Conversations with the Devil

Alain Geoffroy

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Notice

De Diabolo

In a most satirical tone, the author of this little fable parodies Dante's *Inferno* and the protagonist's voyage through each of its concentric circles, transposed into the realm of literature. His long pseudo-historical presentation ironically points out the Ancients' insufficiencies as regards their "simplistic" conceptions of the "universal friend, our great enemy" (302), for they ignored "[s]ociety, as it exists among modern civilized nations" (302), before it summarizes some of the most famous fictional descriptions of the Devil and his dominions, from Dante and Milton to Goethe and Thomas Moore. Deliberately criticizing the superficiality of modern society which he reduces to "the iron grasp of etiquette" (302), the narrator brings his substantial introduction to a close by underlining humorously "the difference between a German and an English Devil" (304): the former, "a student, with long, dirty-looking, sandy hair, and wild blue eyes, and a face ten times as ugly as his own ; shabbily dressed ; and walking more like a locomotive than a man" (304), embodying German Romanticism and Goethe's early years as a student in Leipzig and Strasbourg, whereas the latter, wearing "a handsome coat from Stultz's, and a most knowing hat . . . behav[ing] very much like a gentleman, too, throughout his walk" (305) caricaturing Beau Brummell's[384] and Byron's dandyism. Clearly enough, European literature, and in particular Romanticism, which inspired so many American writers, is here presented as devilish in essence.

Then follows a long dream inspired by the author's ruminations about the Devil which takes the form of a voyage into "the hell of books" in which he is guided, like Dante was by Virgil, by a "hideously ugly" (305) man whose "skin [was] appearing very much like wet paper, and [his] forehead [was] covered with those cabalistic signs whose wondrous significance are best known to those who correct the press" (305). From the limbos[385] of "all still-born and abort-

[384] See note 160.

[385] An ironic echo of Dante: "Suspended in that Limbo many a soul / Of mighty worth." *Inferno* (canto IV).

ive publications" (307) to the "deeper division" destined to receive "American re-prints of English publications" (313), the narrator visits one after the other the different categories of publications, from the most apparently innocent or naïve to a "class of books that were unknown in former times" (313), relegated to a place which would correspond, in Dante's Hell, to that dedicated to the worst of all sins: treachery.[386]

In his peregrinations through "the hell of books," the narrator observes the behavior of several kinds of literary works that "have souls as well as men" (306) and have sinned someway or another, and he sorts them out in so many categories, scattered in various areas according to the nature of their sins. One of the kinds which the narrator obviously decries is that of books which are far from being mature pieces and whose "infantine" attitude evokes that of "newborn puppies, kittens with disk eyes unopened, and babes just come to light, . . . whelping, mewing, and squalling at once" (307). Among many other literary failures lies Fenimore Cooper's *The Monikins* (1835) a "work [which] was hastily written" and whose lack of formal achievement proved "that publishers may sometimes mistake their own interests".[387] Moreover, the narrator unquestionably seems to have little consideration for some of the feminine writings of his times, as he scorns "'Young Ladies' Albums,' which it was necessary to souse in the slough, to prevent them from stealing passages from the various works about them" (308), but also Miss Evans's *Resignation* (1828) which suffered from "the injustice and severity of critics" but revealed the "bad taste of the public" for that "first effort" of a "feminine mind" (307), together with Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's *Records of a School* (1835)[388] which is supported by "two of the most abstruse, learned, and incomprehensible of the metaphysical productions of Germany (312); only the Irish female novelist Maria

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386 Treachery is thus defined by Dante: "Fraud, that in every conscience leaves a sting, / May be by man employ'd on one, whose trust / He wins, or on another who withholds / Strict confidence. . . . Whence in the lesser circle, / Point of the universe, dread seat of Dis [the god of the underworld], / The traitor is eternally consum'd." *Inferno* (canto XI: 55-69).

387 Quoted from James Fenimore Cooper's daughter, Susan Fenimore Cooper (1813-1894), *Pages and Pictures from the Writings of James Fenimore Cooper, with Notes by Susan Fenimore Cooper,* New York: W.A. Townsend and Co., 1861, 275. Thirty years later, Mark Twain (1835-1910) wrote about Cooper's literary art: "It has no invention; it has no order, system, sequence, or result; it has no lifelikeness, no thrill, no stir, no seeming of reality; its characters are confusedly drawn" in his essay "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" (1895).

388 See *supra* note 457.

Edgeworth (1767-1849), who wrote with such a "beautiful serenity" (310), seems to merit his praise.

However, even books whose unquestionable qualities are universally acknowledged seem to deserve their unfortunate condition: among them, the works of famous writers: "Fielding, Smollett, Maturin, and Godwin" and even "D'Israeli, Bulwer, and Hugo" (308) and above all Byron,[389] "the Prince of this division of hell" (310), are "longing for repose, and they can get none on account of the insatiable vanity of their authors, whose desire for distinction made them careless of the sentiments they expressed and the principles they advocated" (309). Even the works of the "Infidel" enlightened by reason, "are doomed to everlasting torpor" (311), like those of Voltaire[390] and the German philosophers; but still worse are the newspapers, grotesquely emitting "a confused sound like the quacking of myriads of ducks and geese" (311), placed "deeper in hell than the Infidel publications . . . because they are so much more extensively read, and thereby do much greater mischief" (311). What their "sins" are becomes clearer as the narrator castigates moral dereliction more than literary weaknesses, even if his recurrently ironic and caricatural tone sounds more like a denunciation of superficiality, obscurantism and prejudices than like a sincere conservative condemnation.

Metaphysics and religion are not better treated and "all the false works upon theology which have been written since the beginning of the Christian era" together with "all the minor works to which it gave origin" (312), and above all "German Metaphysical works, and other treaties of a similar unintelligible character" are condemned "to wander about all eternity in the hopeless maze of this labyrinth" (312). But the worse sort of books, confined in "the original chaos on which [the devil's] domains are founded" (313) is that of "American re-prints of English publications" (313). The narrator's guide rightfully asserts that his evil domain is founded on American reprints, often pirated from original or official editions.[391] Indeed, this prac-

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389 See *supra* note 446 and 447; *infra* note 161.

390 See *supra* note 454.

391 Among many other examples, in 1744, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) pirated Samuel Richardson's (1689-1761) first novel *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) ; in 1842, Harper issued a pirated version of Charles Dickens's (1812-1870) *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843).

tice, encouraged by the absence of extended copyright laws, was supposed to favor the education of the Americans, but in fact established an unfair competition for local writers, often obliged to pay their publishers. The Copyright Act of 1790, inspired by the lexicographer Noah Webster (1758-1843),[392] was designed for "the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies" but it protected only "the author and authors of any map, chart, book or books already printed within these United States, being a citizen or citizens thereof",[393] leaving the possibility to copy foreign authors freely.

Published twelve years after John Neal's *American Writers* (1824),[394] this little pseudo-philosophical tale not only denounces the mores and the wrongs of the American publishing circles of the time, but it establishes moral criteria for the literary world by underlining their occasional absence. Its use of parody establishes by contrast, the bases of an authentic code of ethics.

Hans the Horse-Breaker

This story would have slavishly followed the classic pattern of the Faustian tragedy, if its denouement had not differed markedly from the standard ending. It is set back in time, in "a little isolated township, which is perhaps unchronicled on any map" where life is that of "the original Dutch settlers . . . who are still "cherishing immemorial customs, and full of old world virtue and morality" (315). Here again, the setting is that of the colonial past of the United States, a literary region assuredly conducive to the telling of Americanized supernatural tales inspired by European legends. The style reflects adequately the author's care to render the ancient background of his narrative, in particular with his occasional use of archaisms such as "wroth" (320) or "monied" (321), even if humor is never absent as, for example, when the narrator ironizes about the protagon-

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[392] His major work *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), contributed to the standardization of the American language.

[393] As it appeared in the *Columbian Sentinel* of July, 17, 1790, published in Boston.

[394] John Neal (1793-1876), American author and literary critic. He was a promoter of American literature to which he brought a clean, sometimes simple style, far from British literary standards.

ist's recklessness by asserting that he "verily believe[s] he would have faced a cannon's mouth to sustain his reputation—especially if the deadly engine were unloaded" (317).

The personality of the protagonist, Hans Hopper, borrows from several of Washington Irving's characters, not unlike the general tone of the narrative:[395] Rip van Winkle, but also Brom Bones and Dolph Heiliger,[396] at least as far as his "extreme mobility of body" (316) is concerned. Like Rip, Hans's father proves unable to run his estate as "[h]e was grievously afflicted with the murrain among his cattle and the blight among his corn, and if he ever had a crop that promised remarkably well, the neighbors' cows were sure to break into the field, or some prodigious hailstorm to arise, which made no havoc on adjacent farms" (316).[397] Similarly, he is the victim of a "vixen of a wife" (316) who owes nothing to Dame van Winkle. While Rip had "an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor," Hans himself "was much too indolent to work" (316), and when "not a dog would bark at [Rip] throughout the neighborhood," then in the same way "not a dog could come into the town without acknowledging the charm of [Hans's] voice" (316). But Hans himself is far from sharing Rip's indolence and his reputation of a trouble-maker in the neighborhood equals that of Irving's Brom van Brunt:[398] "when engaged in the perpetration of any mischief, there was no labor too severe for him. He grew up the terror of all the good housewives in the village" (316). Both men are "strongly-built, with square shoulders" (316), and while Brom "was famed for great knowledge and skill in horsemanship, being as dexterous on horseback as a Tartar," Hans is also an expert in horses and he "could subdue the fiercest horse" (317) so that his reputation owed him the

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395 On humor in Washington Irving, see Daniel Royot "Washington Irving et Diedrich Knickerbocker : L'humour de Janus sur les rives de l'Hudson" *Alizés*, n° 17, "Washington Irving", Université de La Réunion, June 1999.

396 See "Rip van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-1820); "Dolph Heiliger" and its sequel "The Stormship" in *Bracebridge Hall* (1822).

397 Rip's supposed "ill luck" is described in almost similar terms: "every thing about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do" ("Rip van Winkle").

398 Brom van Brunt, alias Brom Bones, "was always ready for either a fight or a frolic" so that the "old dames" look at him "with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will" ("The Legend of Sleepy Hollow").

nickname of Dare-Devil Hans.[399] Dolph Heiliger may have served as an other model for Hans Hopper for he also "was continually getting into scrapes" and "could not, for the life of him, resist any new temptation to fun and mischief".[400] But the main source of inspiration, as far as the general intrigue is concerned, is certainly Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker," in which a man in need, afflicted with "a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm" signs a contract with "Old Scratch" to become "a rich and mighty man."[401] Both men meet the "Evil One" at night in a dark forest and they cannot resist his shifty proposition. However, the unexpected ending transforms the supernatural tale into a farce when the aptly named Dare-Devil Hans eventually subdues his master at the end of the three-year compact, beating him on his favorite ground: horsemanship. Dominated by Hans, the devil is turned into a horse as he "roared beneath the lash, reared, plunged, and used every mischievous exertion of which his tremendous strength was capable, to unseat his rider, but in vain. At length, when he was totally obedient, Hans vaulted lightly to the ground and let him go. The liberated demon fled like a bolt from a bow" (322), and Hans lived happily ever after.

The forces of Evil have often been the source of inspiration of literary works, and among them, Goethe's Faustian tragedy is emblematic of the vanity of dealing with Satan. By ridiculing the Devil in person, this American tale does not only declare its independence from the Faustian line, but at the same time from the European tradition, by showing humorously how a Dutch colonist in the New World can outwit the Devil himself on the American ground and make a fortune with his "valuable" (322) horse.

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399 Brom's favorite horse was also called Daredevil.

400 "Dolph Heiliger" (1822).

401 Washington Irving, "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1819) in *Tales of a Traveller* (1824). See Alain Geoffroy "Desire and Death in Washington Irving's 'The Devil and Tom Walker'" *Alizés*, n° 17, "Washington Irving", Université de La Réunion, June 1999.

A Visit to the Clerk of the Weather

In this fable, possibly written by Nathaniel Hawthorne[402] and partly inspired by Dante's *Inferno*,[403] a "sober citizen" (323) is conducted to the lair of the Clerk of the Weather so that he can learn whether and why the coming spring would be late or early. Although he is not actually led to the Devil's very home, many disquieting details color his adventure with devilish undertones. His guide, "a little old woman in a gray cloak . . . encircl[es] [his] arm as if [he] had been in the grasp of a skeleton" (323), and from the outset, she makes it clear that she does not belong to the world of God by stressing the protagonist's own latent unbelief: "You have taken *his* name in vain . . . often enough, and it is evident that you believe not in his existence" (323).

