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Florentine peculiarities—society—balls—ducal entertainments—privileges of strangers—families of high rank—the exclusives—society—parties of a rich banker—peasant beauty—visitors of a banquet—aeward department of a prince—a contented married lady—husbands, cavaliers and wives—personal manners—habits of society.

I am about starting on my second visit to Rome, after having passed nearly three months in Florence. As I have seen most of the society of this gayest and fairest of the Italian cities, it may not be uninteresting to depart a little from the traveller's routine, by sketching a feature or two. Florence is a resort for strangers from every part of the world. The gay society is a mixture of all nations, of whom one-third may be Florentine, one-third English and the remaining part equally divided between Russians, Germans, French, Poles and Americans. The English entertain a great deal, and give most of the balls and dinner parties. The Florentines seldom trouble themselves to give parties, but are always at home for visits in the *prima sera*, (from seven till nine,) and in their box at the opera. They go, without scruple, to all the strangers balls, considering courtesy repaid, perhaps by the weekly reception of the grand duke, and a weekly ball at the club-house of young Italian nobles.

The ducal entertainments occur every Tuesday, and are the most splendid of course.—The foreign ministers present all their countrymen who have been presented at their own courts, and the company is necessarily more select than elsewhere. The Florentines who go to court are about seven hundred, of whom half are invited on each week—strangers, when once presented, having the double privilege of being invited to all. There are several Italian families, of the highest rank, who are seen only here; but with the single exception of one unmarried girl, of uncommon beauty, who bears a name celebrated in Italian history, they are no less to general society. Among the foreigners of rank, are three or four German princes, who play high, halt well, and are remarkable for nothing else; a dozen star-wearing dukes, counts and marquises, of all nations and in any quantity, and a few English noblemen and noble ladies—only the latter nations showing their blood at all in their features and bearing.

The most exclusive society is that of the Prince Montfort, (Jerome Bonaparte,) whose splendid palace is shut entirely against the English, and difficult of access to all. He makes a single exception in favor of a descendant of the Talbots, a lady whose beauty might be an apology for a much graver departure from rule. He has given two grand entertainments since the carnival commenced, to which nothing was wanting but people to enjoy them. The immense rooms were flooded with light, the music was the best that Florence could give, the supper might have supplied an army—stars and red ribbons entered with every fresh comer, but it looked like a "banquet hall deserted." Some thirty ladies, and as many men, were all that Florence contained worthy of the society of the ex-king. A kinder man in his manners, however, apparently a more affectionate husband and father, I never saw. He opened the dance by waltzing with the young Princess, his daughter, a lovely girl of fourteen, of whom he seems fond to excess, and he was quite the gayest person in the company till the ball was over. The ex-queen, who is a miracle of size, sat on a divan, with her ladies of honor about her, following her husband with her eyes, and enjoying his gait with the most childish good humor.

The Saturday evening *soirees*, at Prince Poniatowski's, (a brother of the hero,) are perhaps as agreeable as any in Florence. He has several grown up sons and daughters married, and, with a very sumptuous palace and great liberality of style, he has made his parties more than usually valued. His eldest daughter is the leader of the fashion, and his second is the "cynosure of all eyes." The old prince is a tall, bent, venerable man, with snow-white hair, and peculiarly marked features. He is fond of speaking English, and professes a great affection for America.

Then there are the *soirees* of the rich banker Fenzi, which as they are subservient to business, assemble all ranks on the pretensions of interest. At the last, I saw among other curiosities, a young girl of eighteen from one of the more common families in Florence—a fine specimen of the peasant beauty of Italy.—Her heavily moulded figure, hands and feet, were quite forgiven when you looked at her dark deep, indolent eye, and glowing skin, and strongly lined mouth and forehead. The society was evidently new to her, but she had a manner quite beyond being astonished. It was the kind of annual dignity so universal in the lower classes of this country.

