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PETER THE GREAT;

OR, THE AUDIENCE IN THE MAIN-TOP.

The following, as the writer of it quietly observes, has "never been recorded in the naval annals of Great Britain." We commend it to the next historian.

In common with almost every traveler who visits Amsterdam, I have seen the village of Saardam, and the humble workshop and lodging-house of 'Peter the Great,' which are still pointed out with manifestations of pride and exultation by the worthy and hospitable inhabitants. But the village is not now as flourishing as it was in the days of the Czar. Holland, which at that time was equal to any nation as a maritime power, has wofully degenerated in this respect. England, France, Spain, Russia, as well as our own country, are greatly her superiors, and Saardam has declined in population and the enterprise of the inhabitants, in proportion as Holland has declined as a naval power. But still an interest is attached to the place, which makes it an important object in the eyes of travelers, and there without being a "melancholy Jaques," one could sit and moralize for hours.

But to my story. Peter, while working as a carpenter or blacksmith at Saardam, did not endeavor to preserve his incognito. It was soon known to every court in Europe that the Czar of Russia was residing in Holland; and although the different European monarchs were at that time unable to appreciate his character, as manifested by his voluntary labors, and sacrifices of pomp and personal comforts, they respected him as the powerful and energetic head of a mighty empire, and most of the European monarchs sent to him, with much display and ceremony, ambassadors, rendering him their respects, and inviting him to visit their respective courts.

William of England, however, was dilatory in thus evincing his respect for the Czar, much to the dissatisfaction of the Russian monarch, who was particularly desirous of being on the most friendly terms with the English King. At length, after waiting impatiently for several months, he learned with much gratification that King William was about to send three ambassadors, selected from among the most distinguished noblemen, and attended by a brilliant cortege, to do honor to Peter of Russia. The Czar, with a spirit of eccentricity which he not unfrequently exhibited, resolved to teach these envoys a lesson which they would not soon forget, and punish them in a whimsical manner for their tardiness.

When the ambassadors reached Amsterdam, they were astonished to learn that Peter was at Saardam, busily engaged in building a ship, which was nearly finished, and that he would be delighted to see them at that place. The English noblemen, who expected to be received at Amsterdam with the pomp and ceremony corresponding to the character of their mission, were not a little embar-

assed by this information, but set off, post haste, for Saardam, to find the carpenter-monarch, and sent an *avant courier*, with despatches, announcing their intention. They reached Saardam at the appointed hour, but to their great surprise were informed that the Czar was then on board his ship, where he waited their arrival, and was impatient to give them an audience. They were also informed that a boat was in waiting at the shipyard to put them alongside.

The English dignitaries hardly knew what to think of this affair. There were no precedents by which to frame their line of conduct. They were desirous, for many reasons, to have an interview with the Czar, and were great sticklers for etiquette, yet after a hurried consultation, they determined to flatter the whims of the barbarian monarch, and visit him on board his ship. A couple of burly Dutchmen, in a large and clumsy boat, pulled off the ambassadors and a portion of their suite. They were received at the gangway, by a man dressed in the costume of a sailor, who in a rough manner welcomed them on board. Wondering at their singular reception, but supposing it a specimen of Russian manners, they inquired for the Czar, and their consternation was actually ludicrous when the sailor, with a knowing grin, pointed to the main-top, and assured the grave and stately representatives of Albion that Peter was aloft, where he expected the pleasure of receiving the ambassadors of his friend and brother, the King of England!

The ambassadors were stupefied at this arrangement and gazed at each other with despairing looks, when told that the hall of audience of the Russian monarch was the main-top of a sloop of war! They could not conceal their perplexity, and indeed entertained some suspicions that they were the victims of a *hoax*—but when they were assured that the Czar was actually in the main-top, and wished and expected them to climb the rigging and introduce themselves to his presence, their hearts failed, their limbs trembled, and they hardly knew what course to adopt.

"What!" said the proud and venerable Earl of Tewksbury, "does the Czar of Russia expect me to climb up those rope-ladders, and play the part of a harlequin at this period of my life! To ascend that crow's nest, in such a way, would not only be highly undignified in a person of my rank, but actually impossible."

"No," said Sir Nicholas Granger, with a spice of indignation as well as sorrow in his tone, "this is a most unreasonable exaction on the part of the Czar. For my part," continued the knight, taking a survey of his portly proportions, and then glancing at the shroud, "I should as soon think of flying, as of going aloft to the main-top by means of the rigging. No—if I get there they must hoist me up by pulleys."

Upon father inquiry, they satisfied themselves that they must

visit the bear in his den, elevated as it was, or return to England without accomplishing the object of their mission. They hesitated a few moments, uncertain which horn of the dilemma to seize—but Lord Gower, the youngest of the party, who had once been as far as Constantinople in a ship of war, and who therefore boasted of his nautical experience, suggested that there was nothing so very alarming or dangerous in the Czar's request—but it was neither a frolic nor a hoax—but a mark of respect to a great maritime government, to receive her envoys in a noble ship; and that if they should refuse his invitation to go aloft and hold a personal interview, after having proceeded thus far, the Czar would construe it into an insult, take umbrage, and a war between the two powers of England and Russia must be the inevitable result.

These arguments had due weight, and the other ambassadors, with sour looks and an ungracious grunt, at length signified their reluctant assent to the arrangement, and prepared to "go up the rigging"—a feat which is somewhat awkward and difficult even to a young and active landsman, and was truly appalling to those venerable and heavy-moulded noblemen. It was an act of devotion to their country and their King, of which we can hardly find a parallel in the pages of the history.

