

TERMS OF THE "AMERICAN."

H. B. MASSER, PUBLISHERS AND JOSEPH EISELY, PROPRIETORS.

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From Graham's Magazine for January. "There is no God!"

BY CHARLOTTE CUDMAN.

"There is no God!"—the sceptic scoffing said—

"There is no power that dwells on earth or sky!"

Remove the veil that folds the doubter's head,

That God may burst upon his opened eye!

Is there no God?—You stars above arrayed,

If he look there, the blasphemy deny,

Whilst his own features in mirror read,

Reflect the image of Divinity.

Is there no God?—The purple streamlets flow,

The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees,

Bright flowers, green fields, the winds that round him blow,

All speak of God—all prove that His decrees

Have placed them, where they may His being show:

Blind to thyself, behold Him, MAN, in these.

Love and Conscience.

A SENTIMENTAL STORY.

We had a cousin—height! She's the 'anxious mother' of a half a dozen little cousins now.

Well, she was of form and features as far above

the concentrated charms of all the heroines of

all the novels that ever were or ever will be

written, as Avamanda Malvina Fitz Allen was

superior to Mrs. Jerry Sneak. Her voice was

like the wild warblings of an Arabian harp, as it

fills the zephyrs to their slumber—her eyes,

look not upon the stars, you can't match them

there; and the cunning little gipsy had such a

way of half closing the brilliant orbs, veiling

their dangerous beams, and then with a sudden

start, flashing their death-dealing rays upon you,

that your very heart incontinently felt the

process of combustion—her brow shaded by

her auburn hair was like a hand's breadth of

white cloud and the rich lustre of a southern

sunset—her hands were fitted for nothing but

to sweep the harp's mellow chords, and to be

kissed by a lover—and her feet—oh, how we

adore a pretty foot—Tania, Queen of Fairies,

would have given her most beautiful net shell

chariot just to have seen that perfect feature,

we must call it.

Well, we were in a terrible condition about

that cousin—sometimes we'd call her 'cousin,'

it was so delightful to claim a relationship with

such a perfect creature; and then we wouldn't

call her cousin, for we laid a sort of a trap, that

if she asked, as we hoped she would, why we

used not that cousinly title, we had a very pretty

speech made up to intimate that we desired,

when manhood came to call her by a dearer

name.

But the provoking little mix never seemed

to notice whether we *considered* or not.

She was older than we—and her name was

Eglantina.

One day we were walking in the garden

with the fair one, we determined to divulge

the yet unbroken tale of affection which sur-

charged the heart.

We were in a beautiful walk, fringed with

gooseberry bushes, when, after the most ap-

proved fashion of romance, sinking gracefully

upon one knee, in burning words, we poured

forth our story of eternal love.

Eglantina calmly listened. We thought we

perceived a kind tear dimming her radiant eye—

we rose and stretched out our arms, expect-

ing of course that she would sink upon our

breast, and murmur the gentle confession of re-

ciprocated attachment. Reader, she did no

such thing.

She serenely turned, and pulling a handful of

gooseberries, gravely asked—

"Cousin John, what are these?"

"Gooseberries, my darling Eglantina!" answered

cousin John.

"Eat them," she replied, "gooseberries must be

good for your complexion!"

TAKING A PROFILE.—Early on a very cold

morning, travelling profile cutter called at the

house of a wag, and inquired if he wanted a

profile taken. "Yes," was the reply, "I want

your 'taken from my door.'"

The Sunday Mercury says—"One of our

'poets' arrogates to himself the title of the

Moore of America. As far as his 'poetry' is

concerned, we would be the better satisfied to

find him 'no mere.'"

Beauty in the face of women, and folly in

their hearts, are two worms that fret life and

waste goods.

WELLERISM.—"Here's the banister, but

where is the stairs," as the drunken fellow

said when he felt his way around the bedstead

in the dark.

CONUNDRUMS.

Why is a cat on her hind legs like a water-

fall? Because she is a cat erect (cataract).

Why is a poor man like a seamstress? Be-

cause he makes shifts.

Why is that which never fails like a strong

box? Because it is a certainty (certain tie.)

SUNBURY AMERICAN.

AND SHAMOKIN JOURNAL.

Absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of Republic, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism.—JEFFERSON.

By Masser & Eisely.

Sunbury, Northumberland Co. Pa. Saturday, Dec. 30, 1843.

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AMERICAN DEMOCRACY.

BY LORD BROUGHAM.

It is impossible to close the page of history which records the foundation of the Great Republic, without adverting to the singular change that seems of late years to have come over some friends of liberty in this country, inclining them against the popular institutions which that system consecrates, and upon which it reposes.