A German baroness of high rank receives on the Mondays, and here one sees foreign society in its highest coloring. The prettiest woman that frequents her parties, is a Genoese marchioness, who has left her husband to live with a Lucchese count, who has left his wife. He is a very accomplished man, with the look of Mephistopheles in the "Devil's Walk," and she is certainly a most fascinating woman.—She is received in most of the good society in Florence—a severe, though a very just comment on its character. A prince, the brother of the king of Prussia, divided the attention of the company with her the last Monday. He is a tall, military looking man, with very bad manners, ill at ease, and impudent at the same time. He entered with his suit in the middle of a song. The singer stopped, the company rose, the prince swept a-

bout, bowing like a dancing-master, and after the sensation had subsided, the ladies were taken up and presented to him, one by one. He asked them all the same question, said through two songs, which he spoiled by talking loudly all the while, and then bowed himself out in the same awkward style, leaving every body more happy for his departure.

One gains little by his opportunities of meeting Italian ladies in society. The *cavalier sercente* flourishes still, as in the days of Beppe, and it is to him only that the lady condescends to talk. There is a delicate, refined looking marchioness here, who is remarkable as being the only known Italian lady without a cavalier. They tell you with an amused smile that 'she is content with her husband.' It really seems to be a business of real love between the lady of Italy and her cavalier. Naturally enough too—for her parents marry her without consulting her at all, and she selects a friend afterwards, as ladies in other countries select a lover, who is to end in a husband. The married couple are never seen together by any accident, and the lady and her cavalier never apart. The latter is always invited with her as a matter of course, and the husband if there is room, or if he is not forgotten. She is insulted if asked without a cavalier, but is quite indifferent whether her husband goes with her or not. These are points *really settled* in the policy of society, and the rights of the cavalier are specified in the marriage contracts. I had thought until I came to Italy, that such things were either a romance, or customs of an age gone by.

I like very much the personal manners of the Italians. They are mild and courteous to the farthest extent of looks and words. They do not entertain, it is true, but their great dim rooms are free to you whenever you can find them at home, and you are at liberty to join the gossiping circle around the lady of the house, or sit at the table and read, or be silent unquestioned. You are *let alone*, if you seem to choose it, and it is neither commented on, nor thought unwell, and this I take to be a grand excellence in manners.

The society is dissolute, I think, almost without an exception. The English fall into its habits, with the difference that they do not conceal it so well, and have the appearance of knowing it is wrong—which the Italians have not. The latter are very much shocked at the want of propriety in the management of the English. To suffer the particulars of an intrigue to get about is a worse sin, in their eyes, than any violation of the commandments. It is scarce possible for an American to conceive the universal corruption of a society like this of Florence, though, if he were not told of it, he would think it all that was delicate and attractive. There are external features in which the society of our own country is far less scrupulous and proper.

FEATS OF STRENGTH.

Dr. Brewster, in his work on Natural Magic, (Family Library, No. 50) gives some striking instances of muscular strength, and also of the effect produced by applying the principles of the mechanical powers to the human frame, from which we extract the following.

Firmus, a native of Selencia, who was executed by the emperor Aurelia for espousing the cause of Zenobia, was celebrated for his feats of strength. In his account of the life of Firmus, who lived in the third century, Vopiscus informs us, that he could suffer iron to be forged upon an anvil placed upon his breast. In doing this, he lay upon his back and resting his feet and shoulders against some support, his whole body formed an arch, as we shall afterwards more particularly explain.—Until the end of the sixteenth century, the exhibition of such feats does not seem to have been common.

About the year 1603, a native of Kent, of the name of Joyce, exhibited such feats of strength in London and other parts of England, that he received the name of the second Samson. His own personal strength was very great; but he had also discovered, without the aid of theory, various positions of the body, in which men of common strength could perform very surprising feats. He drew against horses and raised enormous weights; but as he actually exhibited his power in ways which evinced the enormous strength of his own muscles, all his feats were ascribed to the same cause. In the course of eight or ten years, however, his methods were discovered, and many individuals of ordinary strength exhibited a number of his principal performances, though in a manner greatly inferior to Joyce.