At the term of his journey, the protagonist discovers "a pile of rocks of a singular form" whose shape irresistibly evokes that of a volcano: "About a dozen tall, slate-colored rocks—each one of which was seven acres in height—had been thrown together in a circle in the form of a pyramid, the points meeting at the top . . . I observed a light smoke rising up through a small aperture on the very apex of this gigantic cone" (324). In this abode lives a formidable Vulcan,[404] "a venerable, stately old man, with long gray locks . . . [and a] massive frame and [a] fierce expression [in] his eyes" (324), while in his forge, a "quantity of thunderbolts [are] manufactured" and earthquakes are patched up (327). Soon the visit takes a humorous turn, especially when the old man answers, after the visitor has indicated that he came from Boston: "I do not recollect any planet of that name" (325), which makes the fame of the revolutionary city quite relative...

The next backbiting from the Clerk of the Weather's part aims at "persons on [the protagonist's] little planet who pretend to be of [his] council, and who send out little printed missiles, pretending to great ingenuity, wherein it is set forth that on such and such a day there

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402 Although published anonymously, this tale is generally attributed to Hawthorne (1804-1864). The same character reappears in his short story "A Select Party" (1844).

403 See *supra* note 429.

404 The son of Jupiter and blacksmith of the gods, who manufactured thunderbolts for the exclusive use of his father..

shall be a tempest—thunder and lightning—or fervent heat" (325). Weather forecasting was still quite approximative in those days and often based either on weather lores[405] or local observation. Meteorology began to be more reliable after the thermometer and the barometer were perfected in the seventeenth century, but before the invention of the telegraph in 1837, no integration of scattered local data could be made, which did not prevent various publications to propose weather forecasts eagerly-awaited, especially by farmers and sailors. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) was a pioneer in this domain and he lay the bases of scientific weather forecasting. He proposed a theory of the formation of storms[406] prolonging Edmond Halley's discovery of the origin of winds,[407] and suggested the establishment of a network of observers, which would only be realized later on, thanks to the invention of the telegraph,[408] by James Pollard Espy (1785-1860), then meteorologist to the War (1842) and Navy (1848) departments.

In colonial times and before meteorology became a federal business, the information about the weather was conveyed by several widely read almanachs, among which were Franklin's famous *Poor Richard's Almanac*[409] and the *Old Farmer's Almanac*[410] which is still published annually today. But weather forecasts were not always seriously dealt with and were often parodied. To some extent, this text belongs to the same tradition of humor, that of a self-derisive America embodied by the congressman on the head of whom a thunderbolt "unfortunately alighted" and "bounded back to the skies" (327). Although he never actually was a "member of Congress,"[411] the person

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405 Pre-scientific maxims or adages supposed to predict the weather.

406 The lunar eclipse of Autumn 1743 was the occasion for Franklin to elaborate a theory of the formation of the tempests in New England. See Keith C. Heidorn, "Eclipsed by Storm" in *The Weather Doctor's Weather Almanac,* October 2003.

407 The British astronomer Edmond Halley (1656-1742) discovered that winds are caused by air flowing in to replace heated air that has risen, and thus that they were conditioned by barometric pressure.

408 In 1844, Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872) sent the famous message "What hath God wrought" over a wire from Washington to Baltimore.

409 Published yearly from 1732 to 1757. It proposed a calendar, weather forecasts, astronomical and astrological information, as well as poems and a collection of Franklin's aphorisms and proverbs.

410 Founded by Robert Bailey Thomas (1766-1846) in 1792, *The Farmer's Almanac* became the *Old Farmer's Almanac* after 1832. It contained weather forecasts, tide tables, information about gardening or astronomy.

411 Franklin served in the Continental Congress from 1775 to 1776.

of Benjamin Franklin, the witty almanach editor, the inventor of the lightning rod and a visionary meteorologist, comes irresistibly to mind.

Lazy Jake. Or the Devil Nonplussed

The myth of Faust, combined with a parodic version of *The Book of Job*,[412] is one more time revisited in this novelette in five chapters which owes a lot to the "yarn" tradition.[413] However, unlike Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker"[414] also inspired by the Faustian contract, the ending is far from being dramatic: announcing the happy denouement of "Hans the Horse-breaker,"[415] it stigmatizes the mortifying defeat of Satan. Chapter I starts like a classic fairy tale as it is staged "[a] long, long while ago, in the good old days when witches had a legal existence" (328), but the mentioning of witches instead of the awaited fairies sets the tone of the narrative from the very outset. The Devil is then recurrently and humorously nicknamed, which discredits his person by making him almost familiar, as he is successively called "old Nick," "old Clootie,"[416] "old Scratch," "old Hornie," "the old Serpent," "he of the fabulous tail,"[417] "Sathan," "Beelzebuth," or else more conventionally "the Prince of Darkness."

Benjamin Peasblossom is a prosperous man owning "houses and lands, and bonds and mortgages, and horses and cattle : and moreover, certain old chests which, despite their iron ribs, were near bursting with the gold and silver" (328) that he acquired with the help of the Devil, who in due time—relevantly on the week preceding "quarter day"[418]—comes to claim his due. However, Benjamin, who refuses to fulfil his part of the contract, by referring to "a proviso [according to which] if the said Benjamin at the day of for-

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412 One of the books of the Christian Old Testament. See *supra* note 437.

413 The "yarn" was a long often complex narrative of real or fictitious adventures told in a humoristic tone, belonging to the New England folklore.

414 See *infra* note 168.

415 "Hans the Horse-breaker", *The American Monthly Magazine*, February 1836.

416 See *supra* note 328.

417 See *supra* note 35.

418 See *supra* note 481.

feiture could enjoin old Clootie a task that he could not perform in a twelvemonth, then he, the said Benjamin, should stand free and absolved" (328), defies his creditor "to make [his] neighbor, Lazy Jake, rich" (330). The sequel of the story is inspired by another myth, that of Job who was similarly tested by Satan who had defied God to preserve Job's faith even in his worst moments of adversity.

Like Job before him, Jake had "a fairer chance for a life of prosperity" (334) as he inherited, besides a thriving farm, "money out at interest, and a secret hoard of Spanish dollars" (334). However, his proverbial laziness led him to lose one by one the riches he held from his ancestors, until "[i]n a few years his money was called in, and in a few more spent" (334). This flaw of character echoes Irving's Rip van Winkle who likewise displayed "an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor" and "declared it was of no use to work on his farm."[419] Moreover, the description of the degradation of Jake's estate borrows substantially from another tale by Irving, like in the evocation of his extreme poverty which echoes that of Tom Walker's wretched farm, embodied by the poor "wall-eyed horse . . . hanging his head out of the weather-boards of the stable" (335), a miserable double of Tom's scrawny "horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron."[420] In the same Irvingian vein,[421] Jack has a dream of the revelation of the presence of a treasure buried by his ancestor: "he had a vision of his grandfather, who told him that in the orchard . . . was buried a huge jar of gold, which he had hidden there during an Indian incursion, and afterwards left as a safe deposit" (337). Jake, who once was "a mass of soft unhealthy fat" (335), eventually "gr[ows] thinner and thinner" (337), while his poverty increases under the malevolent undermining action of Satan, as enigmatically as Job's: "[Jake] could not see into it; it was very mysterious" (337). Having unsuccessfully tried to make Jake rich by encouraging him to marry a "fat widow, aged forty and upwards, of large person and income" (339), the Devil tries to seduce Jake at all cost, resorting to all the supposedly morally unacceptable means he can think of, such as "pride, ambition, patriotism, and I know not what beside" (340), but all in vain. Like his illustrious biblical predecessor, Jake resists both

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419 Washington Irving, "Rip van Winkle" (1819).

420 Washington Irving, "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1819).

421 In "Dolph Heiliger" (1822), the protagonist is informed by an old man in a dream that a treasure is hidden in a well.

temptation and mortal sins—among which patriotism—, and like in the *Book of Job*, the Devil eventually gives up, vanquished by a quality apparently as powerful as faith: laziness, a comparison which could not have failed to offend puritan ears still numerous in the first half of the century.

However, the provocative tone of the story is tempered with a good solid humor following the tradition of many fashionable New England writings.[422] The longstanding puritan—or Jeffersonian—opposition between the country and the town is deliberately blurred for satirical reasons in this tale as the village is not more virtuous than New York, the city of all sins in which brokers make their wealth, not unlike Benjamin, with the Devil's help, and where the avaricious dairyman's milk is scandalously devoid of cream... The interview between Benjamin and the Devil turns into a farce when Susan, the "*heroine introduced*" (328) in the subtitle of chapter I, in fact "a fine bouncing maiden of fourteen" (330), appears unexpectedly in the middle of the conversation and cannot resist Satan's advances. The author exploits the conventional goldmine of women's moral weaknesses by revealing that afterward, Satan "became the god of her idolatry" and that "even at church, the poor ignorant creature fancied he might be present" (341). More than misogynistic, the intention is to denounce in a light tone the too numerous puritan writings condemning women as the mere playthings of carnal desires for want of moral strength and discernment. The author's irony is still visible when he mentions the classical writers which were the customary references of right-minded readers: "The Christian Soldier," the British theologian Jeremy Taylor,[423] and even Shakespeare and Byron; similarly, the Devil is shown as "a tall "Werter-faced sort of a man," "melancholy and gentleman-like" (329), a cutting comparison directed not so much at Goethe[424] or Ben Johnson,[425] but at the conformist intellectual and elitist tastes of the New England Brahmins.[426] In the same way, all the village notables are shown under their meanest col-

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422 On humor in nineteenth-century New England, see Daniel Royot, *L'humour américain: des puritains aux yankees*, Lyon: Presse Universitaires de Lyon, 1980.

423 See *supra* note 483.

424 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), an epistolary novel, partly autobiographical, telling the tragic story of a young artist who falls in love with a woman who is already engaged and eventually kills himself out of despair.

425 See *supra* note 480.

426 Members of the cultural and social elite of the descendants of old New England families.

ors: the greedy parson dreams of a "pulpit of the next town which gave a higher salary" (332), whereas the apothecary dreams that he poisons his patients to increase his income as well as that of the sexton, his partner in the business; as to the doctor, he refuses to visit a dying person knowing "that he would never be paid for his services" (332). However, times have changed since then, and the world is now ruled by brokers who, according to the Devil's "great idea," grow rich by "buying and selling stock on time." (341) They all echo Benjamin's inextinguishable thirst for wealth, while making money at all cost seems to have become the worst of sins, in the real world as well as in this humorous parody of virtuous capitalism.

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De Diabolo.

THE very existence of the Devil has been denied in these latter days of unbelief and schism ; and this I pronounce to be a most foul, abominable, and soul-destroying heresy ; and, in all probability, one of the most cunning devices of the great enemy himself, to enable him the better to accomplish his wicked ends. With this, however, we have nothing to do, as our object is to write a treatise and not a sermon.

The Greeks and Romans had no Devil ; and how they managed to get along without one, is a perfect mystery to me ; to be sure their gods, and more especially their goddesses, went very far towards supplying his place ; but nothing could make up for the want of a real unsophisticated Devil. When we reflect how much he has to do with all the concerns of life, what a resource in all dilemmas, what a comfort to the desperate, what a support to the most abandoned and wretched, what an all-accommodating friend, we can hardly imagine the machinery of life, among classic nations, to have gone on with any sort of smoothness or regularity without him. One remarkable feature in those nations, was the absence of what we call society. They do not appear to have been acquainted with such a system. Society, as it exists among modern civilized nations enlisting in its numbers all who pretend to rank or standing in the world, with all its laws, stronger than the fiat of a despot, not bending under the terror of dungeons and chains, nor even giving way before the slow but visible approach of death, holding us in the iron grasp of etiquette ; all this was unknown to them.