Writers of ability, but scantily endowed with candor, observers of moderate circumspection, men laboring under the prejudices of European society, and viewing the social system of the New World through the medium of habits and associations peculiar to that of the Old, have brought back for our information a number of details, for which they needed hardly to cross the Atlantic, and have given up as discoveries a relation of matters necessarily existing under a very popular government, and in a very new community.

As those travellers had pretty generally failed to make many converts among the friends of free institutions, either in France or in England, there would have been little harm done to the cause of truth, and no great interruption given to the friendly relations which the highest interests of both countries require should be maintained unbroken between them. But unhappily some persons of a superior class appear, from party or from personal feelings, to have, without due reflection on the mischief they were doing, suffered their minds to be poisoned by the same prejudices; and, a single indiscretion having suffered their private letters, written under the influence of such prepossessions, to see the light, it becomes every one, whose general opinions coincide with those of the individuals in question, to protest against the inference that such sentiments are shared by the Liberal party in England. This becomes the more necessary, in consequence of the tendency which the most reprehensible conduct of some of the States in the Union towards their public creditors has to prepare the way for the reception of such unsound opinions—opinions which, if left to themselves, would probably soon sink into oblivion, how respectable soever the quarters which they may, without due reflection, have been suffered to reach. I allude more particularly to some letters lately published of Lord Sydenham, written confidentially to his late colleagues, while he was acting under them as Governor General of British North America—letters, the publication of which has, to me, who knew their writer, and respected his generally sound principles, been a subject of much regret, which he appears to have written in a moment of some irritation, but which would do serious injury to the good understanding that happily has been restored between the two nations, if they were supposed to speak the sense of those among us who are most friendly to America.

A great deal of oblique and general abuse may be passed over, as that the Americans "are a calculating people, and fight not for glory but plunder"—"such a set of braggadocios, that their public men must submit to the claims of their extravagant vanity and self-sufficiency"—"that there is among them a 'general debasement;—that those who aim at place are corrupt and corruptors, and the masses who bestow preferment ignorant, prejudiced, dishonest, and utterly immoral.'" I fear me most if not all this railing might be retorted upon a certain nation whose wars in China have been warmly eulogized by Lord Sydenham in another letter, though he is greatly scandalized that all the glory of his friends is not likely to prevent their seats "slipping from under them;" a nation whose general elections have of late years been found a scene of the most hateful corruption, although we should be guilty of a most gross and unparadigmatic exaggeration, were we on this account to stigmatize the whole people as "utterly immoral," in the terms rashly applied to his neighbors by the Canadian Government.

But the charges which he allows himself to lay, and which his relatives have thought it right to publish, are more specific. "The Government seems to me the worst of tyrannies, that of the mob supported by the most odious and profligate corruption. No man who aims at power dare avow an opinion of his own; he must pander to the lowest prejudices of the people, and in their parties (the two great ones which now divide the Union, the Locofocos and the Whigs) the only subject of the leading men of either is to instil some wretchedly low sentiment into the people, and then explode it for their own advantage.—There is scarcely a statesman of either who would not adopt the most violent or the basest doctrine, however, if he thought that he could work it to advantage with the majority—peculation and jobbing are the only objects; delusion, and the basest flattery of the people, the means." "If," adds this discreet statesman, "they drive us into war, the blacks in the south will soon settle all that part of the Union; and in the north I feel sure that we can lick them to their heart's content." "A Republic could answer in former times in countries where there was no people, or few;

the bulk of the population Helots and slaves; but where there is a people, and they have the power, government is only possible by pandering to their worst passions, which makes the country unbearable to a man of any education, and the Central Government itself a by-word amongst civilized nations. I hope (he concludes perhaps consistently enough) that we may live long enough to see this great bubble burst; and I do not believe that we need be very long-lived for that" (316).

I am sorry to be under the necessity of declaring that one is at a loss whether most to marvel at the total want of common reflection, or the extraordinary want of common information, in this passage—the production of a man in high office, addressed to a man still higher, and who presumes, without any deliberation, and with no knowledge of the subject, to pronounce so sweeping a censure upon the whole body of a great nation, all their statesmen, and all their institutions. It is fit the Americans should well understand that these are the errors and this the rashness of the late Governor General of Canada, and not shared by the Liberal party, or by any but the most ignorant and the most prejudiced in this country.