Some time afterwards, John Charles Van Ekeberg, a native of Harzegerode in Anhalt, travelled through Europe, under the appellation of Samson, exhibiting remarkable examples of his strength. This, we believe, is the same person whose feats are particularly described by Dr. Desaguliers. He was a man of the middle size, and of ordinary strength; and, as Dr. Desaguliers was convinced that his feats were exhibitions of skill, and not of strength, he was desirous of discovering his methods; and, with this view, he went to see him, accompanied by the Marquis of Tullibardine, Dr. Alexander Stuart, and Dr. Pringle, and his own mechanical operator. They placed the muscles round the German, so as to be able to observe all that he did; and their success was so great, that they were able to perform most of the feats all the rest when they had provided the proper apparatus. Dr. Desaguliers exhibited some of the experiments before the royal society, and has given such a distinct explanation of the principles on which they depend, that we shall endeavour to give a popular account of them.

1. The performer sat upon an inclined board with his feet a little higher than his hips. His feet were placed against an upright board well secured. Round his loins was placed a strong girdle, with an iron ring in front. To this

ring a rope was fastened. The rope passed between his legs through a hole in the upright board, against which his feet were braced, and several men or two horses, pulling on the rope, were unable to draw him out of his place.

2. He also fastened a rope to a high post, and having passed it through an iron eye fixed in the side of the post some feet lower down, secured it to his girdle. He then planted his feet against the post near the iron eye, with his legs contracted, and suddenly stretching out his legs broke the rope, and fell backwards on a feather bed.

3. In imitation of Firmus, he laid himself down on the ground, and when an anvil was placed upon his breast, a man hammered with all his force a piece of iron, with a sledge-hammer, and sometimes two smiths cut in two with chisels a great cold bar of iron laid upon the anvil. At other times a stone of huge dimensions was laid upon his belly, and broken with a blow of the great hammer.

4. The performer then placed his shoulders upon one chair, and his heels upon another, forming with his back-bone, thighs and legs, an arch. One or two men then stood upon his belly, rising up and down while the performer breathed. A stone, one and a half feet long, one foot broad and half a foot thick, was then placed upon his belly and broken by a sledge-hammer—an operation which was performed with much less danger than when his back touched the ground.

5. His next feat was to lie down on the ground. A man being then placed on his knees, he drew his heels towards his body, and, raising his knees, he lifted the man gradually, till, having brought his knees perpendicularly under him, he raised his own body up, and placing his arms round the man's legs, rose with him, and set him down on some low table or eminence of the same height as his knees. This feat he sometimes performed with two men in place of one.

6. In his last, and apparently most wonderful performance, he was elevated on a frame work, and supported a heavy cannon placed upon a scale at some distance below him which was fixed to a rope attached to his girdle.—Previous to the fixing of the scale to the rope attached to his girdle, the cannon and scale rested upon rollers; but when all was ready, the rollers were knocked away, and the cannon remained supported by the strength of his loins.

These feats may be briefly explained thus:—The feats number one, two, and six, depend entirely on the natural strength of the bones of the pelvis, which form a double arch, which it would require an immense force to break, by any external pressure directed to the centre of the arch; and as the legs and thighs are capable of sustaining four or five thousand pounds when they stand quite upright, the performer has no difficulty in resisting the force of two horses, or in sustaining the weight of a cannon weighing two or three thousand pounds. The feat of the anvil is certainly a very surprising one. The difficulty, however, really consists in sustaining the anvil; for when this is done, the effect of the hammering is nothing. If the anvil were a thin piece of iron, or even two or three times heavier than the hammer, the performer would be killed by a few blows; but the blows are scarcely felt when the anvil is very heavy, for the more matter the anvil has, the greater is its inertia, and it is less liable to be struck out of its place; for when it has received by the blow the whole momentum of the hammer, its velocity will be so much less than that of the hammer as its quantity of matter is greater.