This universal friend, our great enemy, "*notre ami l'ennemi*," has always made his character conformable to the times, and has evidently been deeply imbued at every period with the spirit of the age. Among the ancient Hebrews he assumed the same simplicity of

character by which men were distinguished in those early times ; and what Job would have done, if Satan had been up to his present tricks in those days, I know not—but I am thinking his patience would have been less famous[427] if he had been tasked as the Devil tasks us now a days — for instance, in reading Cooper's novels, Cary, Lea & Blanchard's edition.[428] Since the days of Job he has made his appearance in several very distinguished forms, besides the constant care he has taken of the ordinary affairs of life. Nor have there been wanting men of sufficient assurance to call upon him in his own dominions, *chez lui*. The first and most remarkable of these visiters is, undoubtedly, Dante.[429] The great Florentine, in his journey down the infernal tunnel, saw, to be sure, a number of minor devils ; but it was not till he reached the bottom[430] that he came into the presence of the great Lucifer, Devil of devils, the father of evil, the enemy of God and men, stretching his gigantic wings over the sea of ice, the everlasting prison of traitors.[431] Dante, I believe, is the only poet who has imagined hell to be an icehouse, the contrary theory being supported by Milton[432] and others, and rendered nearly certain by the testimony of many a writer, now departed, whose experience is not to be doubted. Chaucer was the second distinguished poet who made a visit to Satan in his own dominions.[433] He was accompanied on this enterprise by an Angel, who very politely did the honors of the place to him. After wandering about for some time viewing all the curiosities

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427 In the Old Testament, Job, a prosperous virtuous man, was severely tested by Satan who imposed upon him a series of hardships and afflictions until he lost all he owned. Despite his disarray and resentment, Job did not lose his faith and was eventually rewarded by God. Hence the phrase "as patient as Job."

428 Carey, Lea & Blanchard, a publisher of Philadelphia. All the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, including *The Last of the Mohicans; a Narrative of 1757,* 2 vol. (1826), originally appeared in this edition, from 1820 to 1850.

429 Alighieri Dante (1265-1321), Italy's greatest poet. His masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy* (1308-1321), relates a journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise.

430 Guided by Virgil, Dante goes through the nine circles of Hell, each one more evil than the other, until he reaches the last one where Satan resides.

431 In the last circle, the damned are frozen in a lake of ice and ordered at various heights in four concentric circles (Cantos 32 through 34).

432 John Milton (1608-1674), an English poet, best known for having written *Paradise Lost* (1667), in which Satan and his damned angels are chained in Hell to a lake of fire. Incidentally, Milton's *Areopagitica* and his republican writings were consulted by the drafters of the Constitution of the United States.

433 Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) the greatest poet of medieval England, the author of *The Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400). After having heard "The Friar's Tale," the Summoner, in the prologue to his tale, evokes the story of a friar's visit to Hell, during which he was made aware of the complicity of friars and fiends.

and obtaining several introductions to the land, Chaucer inquires, with no small astonishment why he had seen no monks there. "Is it possible," says he to the Angel, "that there are none of them here ?" "By no means," replied his celestial companion ; and leading him to the side of our great enemy, he said—"Haud up thy tail, Sathanas."[434] Whereupon the Devil gave his tail a whisk, and out flew myriads of friars from under it like swarms of mud-wasps from their nest. When Chaucer had seen enough of them, the Angel ordered them all back again to their hive, and the Devil slapped down his tail and fastened them in.

The next remarkable exhibition of the Devil is in Milton—and his Satan is too lofty a character to be properly discussed here. Every one knows what he is, and I will say nothing about him to remark that he is the last instance of a heroic Devil.[435] Since the days dilutes, our great enemy has never attempted sublimity of character. Goethe's Mephistopheles[436] is a simple incarnation of placid malice—he would have made an excellent ambassador and minister plenipotentiary to any modern court in Europe, to say nothing of the figure he might have cut at Washington, if he could have managed not to be outwitted there. I have sometimes thought, when I have been reading certain of our newspapers, that he would have made an admirable editor.—But the editors themselves know best whether the duties would not have proved too arduous for him. Now, only observe the difference between a German and an English Devil—between Goethe's creation and Coleridge's ;[437] the latter is a gentlemanly Devil, which is a phase of Satan that would never appear in Germany ; Mephistopheles is hardly human enough to be likened to any mortal in Germany ; if he had taken the character of a man there, it would undoubtedly have been that of a student, with long, dirty-looking, sandy hair, and wild blue eyes, and a face ten times as ugly

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434 (sic). In middle English : "Hold up thy tayl, thou sathanas! — quod he" (1689), in Chaucer's "The Summoner's Prologue." See also *supra* note 35.

435 In *Paradise Lost,* Satan appears as a heroic character whose seduction is all the more dreadfully efficient.

436 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), German writer and scientist, author of *Faust* (1808; 1832) in which the eponymous alchemist sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for youth and power.

437 "The Devil's Thoughts" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (see note 256) & Robert Southey, first published in *The Morning Post and Gazetteer*, 6 September 1799 (N° 9569).

as his own ; shabbily dressed ; and walking more like a locomotive than a man.—But in England he appeared like a gentleman,

> "And backwards and forwards he switched his tail
> As a gentleman switches his cane."[438]

And he probably wore a handsome coat from Stultz's,[439] and a most knowing hat, &c. &c., and he behaved very much like a gentleman, too, throughout his walk. Tom Moore's Devil in London[440] was quite a gentleman, though he had some difficulties with the editors, which is apt to be the case with all gentlemen as the times go. Indeed, the Devil has become so much like a gentleman in these latter days, that it is impossible sometimes to distinguish one from the other.

I had written thus far when sleep overpowered me as I sat in my arm chair ; the pen fell from my hand, and my head reclined upon the desk. I had been thinking so much about the Devil in my waking hours that the same idea pursued me after I had fallen asleep. I heard a gentle rap at the door, and having bawled out as usual, "come in," a little gentleman entered, wrapped in a large blue cloth cloak, with a slouched hat, and goggles over his eyes. After bowing and scraping with considerable ceremony, he took off his hat, and threw his cloak over the back of a chair, when I immediately perceived that my visiter was no mortal. His face was hideously ugly ; the skin appearing very much like wet paper, and the forehead covered with those cabalistic signs whose wondrous significance are best known to those who correct the press.[441] On the end of his long hooked nose there seemed to me to be growing like a carbuncle, the first letter of the alphabet, glittering with ink and ready to print. I observed, also, that each of his fingers and toes, or rather claws, was in the same manner terminated by one of the letters of the alphabet ; and as he slashed round his tail to brush a fly off his nose, I noticed that the letter Z

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438 Which the sequel of the poem confirms : "And how then was the devil drest? / Oh! he was in his Sunday's best: / His jacket was red and his breeches were blue, / And there was a hole where the tail came through."

439 Joseph Stultz, the English dandy Beau Brummel's tailor. See note 160.

440 Thomas Moore (1779-1852), an Irish poet and songwriter who wrote: "Though an angel should write, still 'tis devils must print." *The Fudges in England.* Letter III (1835).

441 "Printer's devil's," in Thomas Moore's words. "A Blue Love Song to Miss— " *The Complete Poems of Sir Thomas Moore Collected by Himself with Explanatory Notes.*

formed the extremity of that useful member. While I was looking with no small astonishment and some trepidation at my extraordinary visiter, he took occasion to inform me that he had taken the liberty to call, as he was afraid I might forget him in the treatise which I was writing—an omission which he assured me would cause him no little mortification. "In me," says he, "you behold the prince and patron of printers' devils. My province is to preside over the hell of books ; and if you will only take the trouble to accompany me a little way, I will show you some of the wonders of that world." As my imagination had lately been much excited by perusing Dante's, I was delighted with an adventure which promised to turn out something like his wonderful journey, and I readily consented to visit my new friend's dominions, and we sallied forth together. As we pursued our way, my conductor endeavored to give me some information respecting the world I was about to enter, in order to prepare me for the wonders I should encounter there. "You must know," remarked he, "that books have souls as well as men ; and the moment any work is published, whether successful or not, its soul appears in precisely the same form in another world ; either in this domain, which is subject to me, or in a better region, over which I have no control. I have power only to exhibit the place of punishment for bad books, periodicals, pamphlets, and, in short, publications of every kind."

We now arrived at the mouth of a cavern, which I did not remember to have ever noticed before, though I had repeatedly passed the spot in my walks. It looked to me more like the entrance to a coal-mine than any thing else, as the sides were entirely black. Upon examining them more closely, I found that they were covered with a black fluid which greatly resembled printer's ink, and which seemed to corrode and wear away the rocks of the cavern wherever it touched them. "We have lately received a large supply of political publications," said my companion, "and hell is perfectly saturated with their maliciousness. We carry on a profitable trade upon the earth, by retailing this ink to the principal political editors. Unfortunately, it is not found to answer very well for literary publications, though they have tried it with considerable success in printing the London Quarterly[442] and several of the other important Reviews."

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442 The *London Quarterly Review* was a publication of the Methodist Church of England, founded in 1809 by the publisher John Murray (1778-1843) on Walter Scott's initiative, to oppose the liberal views of the *Edinburgh Review*.

The cavern widened as we advanced, and we came presently into a vast open plain, which was bounded on one side by a wall so high that it seemed to reach the very heavens. As we approached the wall I observed a vast gateway before us, closed up by folding doors. The gates opened at our approach, and we entered. I found myself in a warm sandy valley, bounded on one side by a steep range of mountains. A feeble light shone upon it, much like that of a sick chamber, and the air seemed confined and stifling like that of the abode of illness. My ears were assailed by a confused whining noise, as if all the litters of new-born puppies, kittens with disk eyes unopened, and babes just come to light, in the whole world, were brought into one spot, and were whelping, mewing, and squalling at once. I turned in mute wonder to my guide for explanation ; and he informed me that I now beheld the destined abode of all still-born and abortive publications ; and the infantine noises which I heard were only their feeble wailing for the miseries they had endured in being brought into the world. I now saw what the feebleness of the light had prevented my observing before, that the soil was absolutely covered with books of every size and shape, from the little diamond almanac up to the respectable quarto. I saw folios there. These books were crawling about and tumbling over each other like blind whelps uttering, at the same time, the most mournful cries. I observed one, however, which remained quite still, occasionally groaning a little, and appeared like an overgrown toad oppressed with its own heaviness. I drew near, and read upon the back, "Resignation, a Novel."[443] The cover flew open, and the title-page immediately began to address me. I walked off, however, as fast as possible, only distinguishing a few words about "the injustice and severity of critics ;" "bad taste of the public ;" "very well considering ;" "first effort ;" "feminine mind," &c. &c. I presently discovered a very important-looking little book, stalking about among the rest in a great passion, kicking the others out of the way, and swearing like a trooper ; till at length, apparently exhausted with its efforts, it sunk down to rise no more. "Ah ha !" exclaimed my little diabolical friend, "here is a new comer ; let's see who he is ;" and coming up, he turned it over with his foot so that we could see the back of it, upon which was printed "The Monikins,[444]

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[443] Miss Evans, *Resignation; A Novel*, 2 vols. Portsmouth: New Hampshire, 1828.

[444] A popular satirical animal fable written by James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) in 1835.

by the Author of, &c. &c." I noticed that the book had several marks across it, as if some one had been flogging the unfortunate work. "It is only the marks of the scourge," said my companion, "which the critics have used rather more severely, I think, than was necessary." I expected, after all the passion I had seen, and the great importance of feeling, arrogance, and vanity the little work had manifested, that it would have some pert remarks to make to us ; but it was so much exhausted that it could not say a word. At the bottom of the valley was a small pond of a milky hue, from which there issued a perfume very much like the smell of bread and butter. An immense number of thin, prettily bound manuscript books were soaking in this pond of milk, all of which, I was informed, were "Young Ladies' Albums," which it was necessary to souse in the slough, to prevent them from stealing passages from the various works about them. As soon as I heard what they were, I ran away with all my speed, having a mortal dread of these books.

We had now traversed the valley, and, approaching the barrier of mountains, we found a passage cut through, which greatly resembled the Pausilipo,[445] near Naples ; it was closed on the side towards the valley, only with a curtain of white paper, upon which were printed the names of the principal reviews, which my conductor assured me were enough to prevent any of the unhappy works we had seen from coming near the passage.

As we advanced through the mountains, occasional gleams of light appeared before us, and immediately vanished, leaving us in darkness. My guide, however, seemed to be well acquainted with the way, and we went on fearlessly till we emerged. into an open field, lighted up by constant flashes of lightning, which glared from every side ; the air was hot, and strongly impregnated with sulphur. "Each department of my dominions," said the Devil, receives its light from the works which are sent there. You are now surrounded by glittering but evanescent corrucations of the more recent novels." Thy department of hell was never very well supplied till quite lately, though Fielding, Smollett, Maturin, and Godwin,[446] did what they could for

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445 The Seiano Grotto, an 800-meter tunnel through the Posillipo hill, built by the Romans.

