantly even after Cooper's powerful and tender sea-tales.

It is no easy matter to pronounce which of Mr. Melville's books is the best. All of them (and he has published a goodly number, for so young an author) have had their own share of success, and their own peculiar merits, always saving and excepting Pierre—wild, inflated, repulsive that it is.

For us there is something very charming about Mardi, all the time fully aware of its sad defects in taste and style. Of course, we give Mr. Melville every credit for his deliberate plagiarisms of old Sir Thomas Browne's gorgeous and metaphorical manner. Affectation upon affectation is scattered recklessly through its pages. Wild similes, cloudy philosophy, all things turned topsy-turvy, until we seem to feel all earth melting away from beneath our feet, and nothing but Mardi remaining. Reading this wild book, we can imagine ourselves mounted upon some Tartar steed, golden caparisons clank around our person, ostrich plumes of driven whiteness hang over our brow, and cloud our vision with dancing snow. Lance in hand, from which the horse-tail quivers in the wind, we stand beneath the shadow of our desert-tent, dreaming of golden caravans. Suddenly a thirst for motion fills us with uncontrollable desire. Our steed paws the sand, and our lance trembles to its very steel point, in grasp of nervous eagerness. Away, away, along the sandy plain! Clouds of sand, that shize in the sun like gold, are flung up around us. The swift ostrich stares to see us pass it in our headlong flight. Pilgrims, wending Mecca-ward, tremble when they behold the advancing pillar of dust in which we and our steed are shrouded, and fall