First of all, Lord Sydenham is no authority on the subject of the United States, merely because he was Governor of Canada, and never in the Union at all. Had he remained in London he would have been as well qualified to judge of those States, as his living near them for two years could make him; nay, a great deal better; for his residence in Canada, without giving him one tithe more of information, had the manifest tendency to fill his mind with Canadian prejudices; and these views seem to gain a still greater ascendancy over him by the disputes of a border nature, in which he was involved. I should, during the separation of England and Scotland before the seventeenth century, never have looked to the Warden of the West Marches for a candid account of the people on the Scotch border when he lived at Carlisle. But, had the Warden directed his hostile operations from York or from Lincoln, I should have believed him just as ignorant as if he had lived in London, and a very great deal more prejudiced.

Next, let us observe how little the Governor General had studied constitutions when he assumes the office of deciding on their comparative merits. It would not be easy to crowd more manifest errors into one sentence than are found in the few lines about ancient republics. Many things respecting those systems are obscurely known, and are therefore the subject of controversy; but no one ever affected to doubt of the matters on which this strange sentence errs, and errs dogmatically. Sparta is of course alluded to by the mention of Helots; but Sparta was not a republic, it was an aristocratic government.—Then Athens, which was a republic, so far from proving that such a government "could answer," is precisely the example always resorted to in order to prove what Lord Sydenham states to be the vice of the American Government as contrasted with the Grecian, namely, the statesman "pandering to the passions of the people." Yet, this notwithstanding, can any one say that Athens, the very seat of this worst of vices, was by it "made unbearable to a man of any education."—Does he conceive that any of us, even in Canada, are more refined, more civilized, more educated, than the ornaments of Athenian society, the very men who were slain to court the people? It is another error equally great to make it the peculiar characteristic of the modern republic, and the feature that distinguishes it from the ancient, that the "people really had the power." In Athens, if any where, they really had the power; we are only left to speculate on the restraints under which it was exercised, and even to doubt if any such existed in practice. But assuredly the bulk of the power was in their hands more than in any other democracy, ancient or modern.

That in the American Government there exist great imperfections no man can doubt; one among the greatest has lately been removed, because the central power of the Federacy is now enabled better to maintain its relations with foreign states in consequence of the recent improvement of the constitutional law. But there remain still which still disfigure the system, and in practice sadly mar its working. Of these, the very worst, undoubtedly, is the entire change of public functionaries, from the highest to the lowest, which follows every change of the President, converts all the more considerable members of the community into place-hunters, and makes the whole interval, between one election of chief magistrate and another, a constant scene of canvass. The removal of this and a few other imperfections would make the Government of America as faultless as a very popular system can ever be. That some and even considerable evils would be left, evils inseparable from a Republic, because growing out of the large share assigned to the people in the distribution of power, cannot be doubted. But it is no discovery of Lord

Sydenham's, that as long as men are men power and pre-eminence will be sought after; and that if the power of bestowing these is vested in the people, the people will be courted by those who seek after them.

We are upon a practical, not a speculative, question; and that question is not as to the impossible attainment of theoretical perfection, but as to the comparative merits of different schemes of polity. Power must rest in some part of the community. Patronage must immediately or ultimately rest with them that have the power. Shall they be the people at large? No, says Lord Sydenham; for if the people are to choose their ministers, they who would fill ministerial places will debate themselves by pandering to the people's prejudices. But what if we trust this delicate office to a court or a prince, for the purpose of making the duty he more uprightly discharged, and exalting the character of the candidates for favor? Are we so blinded by the evils of popular canvass as to have all of a sudden forgotten that other time-serving, that old species of fawning, that wiser form of flattery, which the friends of freedom and of purity used to charge upon the parasites of princes, the crew of courtiers, the minions who pander to the propensities, not of the people, but the despot? Then shall power and patronage be vested in a patrician body, in a class of men whom "a man of education" might well find not "unbearable?" The class fawned upon would here no doubt be found more refined in its tastes, and must be propitiated with more dainty flattery. Yet I question if the fawning would be less pliant, if the Senator would be less given to cringe, than they who, instead of crowding in the anteroom of the noble, after a more homely fashion take the hand of the peasant and the mechanic. I greatly doubt if less falsehood will be found in the smooth speeches addressed to the select patrician circle than in the boisterous harrangues delivered to win the plebeian. One ground of my doubt is the recollections which we all have of the scenes of endless intrigue and widespread corruption displayed by the aristocratic courts of modern Italy, to say nothing of fanciful Rome in her more torrid days, and another ground of my doubt is precisely this, that men are more prone to practice deception in secret than in public, and therefore more likely to use unworthy acts in the closet, the appointed scene of intrigue, than on the hustings, from whence the grosser species of intrigue, at least, must for ever be banished.