When the blow, indeed, is struck, the man feels less of the weight of the anvil than he did before, because, in the reaction of the stone, all the parts round about the hammer rise towards the blow. This property is illustrated by the well-known experiment of laying a stick with its ends upon two drinking glasses full of water, and striking the stick downwards in the middle with an iron bar. The stick will in this case be broken, without breaking the glasses or spilling the water. But if the stick is struck upwards, as if to throw it up in the air, the glasses will break if the blow be strong, and if the blow is not very quick the water will be spilt without breaking the glasses. When the performer supports a man upon his belly, he does it by means of the strong arch formed by his back bone and the bones of his legs and thighs. If there was room for them, he could bear three or four, or, in their stead, a great stone, to be broken with one blow.

BLACK HAWK.

The following biting satire we copy from a late New York paper.

SCENE:—A Drawing-room in New-York. Present—sundry fashionable ladies, together with Black Hawk and his party.

Belinda Smugg.—Oh! what a noble figure Young Hawk is!

Arabella Skugg.—Noble! that he is! What a chest he's got! what a muscular frame! (with a deep sigh) how different from the diminutive, slender, bean-pole looking creatures among our white gentlemen! He! I shall never want to look upon a white man again.

Amelia Simpkins.—Nor I either. Our white men are like a satyr to Hyperion, compared with him.

Belinda, (sighing).—Oh that heaven had made me such a man," as Shakespeare says.

Arabella.—And me two, Belinda.

Amelia.—And me three, Arabella. Only see him walk—what a majestic gait he has! how enlarged he moves! as Homer says. What a noble Roman nose he's got on his face! (sighing.) Oh that he were civilized and understood English better. I'm sure then (aside) that I could make a conquest of him.

Arabella.—He is truly a divine man, if ever there was one. I wish he was a shade whiter.

Belinda.—Do you? Well now I think his complexion is beautiful. What can be handsomer than a charming bronze! It is a color that will wear well and wash well.

Amelia.—True, Belinda, it will never wash out.

Arabella.—How elegant those beads do look in his ears! I wonder if those long holes in the rim were made by art, or whether he was born with them?

Belinda.—I dare say he was born with them. It would be barbarous to pierce the gristle of the poor creature's ears in that manner. What a beautiful red spot he has got painted on the top of his head! I do think they show a great deal of taste in their dress and ornaments. But Major Garland ought to allow them cleaner shirts.

Amelia.—I wish I'd brought along some of brother Ned's. I'm sure they'd be an acceptable present.

Arabella.—I should like, of all things, to be able to speak Indian. It must be delightful to converse with so charming a man. How fresh his ideas must be, just coming from the romantic forest. I'm sure such a pleasant, noble looking young man couldn't feel in his heart to kill poor defenceless women and children. It must have been that cross looking old Prophet, and the savage Napope that did all the murders.

Belinda.—I think so too. It couldn't have been these pleasant looking young Indians. There's the Prophet's son—I understand he's a great wit, and very gallant withal. I should like to speak to him. [Addressing Poweshick, the Prophet's son.] Mr. Poweshick, how did you like the play last night?

Poweshick.—Me! Me no much understand.

Arabella.—Have you seen Miss Kemble?

Poweshick.—Miss Kemble! who she?—White squaw?

Arabella.—She's the celebrated English actress.

Poweshick.—(Showing his teeth gallantly.) White squaw very good—much good. Me like 'em very much. Me take one, three, two home, to be my squaws.

Belinda.—Oh! how witty and gallant he is! What a difference there is between him and the white gentlemen. They'll hardly offer to take one—let alone two or three.

Amelia.—(To Na-she-askuck, Hawk's son.) Are you fond of botany?