446 Henry Fielding (1707-1754), English novelist and dramatist, the author of *Tom Jones* (1749). Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771), Scottish writer of picaresque novels such as *Peregrine Pickle* (1751). Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824) Irish author of the Gothic novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). William Godwin (1756-1836), English author and political

us. Our greatest benefactors have been D'Israeli, Bulwer, and Victor Hugo ;[447] and this glare of light, so painful to our eyes, proceeds chiefly from their books. There was a tremendous noise like the rioting of an army of drunken men, with horrible cries and imprecations, and fiend-like laughing, which made my blood curdle ; and snob a scrambling and fighting among the books, as I never saw before. I could not imagine at first what could be the cause of this, till I discovered at last a golden hill rising up like a cone in the midst of the plane, with just room enough for one book on the summit ; and I found that the novels were fighting like so many devils for the occupation of this place. One work, however, had gained possession of it, and seemed to maintain its hold with a strength and resolution which bade defiance to the rest. I could not at first make out the name of this book, which seemed to stand upon its golden throne like the Prince of Hell ; but presently the whole arch of the heavens glared with new brilliancy and the magic name of "Vivian Grey"[448] flashed from the book in letters of scorching light. I was much afraid, however, that Vivian would not long retain his post ; for I saw Pelham and Peregrine Pickle, and the terrible Melmoth[449] with his glaring eyes, coming together to the assault, when a whirlwind seized them all four and carried them away to a vast distance, leaving the elevation vacant for some other competitor. "There is no peace to the wicked, you see," said my Asmodeus.[450] "These books are longing for repose, and they can get none on account of the insatiable vanity of their authors, whose desire for distinction made them careless of the sentiments they expressed and the principles they advocated. The

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philosopher; his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) advocated that human beings should live without laws or institutions for they are basically guided by reason.

447 Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), the founder of the British Conservative party, published his first novel, *Vivian Grey* in 1826. He served as Prime Minister in 1868 and from 1874 to 1880. Edward George Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873), English novelist, author of historical novels such as *Pelham* (1828) or *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). Victor Hugo (1802-1885), a towering figure in nineteenth-century French literature; in 1836, he was already known as the author of the revolutionary play *Hernani* (1830) and the historical novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831).

448 Published in 1827, Disraeli's novel, portraying the career of an ambitious young man, was an immediate success.

449 Bulwer-Lytton's *Pelham* (1828), partly inspired by Disraeli's *Vivian Grey,* fed popular gossips on the leading figures of the time; like Smollett's picaresque novel *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), it fictionalizes the world of dandyism. In Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), a man sells his soul to the devil in exchange for a hundred extra years of life.

450 A demon of the Hebrew history in the *Book of Tobit.*

great characteristic of works of this stamp is action, intense, painful action. They have none of the beautiful serenity which shines in Scott[451] and Edgeworth ;[452] and they are condemned to illustrate, by an eternity of contest here, the restless spirit with which they are inspired."

While I was looking on with fearful interest in the mad combat before me, the horizon seemed to be darkened, and a vast cloud rose up in the image of a gigantic eagle, whose wings stretched from the east to the west till he covered the firmament. In his talons he carried an open book, at the sight of which the battle around me was calmed ; the lightnings ceased to flash, and there was an awful stillness. Then suddenly there glared from the book a sheet of fire, which rose in columns a thousand feet high, and tilled the empyrean with intense light ; the pillars of flame curling and wreathing themselves into monstrous letters, till they were fixed in one terrific glare, and I read—"BYRON."[453] Even my companion quailed before the awful light, and I covered my face with my hands. When I withdrew them, the cloud and the book had vanished, and the contest was begun again —"You have seen the Prince of this division of hell," said my guide.

We now began rapidly to descend into the bowels of the earth ; and, after sinking some thousand feet, I found myself on terra firma again, and walking a little way, we came to a gate of massive ice, over which was written in vast letters—"My heritage is despair." We passed through, and immediately found ourselves in a vast basin of lead, which seemed to meet the horizon on every side. A bright light shone over the whole region ; but it was not like the genial light of the sun. It chilled me through ; and every ray that fell upon me seemed like the touch of ice. The deepest silence prevailed ; and though the valley was covered with books, not one moved or uttered a sound. I drew near to one, and I shivered with intense cold as I read upon it— "*Voltaire*."[454] "Behold," said the demon, "the hell of infidel books ; the light which emanates from them is the light of reason,

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451 See note 203.

452 Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), Irish novelist, author of novels of Irish life such as *Castle Rackrent* (1800).

453 George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), author of *Manfred* (1817), *Childe Harold* (1812-1818), *Don Juan* (1819-1824) See note 161.

454 François Marie Arouet, *alias* Voltaire (1694-1778): author of poetry, subversive political treatises and satirical novels such as *Candide* (1759).

and they are doomed to everlasting torpor." I found it too cold to pursue my investigations any farther in this region, and I gladly passed on from the leaden gulf of Infidelity.

I had no sooner passed the barrier which separated this department from the next, than I heard a confused sound like the quacking of myriads of ducks and geese, and a great flapping of wings ; of which I soon saw the cause. "You are in the hell of newspapers," said my guide. And sure enough, when I looked up I saw thousands of newspapers flying about with their great wooden backbones, and the padlock dangling like a bobtail at the end, flapping their wings and hawking at each other like mad. After circling about in the air for a little while, and biting and tearing each other as much as they could, they plumped down, head first into a deep black-looking pool, and were seen no more. "We place these newspapers deeper in hell than the Infidel publications," said the Devil ; "because they are so much more extensively read, and thereby do much greater mischief. It is a kind of pest of which there is no end ; and we are obliged to allot the largest portion of our dominions to containing them."

We now came to an immense pile of a leaden hue, which I found at last to consist of old worn-out type, which was heaped up to form the wall of the next division. A monstrous *u*, turned bottom upwards (in this way ∩) formed the arch of a gateway through which we passed ; and then traversed a drawbridge, which was thrown across a river of ink, upon whose banks millions of horrible little demons were sporting. I presently saw that they were employed in throwing into the black stream a quantity of books which were heaped up on the shore. As I looked down into the stream, I saw that they were immediately devoured by the most hideous and disgusting monsters which were floundering about there. I looked at one book, which had crawled out after being thrown into the river ; it was dripping with filth, but I distinguished on the back the words—"Don Juan."[455] It had hardly climbed up the bank, however, when one of the demons gave it a kick, and sent it back into the stream, where it was immediately swallowed. On the back of some of the books which the little imps were tossing in, I saw the name of—"Rochester," which

[455] Either the long unfinished humorous and satirical poem by Lord Byron (1819-1824) published in 1821, or Molière's (1622-1673) play *Don Juan* (1665) based on the story of the libertine.

showed me the character of them which were sent into this division of the infernal regions.

Beyond this region rose up a vast chain of mountains, which we were obliged to clamber over. After toiling for a long time, we reached the summit, and I looked down upon an immense labyrinth built upon the plain below, in which I saw a great number of large folios, stalking about in solemn pomp, each followed by a number of small volumes and pamphlets, like so many pages or footmen watching the beck of their master "You behold here," said the demon, "all the false works upon theology which have been written since the beginning of the Christian era. They are condemned to wander about to all eternity in the hopeless maze of this labyrinth, each folio drawing after it all the minor works to which it gave origin." A faint light shone from these ponderous tomes ; but it was like the shining of a lamp in a thick mist, shorn of its rays, and illuminating around it. And if my companion had not held a torch before me, I should not have discerned the outlines of this department of the Infernal world. As my eye became somewhat accustomed to the feeble light, I discovered beyond the labyrinth a thick mist, which appeared to rise from some river or lake. "That," said my companion, "is the distinct abode of German Metaphysical works,[456] and other treaties of a similar unintelligible character. They are all obliged to pass through a press ; and if there is any sense in them, it is thus separated from the mass of nonsense in which it is imbedded, and is allowed to escape to a better world. Very few of the works, however, are found to be materially diminished by passing through the press." We had now crossed the plain, and stood near the impenetrable fog, which rose up like a wall before us. In front of it was the press managed by several ugly little demons, and surrounded by an immense number of volumes of every size and shape, waiting for the process which all were obliged to undergo. As I was watching their operations, I saw two very respectable German folios, with enormous clasps, extended like arms, carrying between them a little volume, which they were fondling like a pet child with marks of doating affection. These folios proved to be two of the most abstruse, learned, and incomprehensible of the metaphysical productions of Germany ; and the bant-

456 A movement of thought which, from Christian Thomasius (1655-1724) to Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) critical philosophy, promoted the independence of reason.

ling which they seemed to embrace with so much affection was registered on the back —"Records of a School."[457] I did not find that a single ray of intelligence had been extracted from either of the two after being subjected to the press. As soon as the volumes had passed through the operation of yielding up all the little sense they contained, they plunged into the intense fog, and disappeared for ever.

We next approached the verge of a gulf, which appeared to be bottomless ; and there was dreadful noise, like the war of the elements, and forked flames shooting up from the abyss, which reminded me of the crater of Vesuvius. "You have now reached the ancient limits of hell," said the demon, "and you behold beneath your feet the original chaos on which my domains are founded. But within a few years we have been obliged to build a yet deeper division beyond the gulf to contain a class of books that were unknown in former times." "Pray, what class can be found," I asked, "worse than those which I have already seen, and for which it appears hell was not bad enough ?" "They are American re-prints of English publications" replied he, "and they are generally works of such a despicable character, that they would have found their way here without being republished ; but even where the original work was good, it is so degenerated by the form under which it re-appears in America, that its merit is entirely lost, and it is only fit for the seventh and lowest division of hell."

I now perceived a bridge spanning over the gulf, with an arch that seemed as lofty as the firmament. We hastily passed over, and found that the farthest extremity of the bridge was close by a gate, over which was written three words. "They are the flames of the three furies who reign over this division," said my guide. I of course did not contradict him ; but the words looked very much like some I had seen before ; and the more I examined them, the more difficult was it to convince myself that the inscription was not the same thing as the sign over a certain publishing house in Philadelphia.

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457 *Records of a School* (1835) by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, (1804-1894), American educator, lecturer, and reformer, whose sister Sophia married Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). The book exposes the most advanced educational theories of transcendentalist Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888).

"These," said the Devil, "are called the three furies[458] of the hell of books ; not from the mischief they do there to the works about them but for the unspeakable wrong they did to the same works upon the earth, by re-printing them in their hideous brown paper editions. As soon as they beheld me, they rushed towards me with such piteous accents and head-moving entreaties, that I would intercede to save them from their torment, that I was moved with the deepest compassion, and began to ask my conductor if there were no relief for them. But he hurried me away, assuring me that they only wanted to sell me some of their infernal editions, and the idea of owning any such property was so dreadful that it woke me up directly.

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458 The Furies were frightening female embodiments of vengeance. When Dante and Virgil approached the city of Dis, they encounter the Three Furies or Erinyes: Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone: "three hellish furies stain'd with blood: / In limb and motion feminine they seem'd" (*Inferno* Canto IX: 40-41).

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Hans the Horse-Breaker.

On the good old island of Nassau,[459] not many leagues distant from the ancient city of New-York, there lies a little isolated township, which is perhaps unchronicled on any map. Its houses are scattered sparingly upon the southern shore of the island, and are defended from the keen sea-breezes by the high bluffs that encircle the small bay. The land rises with a gradual swell from the seashore, until it attains a somewhat elevated height, and the hills which oppose their brown summits to the northern blast, are clothed with stunted forest trees, apparently of great antiquity, which, being rather broad-bottomed and rusty, are not unlike the original Dutch settlers[460] of this old-fashioned place. The present inhabitants partake of the amphibious character of their township, being alternately fishermen and farmers, and equally expert in bringing forth the treasures of the sea and land. They are an industrious and thriving race, cherishing immemorial customs, and full of old world virtue and morality. I must except, however, from this eulogy, a certain individual, whose history forms the subject of the present sketch.

Hans Hopper was the only son of one of the most industrious farmers of the village we have mentioned. The old gentleman was a little plodding agriculturalist, but one doomed to suffer variety of ills. It seemed as if the same seasons which were favorable to his neighbors always brought ill luck to him. He was grievously afflicted with the murrain among his cattle and the blight among his corn, and if he ever had a crop that promised remarkably well, the neighbors'

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459 An old name for Long Island, given after King William III who came from the German House of Nassau. The name eventually fell into disuse and reappeared when Nassau County was founded in 1899.