And here is furnished a very striking proof of entire carelessness with which this political reasoner made his observations upon America, and formed his opinions respecting her people. He plainly affirms of all statesmen in the United States that "their only objects are peculation and jobbing;" and their means of being enabled to speculate and job are "the basest flattery of the people." Now surely a very little reflection would have sufficed to satisfy any considerate person that this charge is wholly impossible. The existence of such violent party divisions, and the publicity with which every department of Government is administered, make peculation impracticable. They might as well be charged with "compassing and imagining the death of the King." It is an offence which in such a country can have no existence. But this manifest error into which the writer has fallen, while it shows the strength of his prejudices against the Americans, proves also the weakness of his means of annoyance, and it is a sufficient answer to much of his general invective.

As to the standing topic of vulgar manners, let it be fairly stated that there are many parts both of France and England to which we should not think of resorting were we in quest of patterns of polished manners. Even while representing Manchester, Lord Sydenham would hardly have cited the bulk of his constituents as superior in elegance to the people of New York. But an authority fully as high as himself on this delicate matter, M. de Lafayette, would have severely rebuked him for underrated even the manners of the Americans; and if, after such an authority, any further doubts were required, two facts may be mentioned. Sir R. Liston declared that he had never conversed with a better bred sovereign in any court of Europe than General Washington; and among the women of the highest breeding in our day no one would hesitate to mention Lady Wellesley. They who have never been in the United States may surely be pardoned if they feel unable to believe the notion entertained by others who, like themselves and Lord Sydenham, have also never been there, but who would yet assume General Washington and Lady Wellesley to be the only persons of fine manners ever produced in the Union.

It is, however, not avowedly that the Governor General tests his dislike of the Americans. On the contrary, he rather seems disposed to pass that head of complaint lightly, though it is plainly enough at the bottom of many feelings upon the

subject. His main accusation is the mob tyranny, and the public men quailing before it. No doubt a certain degree of this evil is inseparable from every popular Government. Who in Ireland dares profess any opinion hostile to the Romish hierarchy throughout three of the provinces, or favourable to it in the fourth? Who in 1831 was safe in England if he proclaimed his dislike of the Reform Bill? What public meeting has any moderate liberal politician ventured to hold of late years? Have not even the corn-law repealers been fain to raise the popular cry of cheap bread in assemblies collected by tickets, and from which the multitude were carefully excluded? We may not go so far as the Americans in humoring the popular cry of the hour when we address our constituents, because our Government is less purely popular than theirs; but can any one doubt that the speeches of our political chiefs—aye, and even their measures when in office—take the tincture of the multitude to whom they are addressed, and whose favor they are expected to conciliate? If this be denied, we may require to be informed what Lord Sydenham precisely means when—adverting to the free trade measures respecting timber, sugar, and, above all, corn, in 1841—he says, "It is an immense point agreed to get a new flag under which to fight. The people of England do not care a rush for any of your Irish hobby-horses; and they are not with you upon Church matters, or grievances of that kind. Even your foreign policy has not touched them the least, and I doubt whether twenty victories would give you a borough or a county; but you have now given them an intelligible principle offering practical benefits to contend for, and though defeated on it as you doubtless will be, defeat will be attended with reputation, and will make you, as a party in the country, far stronger than you have been of late" (p. 90). Now it is to be observed that the preference here given to the Corn Bill over the Irish Church Reform and the other measures is not rested on the relative merits, but solely on the relative popular tendency, of the different plans—their capabilities as "flags to fight under;" and the Corn-Law is preferred because it is a better party Shibboleth. No doubt Lord Sydenham would have a right to urge that he had always maintained the free trade doctrine for its own sake; but why will he not allow American statesmen also to prefer their several tenets for their own sake? Suppose he had found a letter from Mr. Stevenson to a South Carolina friend maintaining that some proposition for "preventing anti-slavery petitions from being received by Congress was a fine 'flag to fight under,'" offering an intelligible principle to contend for," and, though defeated, would make the Virginian "party stronger than it had of late been," how little would it have availed to urge that Mr. Stevenson had always held the same opinion!—How triumphantly would Lord Sydenham point to this letter as a confession that American statesmen frame their conduct upon the plan of pandering to the tastes and passions of the multitude? And would it have been deemed an answer to his inference if it had appeared that the party proposing this extreme course had never thought of it for ten years which they had passed in office, but merely brought it forward when all other means of obtaining influence had failed, and when their fortune among the constituent bodies of the country were becoming desperate?

But these are possibly extreme cases. Are there no other instances, even in our own better regulated system, so much less disguised by popular excess than the Americans,—no instances of public men shaping their conduct and their speeches according to the opinions and feelings, of even the tastes and caprices of the people, either generally or locally? Surely common fairness towards the Americans required some consideration of the tone taken in our own election addresses, of the speeches made on our own hustings and at our public meetings, of the differences between these and the parliamentary speeches of the same individuals, nay of the well-known difference between the conduct of Parliament itself during its first and its last session.—What minister ever ventured to propose a civil list on the eve of a general election?