Na-she-askuck.—Bottle! me fond of bottle? No! Pale face fond of bottle—me no touch 'em—no get drunk—no stagger like pale face.

Arabella.—What divine sentiments! how noble! how unsophisticated! Mr. Na-she-askuck, who is your favorite author, Pope or Byron?

Na-she-askuck.—No pope! you want to see him? He in tother room.

Arabella.—How elegantly he puns! I've a great mind to put him a conundrum. Why is a woman's face like—

Na-she-askuck.—Like! yes, me like squaws face—white squaw—very much handsome.

Arabella.—Oh! sir, you flatter me now.

Belinda.—(Aside).—How I should like to kiss the dear man. I'm sure there's no harm in it. I would not kiss an odious white man—in public—for all the world. But a child of nature like this—la! I'm sure nobody can take any exception to it. I'll kiss him, (smiting the action to the word) if I die for it.

Na-she-askuck.—(Surprised).—You buss me!—White squaw buss Indian.

Belinda.—Excuse me, Mr. Na-she-askuck—I know you'll think I'm rude and forward—but really, Mr. Na-she-askuck, you are so irresistible that—

Amelia.—A'nt you ashamed, Belinda!

Belinda.—Ashamed! no! where's the harm of saluting a noble son of the forest?

Amelia.—But before all the folks, Belinda—Oh, fie!

Belinda.—Oh, fie!—Oh fudge! You're mighty squeamish all at once, Miss Simpkins.

Amelia.—But only think what the people will say. Why, it will get into the newspapers, and go all over the world.

Belinda.—Well, let it go then. It won't trouble me any.

Arabella.—Nor me neither, Belinda; I'll keep you in countenance. (Saluting Young Hawk in her turn.) There!

Na-she-askuck.—You buss me too!

Poweshick.—You lussky dog, Na-she-askuck, you get all the buss.

Na-she-askuck.—White squaw very much good—very kind—lip very sweet.

Poweshick.—I try 'em then, (saluting Amelia.)

Amelia.—Oh! how gallant.

Belinda.—Fie! fie! Amelia.

Amelia.—Don't you say any thing, Miss Belinda—I didn't kiss the Indian, but he kissed me.—(Aside).—Oh! what a difference between him and the white beauty!

THE RIGHTEOUS NEVER FORSAKEN.

"Hoot away despair!

Never yield to sorrow—

The blackest sky may wear

A sunny face to-morrow."

It was Saturday night, and the widow of the Pine Cottage sat by her blazing jagdags with her five children by her side, endeavoring—by listening to the artlessness of their juvenile prattle—to dissipate the heavy gloom that pressed upon her mind. For a year, her own feeble hands had provided for her family, for she had no supporter: she thought of no friend in all the wide, unfriendly world, around. But that mysterious Providence, the wisdom of whose ways is above human comprehension, had visited her with wasting sickness, and her little means had become exhausted. It was now, too, mid winter, and the snow lay heavy and deep through all the surrounding foresty while storms still seemed gathering in the heavens, and the driving wind roared amidst the bounding pines, and rocked her puny mansion. The last herring smoked upon the coals before her; it was the only article of food she possessed, and no wonder her forlorn, desolate state, brought up in her lone bosom all the anxieties of a mother, when she looked upon

her children; and no wonder, forlorn as she was, if she suffered the heart swellings of despair to arise, even though she knew that he, whose promise is to the widow and the orphan, cannot forget his word. Providence had many years before taken from her her eldest son, who went from his forest home to try his fortune on the high seas, since which she had heard no note or tidings of him; and in latter time had, by death, deprived her of the companion and staff of her earthly pilgrimage, in the person of her husband. Yet to this hour she had been up-borne, she had not only been able to provide for her little flock, but had never lost an opportunity of ministering to the wants of the miserable and destitute.