They heroically mounted the gunwale, Lord Gower leading the way; and they were also assisted by the rough personage who received them at the gangway, and who subsequently proved to be the celebrated Le Fort, one of the most faithful and able among the councillors and friends of the Russian monarch.

They got up the ratlins, and slowly ascended, panting for breath—and pausing in their career, every few moments. They were gazed at with admiration by the crew and officers on the deck of the ship, who could hardly help cheering them in their arduous undertaking—and after a rather unreasonable time, they reached, breathless with fatigue, the cat-harpings. Here, clinging convulsively to the futtock shrouds, they tarried awhile to recover breath, and consult upon what was next to be done. To climb the futtock shrouds, and pass over the top rim, outside, they with one voice decided was impossible—when Lord Gower, with a triumphant shout, pointed out the *lubber's hole*, of which he had often heard, and—the pen is reluctant to record it—these proud representatives of a great kingdom—of a power which aimed to become sovereign of the seas, were actually so lost to shame and a sense of true dignity, as to *crawl into the main-top through the lubber's hole*! This fact has never been recorded in the naval annals of Great Britain.

Peter was quietly seated on an armchair, as, one following another, the ambassadors entered the presence, atually creeping on their hands and knees! He received them with much grace and dignity—with a grave demeanor, as if nothing extraordinary had

taken place—and by the affability of his manners, and the charms of his conversation he soon made them forget the perplexities which they had so recently experienced, and the dangers through which they had passed.

After passing half an hour very pleasantly in the top, the meeting, at the suggestion of Peter, was adjourned to the cabin—and the descent from the "bad eminence," which they had attained with so much toil and peril, was accomplished under the direction of the Czar himself, with much less difficulty than they had anticipated.—*Church Union.*

HOW TO LIVE.

A wealthy gentleman, of Boston, several years ago, gave the editor of the Worcester *Palladium* a short narrative of his own experience. He had an income of \$10,000 a year, (a large sum then, but not considered so now,) a house in town, and country-seat a few miles out. He had several children—a coach, fine horses and driver; and took pleasure in riding every day with his children.

One day when riding, the thought struck him that each one of his children would expect to have a fine house, and coach, and horses and driver, as their father had before them, and to live as he lived; and if they did not, they would be unhappy. He did not think that all of them could have things as he had them, or live as he was living; and he rode home; sent his coach and horses to market, and sold them; bought a cheap carry-all, and became his own driver.

With emphasis he declared that no amount of wealth could induce him to return to his former mode of living, for if any of his children should chance to be poor, as in all probability some of them would be, they should not suffer in their feeling by the reflection that their father rode in his coach while they had to rough it on foot. The example he gave them afforded him satisfaction greater than his wealth had to bestow.—*N. C. Presbyterian.*

CARVING.

Until within a few years ago the ceremony of carving was always performed by the mistress of the house. In the last century this task must have required no small share of bodily strength, for the lady was not only to invite—that is, urge and tease her guests to eat more than human throats conveniently could swallow—but to carve every dish, when chosen, with her own hands. The greater the lady, the more indispensable was the duty; each joint was carried up to be operated on in its turn by her and her alone. The peers and knights on either hand were so far from being bound to offer their assistance that the very master of the house himself, posted opposite her, might not offer his assistance. His department was to push the bottle after dinner. As for the crowd of guests, the most inconsiderable among them—the curate, a subaltern, or squire's young brother—if suf-

fered, through her neglect, to help himself to a slice of mutton placed before him, would have chewed it in bitterness and gone home an affronted man, half inclined to give a wrong vote at the next election. There were then professional carving masters, who taught young ladies scientifically. In the letters of Lady Mary Montague, she mentions having taken lessons three times a week, that she might be perfect when called upon to preside at her father's table. In order to perform her function without interruption, she was forced to eat her dinner alone an hour or two beforehand.

ORIGIN OF PAPER MONEY.

The Count de Tendilla, whilst besieged by the Moors in the fortress of Alhambra, was destitute of gold and silver wherewith to pay his soldiers, who began to murmur, as they had not the means of purchasing the necessaries of life from the people of the town. "In this dilemma," says the historian, "what does this most sagacious commander? He takes a number of little morsels of paper, on which he inscribes various sums, large and small, and signs them with his own hand and name. These did he give to the soldiery in earnest of their pay. "How," you will say, "are soldiers to be paid with little scraps of paper?" Even so; and well paid, too, as I will presently make manifest, for the good Count issued a proclamation ordering the inhabitants to take these morsels of paper for the full amount therein inscribed, promising to redeem at a future day with gold and silver. Thus, by subtle and almost miraculous alchemy, did this cavalier turn worthless paper into precious gold and silver, and his late impoverished army again had plenty." The historian adds, "The Count de Tendilla redeemed his promise like a royal knight; and this miracle, as it appeared in the eyes of the Agapida, is the first instance on record of paper money which has since spread throughout the civilized world the most unbounded opulence."—*Exchange*

A Startling Fact.

A casual remark in the Raleigh paper catches our eye. It is that Col. S. D. Pool, Superintendent of Public Instruction, says "there are two hundred and thirty thousand and white children in North Carolina, and only fifteen thousand of these are attending the subscription schools. And outside the schools centres in the State there is not an average of a hundred children to every county going to school." Well may the amazed reporter exclaim: "Think of that! Shall old North Carolina twenty years from to-day be peopled with numskulls? We all are to blame. Let us take hold and do better."

Indeed we must do better than that. Rouse up, North Carolinians all! Send your children to school as long as you have a crust of bread and a whole garment to feed and clothe them with. Give your children clothing for the mind, which stands the wear and tear of the wasting years.—*Wilmington Star.*