The arts to which our attention is directed by these remarks are in the highest degree creditable to all who use them, and are inescapably hurtful to the people upon whom they are practiced. If they are, to a certain extent, inseparable from a very popular Government, their mischief forms a serious deduction from the merits of that system. To restrain them within the narrowest possible limits is the bounden duty of all statesmen, but most especially is it the duty those who maintain the superior advantage of a popular constitution. Then, above all others, it behoves not to lower the character of popular men, not to corrupt the people themselves; for it must never be forgotten that the flattery and the falsehood which tint the atmosphere of a court, the poison which tyrants inhale

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with their earliest breath, cannot with impunity be inspired by the people.

After all, in estimating the merits of any Government, we must never lose sight of what is the end of all government—the comfort and happiness of the people. It may safely be admitted that if a scheme could be devised for embodying a legislature of wise, virtuous, and enlightened men, with an executive council of capacity, integrity, firmness, removed from popular control, animated with the desire of furthering the public good, and consulting, in the pursuit of it no will or authority but their own chastened judgment, a much purer and more noble Government would be constituted than any that owes its origin to the public choice, and acts under the people's superintendence. But unhappily, experience has proved that any legislature, and any executive body, removed from all control, soon forgets the object of its creation; and instead of consulting the good of the community at large, confines all its exertions to furthering its own individual interest. So it must ever be until we are blest with a descent of angels to undertake the management of our concerns. Till then there is but one security for the community—a watchful superintendence and an efficient control over its representatives and rulers. The experiment may be coarse and clumsy; it may be attended with evils of a very serious kind; it may give rise to an unfortunate influence being exercised by classes of the people who are neither very refined nor always very honest, nor even very well informed as to their own interests. Nevertheless, as human society is constituted, in the choice of evils this is the least; it admits of many compensations; it gives the prospect of much diminution as knowledge and as virtue advance; whereas any system that excludes the popular voice must needs lead to a thralldom and to abuses which admit of no compensation, and instead of wearing out in time, only gather strength and acquire increased malignity with every year that revolves.

The worst of all the features in the Union Lord Sydenham has no doubt passed entirely over—the disgraceful prejudices against negro emancipation. But even these may yield to circumstances, and give place to more rational as well as more humane views of national policy, provided a free government continues to bless America, and no catastrophe happens to destroy the Union. Lord Sydenham indeed is thoughtless enough to view with a kind of exultation the prospect of negro insurrection as a consequence of the United States daring to wage a war with England. Misguided, short-sighted man! and ignorant, oh, profoundly ignorant of the things that belong to the peace and happiness of either color in the new world! A negro revolt in our islands, where the whites are as a handful among their sable brethren, might prove fatal to European life, but the African at least would be secure, as far as security can be derived from the successful shielding of blood. But on the continent, where the numbers of the two colors are evenly balanced, and all the arms are in the white man's hands, who but the bitter enemy of the unhappy slaves could bear to contemplate their wretchedness in the attempt by violence to shake off their chains!—Then again he feels quite confident that the northern states must be utterly defeated, and easily defeated, as soon as they draw the sword against England. Possibly; and yet this inference has not been very logically drawn by Lord Sydenham from the history of the former American war. When the people of the colonies numbered less than three millions, they defeated the best troops of England, possessed as she was of all the strongholds of the country, and sweeping the ocean with her fleets, before the infant republic had a flag floating upon the seas. That twenty-four millions, with entire possession of the land, and a formidable fleet at sea, should be overwhelmed by the Canadians and Nova Scotians, is certainly a possible event, but that it is as much a matter of course as the Governor of these petty settlements complacently assures himself, may reasonably be doubted. Nay, it seems barely possible that some notion should creep into the minds of the Americans, as how a war might lead to the very opposite result of Canada joining with the United States, and forming an additional member of that Great Confederacy.

They, however, who are the best friends of both countries, must be the least willing to indulge on either side in such speculations. The Americans will, it is to be hoped, not be tempted to form such pernicious projects by any notion of a hostile feeling towards them prevailing in this country. They may be well assured, that far from regarding their government as "a bubble," and trusting that it soon may burst, the universal sentiment in England is the hope that it may long continue to exhibit the proud spectacle of popular freedom, and even popular power, combined with order at home, and moderation abroad in successful refutation of all the old opinions, that a republic was impossible in a large territory with a numerous people.