The indolent may well bear with poverty while the ability to gain sustenance remains. The individual who has but his own wants to supply, may suffer with fortitude the winter of want; his affections are not wounded, his heart not wrung. The most desolate in populous cities may hope, for charity has not quite closed her hand and heart, and shut her eyes on misery. But the industrious mother of helpless and depending children, far from the reach of human charity, has none of these to console her. And such an one was the widow of the Pine Cottage: but as she bent over the fire and took up the last scanty remnant of food to spread before her children, her spirits seemed to brighten up, as by some sudden and mysterious impulse, and Cowper's beautiful lines came un-called across her hand:

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace,
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face."

The smoked herring was scarcely laid upon the table, when a gentle rap at the door, and loud barking of a dog, attracted the attention of the family. The children flew to open it, and a weary traveller in tattered garments, and apparently in indifferent health, entered and begged a lodging and a mouthful of food: said he, "it is now twenty-four hours since I tasted bread." The widow's heart bled anew as under a fresh complication of distresses; for her sympathies lingered not round her fireside. She hesitated not even; rest and share of all she had, she proffered to the stranger.

"We shall not be forsaken," said she, "or suffer deeper for an act of charity."

The traveller drew near the bread—but when he saw the scanty fare, he raised his eyes towards Heaven with astonishment—"and is this all your store? and a share of this do you offer to one you know not? then never saw I charity before! but madam," said he, continuing, "do you not wrong your children by giving a part of your last mouthful to a stranger?" "Ah," said the poor widow, and the tears gushed in her eyes as she said it, "I have a boy, a darling son, somewhere on the face of this wide world, unless Heaven has taken him away, and I only act towards you, as I would that others should act towards him. God who sent manna from Heaven, can provide for Israel, and how should I this night offend him—if my son should be a wanderer destitute as you, and he should have provided for him a home even as poor as this—were I to turn you unrelieved away?"

The widow ended, and the stranger springing from his seat, clasped her in his arms—"God indeed has provided for such a wandering son—and has given him wealth to reward the goodness of his benefactress—my mother! Oh my mother!"

It was her long lost son, returned to her bosom from the Indies. He had chosen that disguise, that he might the more completely surprise his family; and never was surprise more perfect, or followed by a sweeter cup of joy. That humble residence in the forest was exchanged for one comfortable, and indeed, beautiful in the valley, and the widow lived long with her dutiful son, in the enjoyment of worldly plenty, and in the delightful employments of virtue, and at this day the passer by is pointed to the luxuriant willow that spreads its branches broad and green above her grave, while he listens to the recital of this simple tale.

A candidate for the honors of Congress, in the state of Indiana, has addressed the following circular to his constituents. The Brooksville Inquirer gives it verbatim et literatim from the MS., and alleges that it is authentic.—

"I emigrated from Virgenoe fifty-two years ago to Kentucky with a large Connection and have been aresedate in the State for about twenty seven years and forty eight years ago My father Dofended and assisted in Driving the Indians out of this District Where the New Lords of the Sile object agiush Me Because I was not College Bred for Whom for father Was afiting for the Country he then Leved at ease and was nuste in the old penselvaney and was arubing his self against the College Walls this Usurper is a seteon of Rush Vill and faine Would usurpe more authority than the peopel allows hem he Cals him Selfe — he faine Would Judge other Mens Matters But the peopel Well not allow him if we all are to be Put Dow Be Cause we are not College Bred, I wish to Leave Such a government."

A Kentucky editor, when describing the ravages of the Cholera in that State, says:—"A messenger arrived on Sunday morning, from Flemingsburg, and announced to us the thrilling and appalling intelligence that our father was no more, and that two dear sisters had been attacked with the epidemic. We hurried to the scene. A father and a sister had been borne to their graves, and another sister was breathing her last. We watched by her—wept over her—and she died!" How many have suffered and done like this, and how many are yet to suffer and do like it. In this village, out of a family of thirteen individuals, it is stated that twelve were carried off by the disease.