460 Long Island was occupied by the Dutch from 1611 and became part of New Netherland until 1664, when English colonel Richard Nicholls proclaimed Long Island English territory.

cows were sure to break into the field, or some prodigious hailstorm to arise, which made no havoc on adjacent farms. Then he was as unsuccessful in his fishing. Although his nets were formed with extraordinary care, the shad seemed to have a peculiar faculty or getting through them, or the horse-shoes were immeshed in amazing numbers, and broke their way out to the infinite discomfort of Old Hopper. Thus, although as hard-working a man as any in the village, he was doomed to suffer continual losses.

The villagers, who, like the people of most country towns, are never at a loss to account for similar events, declared that the old gentleman's ill luck was attributable to prodigality and want of thrift in his vixen of a wife and his incorrigible son. In truth, the youthful Hopper did not promise to retrieve the fortunes of his family. Being an only son he was the spoiled darling of father and mother, and inherited the faults of each. He was much too indolent to work, but when engaged in the perpetration of any mischief, there was no labor too severe for him. He grew up the terror of all the good housewives in the village, for not a hen could cackle in his hearing without his discovering her favourite retreat and securing the new-laid treasure in all its spotless beauty.

Unfortunately for the villagers, Hans contrived to be on good terms with all the mastiffs of the neighborhood ; not a dog could come into the town without acknowledging the charm of his voice, and giving him a tacit passport to all the treasures that he guarded. Hans was a famous bird charmer, and many an escaped canary has he whistled back to perch, none of which ever returned to its original master. He could wile away squirrels from their autumnal granaries, and call in the screaming wild fowl from the ocean ; in short, he seemed to be a universal favorite. But it is high time that I should attempt some description of the hero of my tale. He was short, but strongly-built, with square shoulders, and a person equally adapted for feats of activity and strength. His limbs were incessantly in motion, and it was even a penance for him to sit quietly at table. But this extreme mobility of body was not participated by the features of his countenance. These remained ever in repose. Sometimes, indeed, his dull blue eyes would light up with the smothered fire of merriment or anger, but in general it was a bootless task to search his countenance for a proof of what was passing in his mind. Let me add that his lips

were thin, his nose sharp, his face covered with light freckles, and his head with wiry reddish hair ; and you will have as complete an idea of his appearance as I can possibly convey.

Hans had no sooner attained his majority, than his father and mother died, leaving him their little property, which consisted of the paternal homestead and a few hundreds in cash at interest. He now began to think of living like a gentleman, and having laid down a few acres to oats, he purchased a fiery young colt, and witched the village with his noble horsemanship. I have mentioned that he possessed a wonderful power over animals, and horses were not exempted from his sway. The secret of his magic was unknown, but, like Cahir na Cappul,[461] the Irish rapparee,[462]

> "He had but to whisper a word, and your horse would trot out of his stall."

Every one has heard of Jerry Sullivan, well known at Newmarket[463] and Epsom,[464] and on the Curragh of Kildare,[465] who was a famous whisperer, and had a magic word by which he could subdue the fiercest horse ; but I take it on me to assert, that not Jerry Sullivan, in his high and palmy days of equestrian distinction, could exert so powerful an influence over his noble steeds as did the redoubtable Hans Hopper. So remarkable, indeed, were the exploits of the latter, that he was called Dare-Devil Hans ; and it was confidently whispered in the cosy coteries that assembled under the patriarchal roof of mine Host of the Green Flagon, that the youthful Hopper was more than a match for the Evil One himself. Hans was aware of the distinction he had gained, and to such a pitch was he inflated thereby, that I verily believe he would have faced a cannon's mouth to sustain his reputation—especially if the deadly engine were unloaded.

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461 The surname of James Sullivan, the whisperer, "a native of the county of Cork, and an awkward ignorant rustic of the lowest class, generally known by the appellation of the Whisperer, and his profession was horse-breaking." after William Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, New York: Collier Publishers, 1881.

462 An archaic word meaning "a vagabond", "a wild Irish plunderer of the 17th century."

463 A city in Suffolk, England, a horse-racing center since the early17th century.

464 A city in British Surrey, famous for its Derby first run in 1779.

465 An Irish county, west of Dublin, with a tradition in horse-breeding and horse-racing since 1741.

Hans had something of a travelled reputation too, for he had more than once passed the low barrier of hills that sheltered the village on one side, and brought news from the fair regions that spread in boundless luxuriance beyond them. Mounted on his fiery colt, he made semi-annual excursions to Oyster-Bay,[466] and once crossed the perilous stream of the East River,[467] and penetrated to Bloomingdael,[468] an exploit which is yet talked of by the gossips of his township. In pleasant summer weather he would trot his horse upon the shining beach of Coney Island,[469] and fairly win the money of the gentlemen jockeys who ran their steeds against him. A couple of months he devoted to the ungrateful task of tilling his paternal acres ; but that once over, he idled away the remaining portion of the year. He was lazy enough to be a poet, but his exploits in literature were confined to the perusal of an odd volume of the Turf Register,[470] and a well-thumbed copy of Degrafton's Farriery.

It was not long before the cash his father left him disappeared ; and, forced to take up some employment, he became a jockey, and passed his time in breeding, training, swapping, and selling horses. He was a constant attendant at the Union and sometimes came off a great winner. But the money thus acquired was always spent in vulgar dissipation—at the tavern or the cockpit ; and Dare-Devil Hans, with all his magic power over horses, had much ado to support his own smart 'bit of blood.'

At length he became quite desperate ; being deprived of the means of keeping up a figure, and revolved the expediency of parting with a favorite horse, which he still kept, notwithstanding the decline of his fortunes. One night, returning homeward rather late, he entered, in a gloomy mood, the piece of woodland which commences on the decline of Flatbush hill, between that and the pretty village of

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466 A village in southeast New York.

467 A tidal strait separating the boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx from Brooklyn and Queens.

468 An old village situated south west of Bloomingdale Road—present-day Broadway. A mental asylum was built there in 1821.

469 A former island, now a peninsula situated south of Brooklyn, NY, with a beach on the Atlantic Ocean; it became a popular resort in the mid-nineteenth century and was originally overcrowded with rabbits ("coney" is an old English name for "rabbit") which were commonly hunted before the place became fashionable.

470 The *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, published for the first time in 1829 by J. S. Skinner in Baltimore.

Flatbush.[471] The axe has somewhat thinned this little forest, but at the time of which I write it was luxuriant and dense. Hans patted the neck of his favorite steed, and sighed at the thought of parting with him. No Arab of the desert was ever more affectionately attached to the animal that carried him. "My poor Selim," said he, "I'm sorry to part with thee, lad, fort thou art, in truth, the horse of my heart. But poverty parts good company—They call me Dare-Devil Hans —'Egad ! I wish I could only get the speech of the Old One, I fancy we could strike a bargain in the strapping of a saddle-girth."

The words had no sooner passed his lips than he "became aware" of a gentlemanly stranger, clad in black, and mounted on a powerful charger of the same sable hue. It did not strike Hans that he had called a spirit from the vasty deep, and he accordingly saluted his companion.

"A fine evening for riding—rather coolish though."

"Cool!" returned the stranger in surprise—"I call it as hot as —" 'twas a *lapsus lingae*, and he checked himself.

"Hot !" cried Hans—"Egad, Sir, you must come from a cold climate."

"The contrary, I assure you," replied the other. They rode on awhile in silence.

"I say," said Hans, with another effort at conversation ; "You've a nice horse under you. Suppose you try paces with me."

The stranger, nothing loth, consented. Each spoke cheerfully to his horse and touched him with the spur. The two horses, fired with emulation, launched at once into the rapid fury of the race. They warm apace, their joints become suppler, their action freer, they toss their manes upon the night-breeze, and snort with joyous enthusiasm. The riders are as men insane—the steeds are as mad as their masters. They stretch like greyhounds in their headlong progress ; the night-breeze alone outstrips them. The flints of Flatbush sparkle for a moment under foot, and then the spire of its hoary church is left away behind. Victory hovered for a moment, and then the black steed shot ahead.

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[471] Originally a Dutch colony of the name of Midwout (1651), captured by the British in 1664, now incorporated in Brooklyn City.

"Pull up ! pull up !" cried Hans, reining in his reeking nag. "you've distanced the best horse on the island, and you must he the very d—l."

"At your service," replied the other, bowing very gracefully.

Hans was overjoyed—he shook hands with Eblis,[472] and invited him to honor his humble dwelling with his presence. The invitation was accepted, and over a strong jug of Hollands a Compact was agreed upon. The old gentleman promised Hans to be his banker for three years, during which he was to enjoy unlimited health and credit ; but at the expiration of that term his Satanic Majesty was to call for the devoted Dutchman. The bargain once concluded, the two allies smoked pipes innumerable, and it was not until the shrill crowing of chanticleer proclaimed the near approach of morning that the gentleman in sables mounted his black horse and vanished in a very equivocal manner.

Hans went to bed, and awoke about ten o'clock in a very happy state of mind. He eat (sic) his breakfast, and then sauntered down to his usual haunt, the bar-room of the tavern, where he surprised some of his phlegmatic townsmen into an ejaculation by displaying a handful of gold corns. It was soon rumored about that Hans had come into possession of a handsome legacy ; and all who had previously shunned him, crowded eagerly to make his acquaintance. Foremost among the herd of flatterers were those whose hen-roosts had been oftenest visited by the youthful Hopper—but they forgot all in the enthusiasm of the moment.

Hans was now able to hold up his head among the best, and kept company with celebrated training grooms and famous jockeys, the magnates of the land. He bought a full-blooded Virginia mare, and became a member of the Jockey Club. All his speculations on the turf were fortunate, and all his drafts upon his secret banker duly honored. In fact, his affairs were soon so prosperous that he refunded to his ally all the money he had loaned him with handsome interest, and refused any longer to receive his aid. The Devil waxed exceedingly wroth at this, and became as impatient for the time when he might claim his due as Hans was reluctant to have that time approach.

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472 A devil of Islamic mythology.

Meantime our hero, feeling the growing responsibility of a monied man, determined to reform his evil habits, ceased to frequent the bar-room of the Green Flagon, and assumed a serious demeanor. He repaired the venerable mansion of his fathers, and having placed his household affairs in the strictest order, led to the hymeneal altar the daughter of a wealthy farmer of Jamaica, a young and blooming girl. In less than a year after he was assured that his possessions would not pass out of the family for want of an heir. But in the midst of all this happiness poor Hans often shuddered when he reflected how rapidly the time was passing, and how soon his infernal creditor would come to claim his dues.

As the fatal night drew near, his spirits seemed to forsake him. He was often absent and moody, and would sometimes sit by the hour together gazing on his wife and child with tearful eyes, and shaking his head mournfully if any question was asked him. The green hues of summer had brightened into the hectic tints of autumn ; the evenings were bleak and desolate ; and Hans, as if sympathizing with universal nature, shuddered as he drew his chair closer to the fire. He now seldom stirred abroad except to exercise his horses. He frequented no races, went to no merry makings, and seemed a sadly altered man. One night his wife had gone to bed betimes, and he was left sitting up alone. It was the fatal night, and the hour was approaching. Poor Hans sat gazing at the dial-plate of the old clock, and counting every tick with feverish solicitude. At length the clock struck twelve. Hans started up, and listened. Directly after there was a thundering knock at the back door, and he hastened to open it. Though the night was dark, he recognized his fiendish creditor by the fiery glare of his eye-balls, and the ruddy glow that issued from his mouth ; while his barbed tail, that verified the portraits in the picture books, was whisking restlessly to and fro, and describing arcs of circles on the frozen ground.

"Come !" cried his Majesty, "you're wanted."

A thought, so vivid and instantaneous, that it seemed providential, flashed across the mind of Hans. He knocked the hat from the head of his fiendish visiter, and ere the latter could recover himself, he seized one of his horns with both hands and dragged him to a range of pegs on which he hung his harness. Before the astounded demon could recover himself, Hans snatched a formidable cowskin,

and thrust a severe bit into the mouth of the arch enemy. He then began beating him with might and main. The tortured fiend fell upon his hands and knees. In an instant Dare-Devil Hans sprung upon his back and inflicted the severest discipline. The fiend bolted and leaped from the house, but Hans was as firmly seated as the old man of the mountain on the back of Sinbad.[473] His degraded majesty roared beneath the lash, reared, plunged, and used every mischievous exertion of which his tremendous strength was capable, to unseat his rider, but in vain. At length, when he was totally obedient, Hans vaulted lightly to the ground and let him go. The liberated demon fled like a bolt from a bow, leaving behind a long trail of fiery light that shone like the track of a comet in the evening air. Hans breathed freely—he was free—but this was not all ; for on going into his front yard he discovered the Devil's horse tied firmly to the palings. He endeavored to lead the animal to his stable ; but the beast proving refractory, he vaulted lightly on his back, and applied to him the same discipline which had subdued his master with the same success. From that time horse and man were friends. The creature (named Beelzebub in commemoration of his former owner) was a valuable acquisition, for he won many a plate and sweepstakes for his master, and introduced a breed of colts into the island of extraordinary strength and fire. Hans is yet alive, and from his own lips I learned his story. He concluded his narration in the following words : "That black horse was a jewel—and there was but one bad thing about him —when he was taken sick, brimstone wouldn't physic him."

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473 In "The Fifth Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor"—*A Thousand And One Arabian Nights*—Sindbad meets an old man on an unknown island who climbs on his shoulders and rides him as if he were a horse.

THE

AMERICAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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A Visit to the Clerk of the Weather.

"I don't know—I have not yet spoken to the clerk of the weather,"— said I, in common parlance to my friend and kinsman, who had asked me the wise question— "Do you think we shall have an early spring?" We stood on the steps of the M— hotel. The night was not very dark, but sundry flakes of snow, that came wavering to the ground, served to render the vision indistinct. Nevertheless I could plainly perceive that a little old woman in a gray cloak, who was passing at the moment, had caught my words ; and her small black eyes rayed up through the mist as I spoke, with an expression of intelligence rather uncomfortable to a sober citizen like myself. My friend, at the same moment, turned on his heel with a slight shudder, and sought a warmer climate within. The little old woman stood at my side in a twinkling, and when I would have withdrawn myself, I felt her bony hand encircling my arm as if I had been in the grasp of a skeleton.

"Unhand me, madam, or by Heaven—"

"You have taken *his* name in vain," said she, in a hoarse whisper, "often enough, and it is evident that you believe not in his existence. Come with me. Nay, do not hesitate, or I will weigh your manhood against the courage of an old woman."

"On, fool !" exclaimed I.

Away scampered the old woman, and I followed—drawn by an impulse which I could not resist. Streets, houses, woods, fences, seemed running back as we progressed, so rapid was our motion. At length I was lifted from my feet, and whirled through the air at such a rate that I nearly lost my breath. The gray cloak of the old woman could be discerned at some distance before me—clouds sprang apart, and rolled themselves in ridges on either hand of her as she passed, making a clear path for herself and follower. How far we travelled thus I am unable to say. But suddenly we struck the land, and I stood

upon the green turf : the sun flamed full upon my head, and I now, for the first time, felt travel-worn and faint.

"I can assist you no farther," said the old woman ; and in a moment she had disappeared.

At a little distance from the spot where I stood, was a pile of rocks of a singular form. About a dozen tall, slate-colored rocks—each one of which was seven acres in height—had been thrown together in a circle in the form of a pyramid, the points meeting at the top. As I stood gazing at this singular structure, I observed a light smoke rising up through a small aperture on the very apex of this gigantic cone. I determined to obtain ingress to this strange dwelling, for that it was inhabited I no longer doubted. I walked around the natural fabric several times before I discovered an entrance ; several rugged rocks had hidden it from my view. But the opening was large enough to admit a dozen horsemen abreast. Slowly and cautiously I entered the lofty chamber. It was about five hundred yards in circumference. Several singular objects immediately drew my attention ; of course the animated forms were honored with my first notice. There were three gigantic beings lounging about in different parts of the room, while a venerable, stately old man, with long gray locks, sat at the farther side of the apartment busily engaged in writing. Before advancing to speak to any of my new acquaintances, I glanced around the rocky cavern. In one corner was piled a heap of red-hot thunderbolts. Against the wall hung several second-hand rainbows, covered with dust and much faded. Several hundred cart loads of hail-stones, two large sacks of wind, and a portable tempest, firmly secured with iron bands, next engaged my attention. But I saw that the venerable personage mentioned above had become sensible of my presence, and as he had half risen from his seat, I hastened to present myself. As I drew near to him, I was struck by the size of his massive frame and the fierce expression of his eyes. He had stuck his pen behind his ear—which pen was neither more nor less than the top of a poplar tree, which some storm had rudely disengaged from its trunk, and the butt of which he had hewed down to a proper size for dipping into his inkhorn. He took my hand into his broad palm, and squeezed it too cordially for my bodily comfort, but greatly to the satisfaction of my mind, which had experienced some painful

misgivings from my first entrance. I saluted him in the fashion of my country, and he replied,

"I am tolerably well, I thank you, for an old man of threescore centuries—from whence come you ?"

"I am last from Boston, sir."

"I do not recollect any planet of that name," said he.

"I beg pardon—from the earth, I should have said."

He thought a moment. "Yes, yes, I do recollect a little mud-ball somewhere in this direction ;"—he pointed with his arm—"but, truly, I had almost forgotten it. Hum ! we have neglected yea of late. It must be looked to. Our ally, Mr. John Frost, has had some claims on us, which we have liquidated by giving him permission to erect sundry ice-palaces, and throw up a few fortifications on your soil ; but I fear the rogue has made too much of his privilege. He must be checked !"

"Really, sir, not only my gratitude, but the gratitude of all the world would be yours, if you would attend to us a little more vigilantly than you have done."

He looked grave a moment—shook his head, and rejoined —"But sir, I have, myself, some complaints to make with regard to you. I have been somewhat slandered by your fellows, and in truth, that was one inducement that led me to yield so readily to the request of my kinsman, Mr. Frost. You probably know there are some persons on your little planet who pretend to be of my council, and who send out little printed missiles, pretending to great ingenuity, wherein it is set forth that on such and such a day there shall be a tempest—thunder and lightning—or fervent heat. Nay, some of them have carried it so far as to publish caricatures and drawings—have prophesied that there should be snow in August, and——"

Here we were interrupted by a loud fussing noise, which caused me to start and turn round.

"You must have a care. You have scorched your garments, I fear," cried my host to a squat figure, who came trudging towards us, wrapped in sheets of ice and wearing a huge wig powdered with snow.

"It is nothing, your Honor," answered the other, in a hollow voice which chilled my blood—"I only trod upon that cursed coil of

chain-lightning which your servant has placed so near the door to be my bane as often as I visit you !"

I was too much taken up with this uncouth visiter to notice the entrance of another guest, who had placed herself directly between me and the clerk of the weather before I beheld her. She was a lovely young damsel, dressed in a variegated gown, of the most beautiful colors, her head surmounted by a green turban, and her feet shod with moccasins of the same hue, bespangled with dew-drops. The icy dwarf shrunk aside as she approached, and lowered at her from under his thick brows. She cast a glance at him, and pouted like a spoiled child. She then turned to me, and said in a tone of ineffable sweetness,

"You are the stranger from the Earth, I conclude ?"

" At your service, fair lady."

"I heard of your arrival," continued she ; "and hastened to meet you. I wish to inquire after my good friends, the inhabitants of your globe. My name is Spring."

"My dear lady," said I, "your countenance would gladden the hearts of us all ; I assure you that your presence has been desired and earnestly prayed for by all classes of my fellow-sufferers."

"It is too provoking !" cried she, dashing her green turban upon the ground, and stamping with her little foot until I was besprinkled with the dew-drops that it shed. "I suppose that I am blamed—nay, execrated, for my tardiness by my children of the earth—while heaven knows that I long to bound over your valleys and hills, and linger by the side of your running brooks as of yore. But that wretch—that misshapen wretch—"and she pointed at Jack Frost, for he it was, "that soulless, withering demon, holds me in his power. I brought an action against him last year ; but, unfortunately, I was advised to put the case in Chancery,[474] and summer arrived before it was decided. But assure your fellows that I will not neglect them in future. I shall be amongst them early. Mr. Frost is obliged to take a journey to the north to procure a polar bear for his wife, who has lingered amongst you, with her husband, so long, that she affects some of your customs, and must needs have a substitute for a lap-dog." She then turned away and held communion with the clerk of the weather,

474 Originally a court of Justice in England and Wales presided by the Lord Chancellor. In the United States, courts based on laws softened by ethic principles of fairness were called "courts of chancery" or "courts of equity".

while I sauntered about the cavern to examine its singular contents. A gigantic fellow was sweating over the fire and cooking his master's breakfast. In a moment I saw him ascend by a sort of rope ladder, and pick a small white cloud out of the heaven, wherewith to settle the coffee. I sauntered on until I came to a heap of granite, behind which sat a dozen little black fellows, cross-legged, who were laboring with all their might to weave a thunder gust. The part of the business which seemed to puzzle them most was the working in of the boils, which they were obliged to handle with long pincers. Another important point was sewing on the fringe, which was made of chain lightning. While I stood surveying these apprentices, a strapping fellow came reeling towards me, and inquired whether I had visited the forge. I told him that I had not. He said that it was not now in operation as there was a sufficient quantity of thunderbolts manufactured for present use, although there might soon be a trifle of an earthquake to patch up. I observed that his wrist was swathed with a crimson bandage, and inquired if he was injured in that part. He said that he had received a trifling scratch there, for that last year he had been commissioned to discharge several thunderbolts upon our earth, which he did to his satisfaction until he came to the last, which, having been hurled like a rocket against our globe, unfortunately alighted on the head of a certain member of Congress, where it met with so much resistance that it bounded back to the skies and grazed his wrist.

At this moment somebody seized my arm from behind ; I turned my head and saw the little old woman in the gray cloak. I was hurried from the massive hall and conveyed, with as much speed as before, back to the world from which I had set out on this strange and wonderful adventure.

THE

AMERICAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY, 1836 (VOL. VII.)

LAZY JAKE. OR THE DEVIL NONPLUSSED

A NOVELETTE

CHAPTER I

Interview between two gentlemen — a difficulty propounded — A heroine introduced.

A LONG, long while ago, in the good old days when witches had a legal existence, and old Nick, by the wilfulness of man's belief, was allowed converse with the human race, lived old Benjamin Peasblossom. He had houses and lands, and bonds and mortgages, and horses and cattle : and moreover, certain old chests which, despite their iron ribs, were near bursting with the gold and silver— the joes and half-joes,[475] the pistoles[476] and the pistareens,[477] he had crammed into their capacious mouths. Now, as the story goes, Benjamin had not come as honestly and fairly by this money as he might have done ; but it was said, that once as the clock struck twelve at night, in a damp vault in the church-yard, and on the lid of a coffin, with blood out of his veins, and with a pen made of a dead man's nails, Benjamin had given and granted, released, enfeoffed, conveyed, and confirmed, his soul unto the devil, in consideration that he, the devil aforesaid, would prosper said Benjamin in all his undertakings; with a proviso, nevertheless, that if the said Benjamin at the day of forfeiture could enjoin old Clootie[478] a task that he could not perform in a twelvemonth, then he, the said Benjamin, should stand free and absolved.

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475 "Joey": a former coin of the United Kingdom with a value of three pennies.

476 Either a former gold coin of France, or a former gold coin of Spanish America equal to two escudos.

477 A silver coin used in America and the West Indies in the 18th century, from the Spanish *peseta*.

478 The Scottish name for the Devil.

Now, after this, Benjamin waxed richer and richer ; he became the most important man in the village ; he was appointed overseer of the poor, one of the selected men of the town, and at the time when Old Nick called on him for payment, he was actually an elder of the village church.

The manner of the visit was this. One cold winter's evening, Benjamin was sitting alone by his fire, the wind moaning around his house like the cries of the widowed and fatherless after their dower rights and patrimonies, and he, thinking about foreclosing a mortgage, when he heard a gentle tap at the door, and a tall "Werter-faced[479] sort of a man," "melancholy and gentleman-like,"[480] entered, and took a seat opposite to Peasblossom.

"Ha ! Already !" exclaimed Benjamin, stretching out his arm for a small pocket-bible which lay on the table.

"I have been patient enough methinks," said his visiter ; "and although it be a naughty night to swim in, as my friend Will has it, I hope the honor of your company."

"I cannot go yet," said Benjamin, removing his chair a little ways. Next week comes quarter day,[481] and then there is Deacon Gray's interest to come in, and old Thompson's mortgage to be foreclosed ; indeed, my friend, it's quite inconvenient to go just now."

"I fancy," replied the other, with a courteous smile," thou wilt find it inconvenient always ; so thou must e'en away tonight."

"I cannot follow thee," said Benjamin, staring wildly around and gasping for breath.

"But thou must, unless thou wilt give me a task that I cannot perform, and that I fancy thou canst scarcely do."

Benjamin's head sunk between his hands ; to puzzle old Scratch he thought was no easy matter. His visiter, who felt secure of his prey, leisurely drew a cigar from his pocket, lighted it, and commenced puffing. It emitted a bluish flame, and indeed in itself much resembled a half-grown roll of brimstone. When the fume reached the nostrils of Benjamin, he wiggled uneasily in the chair, and fell into a great perturbation of spirit, bethinking himself of devilled turkey legs, poached eggs, roasted potatoes, and beef steaks and grid-

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479 From Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774).

480 "I will be more Proud, / and Melancholy, and Gentleman-like, than I have been; / I'll ensure you." Ben Johnson (1572-1637) *Every Man in his Humour* (1598), (Act I, Sc. 3).

481 One of the four days of the year when rents and rates were traditionally due.

irons. Meanwhile the mortgagee of Benjamin's worse half his soul, sought to amuse himself with a book or two lying on the mantel. He passed instinctively by "The Christian Soldier,"[482] and "Holy Living and Dying ;"[483] yawned a moment over Shakespeare ; but espying a newspaper, the father of lies felt that he had reading congenial to his taste.

At length, Benjamin's face brightened, and he exclaimed, "I have it, I have it ! I defy thee to make my neighbor, Lazy Jake, rich."

"Oh ho !" quoth the devil, "sits the wind in that quarter ? vexing Job[484] was a trifle to that : but since thou hast set me the task, it would be unseemly in me to forfeit my prize without an endeavor to serve it."

"Suppose we cancel the bond at once," said Benjamin, "and I will give you an acquittance."

Old Hornie forgot his accustomed good breeding at the proposition and unqualifiedly grinned. "No,"said he, "it is now a point of honor with me, and my friends, the lawyers, can help me at a pinch.—They have such an ingenious way of transferring estates, that if I can get Jake admitted to the bar I shall have the pleasure of your company very soon."

After uttering this pleasantry, the head of the legal profession looked cautiously round, fearing that some of the fraternity had overheard him.

But the only addition to the company was Benjamin's daughter Susan, a fine bouncing maiden of fourteen, with a heart as free of guile as New-York dairyman's milk of cream.

"La, Paa." said Sukey, "I did n't know of your having company."

The devil bowed—devils are always so polite—Miss curtseyed. The devil has such a taking way with him.

"Well, friend Peasblossom," quoth he of the fabulous tail, "this little affair will soon be settled, and then—"

"La, Paa," interrupted Sukey, what a smell of brimstone !"

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482 "...ignorance will not result in a tactical strategic victory for the forces of evil. The Christian solder must know the enemy (First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy; 2 Cor. 2:11).

483 Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) *Holy Living And Dying With Prayers Containing the Whole Duty of a Christian And the Parts of Devotion Fitted to All Occasions And Furnished for All Necessities* (1650-1651). An English bishop and one of the most widely read and finest theological writers.

484 See *infra* note 427.

"And then," continued old Clootie to Benjamin, "you must—" Benjamin coughed very loudly, looked imploringly at Sathan, intimating that he would dispense with the peroration.

"Paa has got such a bad cold," said Susan.

"Well, as extremes meet," replied Clootie, "he will soon have bad heat."

Benjamin shivered, but the impracticability of Lazy Jake again sent a glow through his breast.

"Would n't the gentleman like a glass of sweet-cider ?" inquired Susan, who was of an affable and loquacious turn.

"If Miss Susan would only write her name in his pocket-book as a sort of rememberancer !"

"Away, tempter," shouted Benjamin.

"Such a pair of red cheeks, and two such sparkling eyes," continued the *arch* fiend, "might tempt even Solomon.[485] But, friend, I must away, as I have business of much importance to attend before daylight. Let me see, let me see," said he in an under-tone, "the big paunched Justice yonder wants a good reason for an unjust decision ; Miss Tabitha Spinster must be taught the last improvement upon the amorous waltz ; the grocer's doubt of the propriety of sanding his sugar must be settled ; and then I have to strike the moon into three or four youths, and make poets of them ; for when once they have coupled love and dove, they are mine as sure as stupid rhymes to Cupid[486]—but I forget myself ; good night, friend Benjamin—'parting is such sweet sorrow'—good night, Miss Susan, I hope we may become better acquainted ;" and so saying, he bowed slowly ; and ere Susan, who turned to see why the candles burned so bluely, was aware, the old Serpent (I hate to call him names) had vanished, and Peasblossom gruffly ordered her to bed ; where, I fear, she dreamed of the polite gentleman, not being aware what a profligate character he was, and how he had played the very devil with the world ever since the first weakness of woman, which, I believe, was in the year *one*.

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485 King Solomon ruled over Israel from 960 to 922 BC. He is famous for his proverbial wisdom and for having built the Temple of Jerusalem.

486 The Roman version of the Greek god of erotic love Eros, often evoked in poetry.

CHAPTER II

A midnight prowl through a Village

WHEN the devil left the residence of Peasblossom, it was his intention to visit all his acquaintances in the village, renew old friendships, make new ones, and insinuate himself into the good graces of his enemies, if he had any. He now recollected that it was past the usual bed-time of the villagers, and that he would find nobody up, save those who stood in no need of his visitation ; and that therefore he must make his presence known by his spirit and not by his assumed form. As this thought floated across his brain, he found himself in front of the parsonage. Now, the good man having indulged somewhat in mulled beer and a Welsh rabbit, was naturally dreaming of a good living ; and the devil suggested to him, as he settled on his breast in the shape of a huge Cheshire cheese, that as there was a vacancy in the pulpit of the next town which gave a higher salary, it was his duty to go thither ; and having thus given the parson a *call*, Beelzebuth whisked off to the parson's neighbor, the apothecary. The apothecary presently dreamed that he and the sexton had entered into partnership, and that they employed the doctor as a clerk. Then the apothecary fancied that he was filling his laudanum jar with juice of the pokeberry,[487] but why, he could not tell, till the high price of opium rose up as an excuse. "But prithee," cried one of the devil's grand-children, named Subterfuge, who was present, "will not the poor souls sleep as well on the juice as the extract ?" "Aye, much better," quoth that slippery knave, Conscience ; so the apothecary turned him over, and slept soundly until morning. The devil walked into the doctor's as a messenger came from a poor person in extremity requesting his immediate presence. The doctor hearing who it was that required his aid, knew that he would never be paid for his services, and so bade his servant tell the messenger that he had been suddenly called out and would not be back until morning. Hereupon the doctor drew his bed-clothes tighter around him, and sunk into a nap ; wherein he dreamed that he fell grievously sick, and his

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[487] *Phytolacca americana*: an American plant with small white flowers, blackish-red berries and a poisonous root.

friends, in great alarm, proposing to send for a brother Æsculapius,[488] it struck him as such ridiculous nonsense that he burst into laughter and awoke. The Devil next visited his friend the Justice ; and as the grocer's sugar was sanded the following day, and Miss Tabitha practised the Mazurka[489] in the evening at the village ball, it is presumed our hero also paid them a passing visit. He inoculated two young geniuses with the love of rhyme, and three young misses with flirtation ; so he felt secure of five new votaries at least. He passed by the window of a learned judge, and a subtle metaphysical fluid which could not disprove the existence of witches, passed into the judge's pericranium. Then the Devil thought he would call on his special agent, the village attorney ; and he found him asleep with one eye open, and he studied a long while for some new device to inspire the lawyer withal ; but after examining the stock already on hand, the Devil found that he, himself, had acquired a new wrinkle ; so, well contented, he left the house, and bent his steps towards the dwelling of Lazy Jake.

CHAPTER III.

A Reflection — Lazy Jake's House — His Bed-chamber — A Discovery, or an instance of Inductive Reasoning.

Had the task allotted to our hero been that of overcoming any of the cardinal virtues, or of combatting the vice gluttony, lust, intemperance, writing for magazines, avarice, pride, or even dozing in church, he had not troubled himself much about the result ; but when he reflected on the nature and influence of laziness, he felt appalled by the *vis inertia*[490] opposed to him. Of all the sins which most easily beset a man, this is the darling of their progenitor, for it makes its way insidiously and so easily, like a huge anaconda, gliding through a country, and tainting all things with its poisonous breath ; and it has such a tenacity of its conquests, that it is one of the most powerful engines of evil ever devised. Might I in a sober narrative like

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[488] In Greek mythology, Aesculapius was a legendary physician who knew how to revive the dead, which led Zeus to kill him and make him the god of medicine.

[489] A dance of Polish origin popular in the United States at the beginning of the 19th century.

[490] Latin phrase for "force of inertia."

the present allude with propriety to the profane history of the Grecians, I would say that laziness, like the apparently harmless peace-offering of the Greeks to the Trojans, carries the armed vices in its womb, who will soon spread havoc through the town, and surprise the citadel.

Before commencing his operations, the old Serpent thought it advisable to survey the residence of Jake, and observe whereabouts lay the best avenue for his approach.

About half a mile from Peasblossom's, in the outskirts of the village, Jake reposed on his patrimonial remains. He had inherited many a broad field and rich meadow ; his house had been encompassed by luxuriant gardens and thrifty orchards, flocks of cattle covered his pastures, the loud neighing of steeds, the soft bleating of sheep, the piteous lowing of cows, the complaisant grunting of swine, tilled the atmosphere around him. Turkeys gobbled, hens cackled, ducks quacked, and geese gabbled through his barn-yards. He had money out at interest, and a secret hoard of Spanish dollars in his house. Never had man a fairer chance for a life of prosperity. But in vain ; a blight had been on Jake from his youth upwards. He was, in truth, one of the laziest of mortals. Nought loved he beyond his bed ; and when he had rolled out of that, he would swallow his breakfast, and then lighting his pipe, sink into his arm-chair, and puff away the live-long morning. His laborers, too, imbibed the sweet poison : his seeds were never in the ground until his neighbors were talking of reaping... his winter grain was not sown until the frosts had set in. Weeds choked up his gardens—his unpruned trees spent their juices in unfruitful shoots—his fences gradually fell down—his cattle were neglected—his horses died of the distemper—his eggs turned addle in their unsought-far nests — his turkeys ran wild in the woods—and the foxes and weazles stole into his yards and carried off his geese and chickens. The rains gradually rotted away the shingles on his roof, and caused his walls to moulder. In a few years his money was called in, and in a few more spent ; and still his disease was upon him. To-morrow he would bestir himself, and to-morrow be would arouse ; but what signified his doing it to-day. But on the morrow he slept so late that it was useless to make the effort ; he could do nothing in half a day, he would begin with the next week. But perhaps the next week was stormy, or Jake did not *feel very well*,

or his boots were without soles, "he must send them to the cobbler's that very day." The cobbler bent over his lap-stone all the week, but not on Jake's account. And then the next week was too late in the season, and why should a man worry himself to death ? he would reform with the new year ; but January is so cold. And thus would Jake go on, rousing himself up desperately every half hour to fill his pipe, and eating his dinners, and suppers, and breakfast, and teas, and luncheons, with an energy that astonished himself, and sleeping with a resolution undisturbed by aught but indigestion and surfeit.

The grayness of morning was stealing over the heavens, when our adventurer came in sight of Lazy Jake's abode ; and ere he had completed his survey, the pale wintry sun was high advanced ; but still scarcely a sign of life about the premises. A half-starved cow was turning "its sides and shoulders and heavy head" on some scattered straw near the barn, and endeavoring to obtain "a little more sleep and a little more slumber."[491] A wall-eyed horse was hanging his head out of the weather-boards of the stable, while a skeleton pig was assisting his weak steps towards the kitchen, by leaning against the straggling paling on his path.

Every thing about the house appeared in a state of dilapidation ; the rains had washed the paint from the boards and the pointing from between the stones. The shutters had disappeared from the windows or hung by half a hinge, the glass was broken, and a panel wanting in the door betrayed an uncarpeted and filthy floor. Within doors things were in a grievous plight : bottomless chairs and broken tables—the clock unwound—the locks all out of order—blue mould on the walls, and grease and dirt on the floor. There was a bedstead in the parlor, and kitchen utensils in the bed-room, where, stewing and steaming in his dirty blankets, lay Lazy Jake himself :

Jake had eaten and slept until he had become a mass of soft unhealthy fat ; so that, wrapt up as he was in the woollens, he might have been compared to a roll of rancid butter enveloped in a yellow cabbage leaf. He was of an easy good-natured disposition as pliant as the conscience of a politician, or as the gum catoutchoe, or whatever its unorthographable name may be.[492] Jake had a decided aversion to motion, and he once indulged in an astronomical speculation, which

491 "... so he on his bed, / Turns his sides and his shoulders and his heavy head. / 'A little more sleep, and a little more slumber;' / Thus he wastes half his days, and his hours without number," Isaac Watts (1674-1748), "The Sluggard."

was, "why the devil the stars and planets keep moving about as they did, seeing they have nothing in the world to do." He used to wander why the

" little busy bee"

did not

"improve each shining hour,"[493]

by a nap in the sun instead of keeping up such an incessant toil and pother.

But we have not leisure to detail all the sayings and doings of Jake, though a few pages would suffice for the actions of his life. The devil perambulated the room with a curious eye and an incurious nostril ; but still he was unsatisfied in one particular. He cautiously approached the bed, raised the end of the clothes, and discovered the fact to be as he had suspected,—that such a lazy, uncleanly person as Jake slept in his stockings.

CHAPITRE IV.

A Moral Phenomenon, or Temptations to become rich resisted——Mining and Countermining—Gold—Lore—Land Speculation and Stock-jobbing.

WHEN the devil retired to ruminate on his plans, he betook himself to the banks of a neighboring mill-pond. In truth, when he reflected on what he had just seen, he felt sorely perplexed, and, like an enamoured swam, cast many a desperate look at the water. But honor soon came to his aid, and he roused himself up manfully to his task. The result of his cogitations will be portrayed in the following

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[492] In fact, "caoutchouc" or rubber. Used by Native peoples of South and Central America, it was brought to Europe by Charles de la Condamine and François Fresneau in the mid-eighteenth century. Until the early 1800s, rubber was used only for elastic bands and erasers—hence the name "rubber." In 1823, Charles Macintosh reinvented the waterproofing of fabrics—which Pre-Columbians already mastered— and in 1839 Charles Goodyear discovered vulcanization, which revolutionized the rubber industry.

[493] "How doth the little busy bee / Improve each shining hour, / And gather honey all the day / From every opening flower!" from "Against Idleness and Mischief" (1715) by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), English poet and theologian.

pages ; and we must leave this one of our heroes for the present to return to the other.

Matters grew worse and worse with Lazy Jake, for the plan of the first campaign appeared to be to reduce Jake to such misery that he should imbibe the idea of the necessity of exertion. Exertion once commenced, the devil knows so well how to temper the love of gain with the labor of its acquisition, that the richest self-made men are generally the most industrious and untiring. Jake's horse died of the colic, his cow of the distemper, and his pig of the measles. The supply of his table grew scantier, and his creditors clamorous. Judgment after judgment was entered up, and execution after execution lodged in the sheriff's hands. His lands were still greater in value than the amount of his debts. He could have made an agreement with his creditors for a mortgage, the money to be applied to the discharge of their claims ; but Jake felt an unconquerable aversion to all exertion. True, he needed but to ride to the attorney's and have it arranged ; but his horse was dead. He could have walked there, but next week he would borrow a conveyance ; and one week earlier or later could make but little difference. At length his creditors let the law take its way ; and in the spring Jake was master of nought but his homestead and the curtilage.[494] He grew thinner and thinner ; for, after grim-visaged want has stared us in the face for awhile, we become wonderfully assimilated to the spectre. At last a dinnerless day brought on the crisis ; and poor Jake, sinking into his arm-chair, cursed his unlucky stars. "Nothing ever prospered with him ; his neighbors, who had started life with nothing, were rich ; while he who had every thing at command, through his perverse luck, was reduced to poverty. He could not see into it ; it was very mysterious. But something must be done ; he would see what he could turn his hand to— in the morning."

So Jake lighted his pipe, and resigned himself to the influence of that vacuity of thought in which the smoker indulges, and miscalls reflection. Presently he fell into a gentle nap, dreaming of huge joints of roasted meat and savoury sauces, placed before him in great profusion, but just beyond his reach. Then the viands disappeared and he had a vision of his grandfather, who told him that in the orchard which had been sold to his neighbor Peasblossom, was buried a huge

[494] The enclosed area surrounding a house.

jar of gold, which he had hidden there during an Indian incursion, and afterwards left as a safe deposit ; but having been called away by an apoplexy, his heirs had never been the wiser. Then the old gentleman vanished, and when Jake awoke, the sun had again arisen, and was peeping in at the window. The loud demand for breakfast from his inner-man first recalled him to a sense of his misery ; then gradually his dream arose to mind, indistinctly at first, but at last vivid and impressive. "But of what use is it ?" said Jake ; "three months since, and it would have saved me from my troubles ; but now what can I do. These is no use of trying to purchase it back, I know Peasblossom will not sell. He got it for a song, and all King David's psalms played by the royal minstrel himself could not redeem an inch of it. However, the next time I meet him I will ask him about it ; I am resolved to lose nothing for want of exertion."

Now, as the devil would have it, Peasblossom began to feel extremely uneasy. True, Jake was not growing rich, but waxing poorer ; still there was something very suspicious in that very fact. And it entered into Benjamin's noddle to conceive, that as Jake still had the homestead left, it might be a foundation for future acquisitions ; so he resolved to deprive Jake of this last resource if possible.

"I have been thinking," said Benjamin, taking Jake kindly by the hand, that it was due to our old friendship that I should lend you some aid in your need. I had your orchard of you for a trifle and although honestly purchased, still if thou wilt thou mayst have it for a small advance."

"What !" cried Jake, "the orchard next the garden ?" "Yes, the same, "replied Peasblossom ; "so give me a note at a short date for the amount, and a mortgage on your house as security ; for, Jacob, I have a family to provide for, and although I am of a generous disposition, still prudence dictates a certain course. So, Jacob, go down to Fifa's and execute a mortgage on the house, and thou shalt have the orchard."

Jake's eyes twinkled with joy, the pot of gold was already in his greedy grasp, and he actually went that day to the lawyer's and signed the note, bond, and mortgage, and took his deed. So he sate himself down, and devised a hundred ways of spending his money, which, alas, was not yet his. Early in the morning he intended to go out and search for it, and he must rest after his hard work. Jake

awoke early, and felt an impulse to rise and commence his search ; but what was the use of hurry ? he had a few dollars yet which had been unexpectedly paid him—" the more hurry the worse speed ; besides evening would be better for his work, as there would be nobody to watch him.

Jake waited till evening, and still the same reluctance to bestir himself. "The gold was safe where it was, and he could get it when he wanted it." Day passed after day in this manner, although, it must be confessed, Jake kept a vigilant eye to the orchard when awake, and dreamed of it by night. At last Jake began to dig. But the work went on slowly ; and as the orchard contained a couple of acres, and Jake knew not where the treasure lay, his heart grew faint. Week after week elapsed, and nothing could rouse Jake to vigorous action ; his note became due ; Peasblossom, in fulfilment of his plan, commenced suit ; Jake could have delayed it by attending to it but he was absolutely too lazy : judgment was entered, execution followed ; the orchard was sold, and the house to satisfy the balance ; the overplus was paid to Jake, and without a roof to call his own, he betook himself to the tavern, and gave way to deep melancholy, only relieved by eating, drinking, smoking, and sleeping. The shrewd fellow who had purchased the orchard suspected something from the state in which he found it, and rested not until he had upturned the whole soil, and satisfactorily solved his doubts.

Love was now called in by the devil to his aid. A fat widow, aged forty and upwards, of large person and income, cast amorous glances on Jake as he sat at the tavern window, from her room on the opposite side of the way. Jake was not iron or stone ; and if he had been, the ardent glances of the widow would have heated him red-hot. As it was, Jake felt indescribable longings to move, aye, actually to walk ; and one day, fired beyond control, he went over to the widow's. Fortunately one or two visits so overcame the retiring modesty of the fair, that Jake was the happiest of men, save in the necessary trouble and fatigue he was put to in promenading with his lady fair. This did very well for a day or two ; but then—shame on his manhood—Jake, buried in an oblivious snooze after dinner, forgot love, honor, the widow and her money bags. Impatiently did the fair one sigh, fume, scold, rave ; and it was really thoughtless to Jake to allow such a mass of inflammable matter to become so heated. He might

have known the consequences. A rousing box on his ear awoke him from his slumbers. Unhappy Jake ! torrents of expletives rolled around him like lava from a volcano ; heated epithets fell upon him ; and, at last, like Herculaneum,[495] he was completely buried under showers of invectives, red-hot, and reproaches at white heat. The game was up ; Cupid and Somnus[496] were at sword's points, and Cupid quit the field.

Jake was now assailed in various ways. Land speculations were presented to his imagination ; for such a rage possessed the good people of the village, that they began buying up all the land within three miles of the town. What they bought one day in farms or plantations, they the next day offered at auction, nicely surveyed into building lots, and the prices were immense. But Jake let all slip through his fingers. He had a keen foresight and a good judgment, but he was ever too lazy to move.

Then his brain teemed with improvements in various useful machines, by patenting which he could have made great sums ; but Jake never had resolution sufficient to draw up his specifications.

The Prince of Darkness strove manually against the inertness of Jake ; he assaulted him in every way ; pride, ambition, patriotism, and I know not what beside ; but Jake was impracticable. The Devil became uneasy ; his disappointment preyed on his spirits ; he grew thin, pale, and interesting.

Never before had he been so puzzled. When he had set to work in earnest, he had always succeeded, except in one case ; and his ill success in that Satan attributed to the malign influence of Mrs. Job.[497] Eleven months of the allotted time had elapsed, and yet Jake was poorer than ever. The Devil began to despair, melancholy seized upon him, and he was evidently rapidly falling into a consumption. He actually indited some verses in the Byron vein—"I have not loved the world, nor the world me;"[498] he went about like one distraught—he would have fallen into dyspepsia had it been then invented ; but as it was, he never shaved himself without experiencing des-

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495 A city in the Bay of Naples (Italy) completely buried by a pyroclastic flow, along with Pompei, after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (AD 79).

496 Somnus or Hypnos, brother of Thanatos, the Greek god of sleep.

497 Overwhelmed by misfortune and adversity, Job's wife said to her husband: "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God, and die." (Job 2:7-9). See note 427.

498 Lord Byron (1788-1824), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III: Stanza 113.

perate thoughts. I know not how he could have existed through the last and still unsuccessful week of the term of probation ; but musing one day on his apparently diminished power in the world, and the necessity of reviving it he had the vision of a board of brokers, and the Devil laughed to think what a great idea it was. About a century afterwards he put his scheme in operation in New-York, and he has since had no fear for his dominion in the world ; for he drew up his specifications in terms plain beyond dispute, and thus it stood, "buying and selling stock on time."

CHAPTER V.

Our narrative is drawing to a close. An author, even though his characters be fictitious, acquires an acquaintance with them that he is loath to terminate. We, dealing in truth severe, cannot distribute poetical justice to our characters as the critic might demand. Poor Susan never could forget the polite gentleman who wanted her to write in his pocket-book, he became the god of her idolatry. She sighed for him, and sought for him everywhere. If a carriage passed door, she expected to see him leaning from its window ; if a stranger arrived in town, she knew it *must* be him. At all the village gatherings she looked but for him ; and even at church, the poor ignorant creature fancied he might be present. Twice or thrice she detected him in the heroes of fashionable novels ; but they merely fed her imagination. She once went to a camp-meeting, and thought she saw him there ; and he may have been.

But be this as it may, the year elapsed. * * Benjamin is again seated by his fire—he is wealthier and more hard-hearted than ever. His eye is on the clock—the fatal hour is past—a rap at the door, and Benjamin's old visiter enters ; but alas, how changed ! His cheek is hollow, his eye dim ; he says nothing, he draws forth the contract ; he throws it into the flames. But the parchment used by him is of course fire-proof ; so Benjamin takes it out, and the Devil honorably erases Peasblossom's name and tears off the seal.

"If I ever," said he solemnly, "undertake again to make a lazy man rich, may I be—sainted."

"Cheer up," said Benjamin, for men with whom all things prosper are great consolers ; "cheer up, you have got much to be joyous for." "True," replied the Devil despondingly, "but I have been foiled ; there is one vice I cannot manage, one failing too stubborn for me, and that is LAZINESS."

Our story is finished. If there is a moral in it, the reader can apply it. We have but to dispose of our dramatis personæ, and lay aside our quill.

Lazy Jake died as he lived. Peasblossom lived long enough to become the Devil's without a formal agreement ; the Devil recovered his cheerfulness, and Susan, surviving her first love, grew up to womanhood, was married, and went the way of all flesh.