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## AN EXCURSION TO MANCHESTER.

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By Miss Catharine M. Sedgwick.

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IT is not a very disagreeable or sterile life, that a citizen of New-York or Boston need lead, whose business confines him to the city, provided he can now and then take a day's excursion into the country. A New-Yorker may pass a happy day on the shores of the Hudson, any where between the city and Newburgh, and return in time to take tea in his own house—to bathe in his bath of blessed Croton—and sleep, in his own accustomed place—with all the appliances and means of home about him. He may exchange the dusty street for the sea-shore, and bathe in sea-breezes and surf; and, instead of blistering his eyes with red bricks, look at the sublimest of God's works—the upheaving ocean. He may go to a friend's house on any of the lovely bays or necks of Long Island, out of sight and hearing of the tiresome town; or, if imbued with true rural tastes, he may plunge into the sporting solitudes of Long Island, and pursue his prey by wood or water. We know merchants in the most active and oppressive business of the city, who do this. Let a man but cherish the tastes (and they are salvation to body and mind) which Heaven has implanted—the love of nature and simple pleasures—and he will have ample means for its gratification. Let him not lose his original nature, in the eager competitions and artificial pleasures of the city, but prefer the opportunity of cheerful, innocent, and elegant leisure, to excessive gains; put up with a simple lunch in the place of a luxurious dinner; and honestly love better the shadow of a tree on a cool hill-side, with birds for his musicians, than even the opera with his favorite singer; and he can have, at moderate price, these refreshments, any day in the week, and be sure of a happier to-morrow. "If it were not for to-morrow," said Byron, in estimating the joys of a revel. The highest wisdom is always to measure the enjoyment of to-day by the shadow it casts on 'to-morrow.'

I had a day's pleasure yesterday, that neither cast a shadow before or behind. A friend, who works like a good Providence, and without any bustle of preparation, by a process as quiet as that which brings the sunshine upon us, surrounds us with pleasant circumstances, so that all the wheels of life run easily—this friend had invited me to take an excursion to Manchester.

I am rather ashamed now to confess it, but I had never heard of Manchester, a town that has arrived at the mature age in manufacturing life of eight years, with a population of fifteen thousand souls; busy souls they are; and if one may judge by outward signs, full of cheerful self-complacency and honest ambition.

After a delicious breakfast in my friend's house, where may be seen a union of noble simplicity (such as is oftener fabled than realized,) with the luxury of wealth and

the beauty of art, we took our places in the Lowell train. Here the number of our party was augmented to that of the muses and graces combined; and if the gentle dames of our citizens were neither muses nor graces, they had qualities quite as much to our purpose. I do not know whether it was the atmosphere that the born gentleman always carries with him, or that my friend did silently and unperceived exercise the beneficent arts of a host, but each of our company occupied the place he would have chosen; and unexpectedly (for who ever expected social enjoyment in a rail-car) found his surroundings so agreeable, that there was a buzz of cheerful conversation through our whole progress of fifty-five miles. To be sure, the day was as fine as if my friend had himself bespoken it; and June, having just escaped from the clutches of this benumbing spring, was every where genially smiling in full fresh boughs, brimming streams, sweet clover-fields, and myriads of roses; roses laughing in the gardens, trailing over the little court-yards, and clambering to the very tops of the houses. June is indeed the crown of the year, and the roses the jewels of her crown. We shot past the crowded suburbs of Boston, and through the rural districts that surround them, past gardens and woodlands, and darted into the far-famed city of Lowell, where we only stopped to exchange some thirty fellow creatures for some thirty others, who, to our careless eyes, seemed as like as pieces of printed calico of the same color and figure; but each of these had his distinctive marks, his own boundless world of memories, and hopes, and projects. It is our insect vision that limits the world to our own horizon.

There is no second class of cars on this route, consequently we had the democratic principle of modern modes of transportation, without mitigation. There were brawny boatmen, of New

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Hampshire, in their red flannel shirt-sleeves, re- turning from 'rafting' down the Merrimack, tall stalwart fellows, whose bodies had attained nature's generous dimensions. Their faces were intelligent, and their speech civil, without any indication of social subordination. How different from the demi-savages who come in swarms among us! men who have been undergoing the process of degradation from generation to generation; whose low foreheads, contracted eyes, and wide and open mouths show that approximation to the brutish nature which has been going on for the long years that they have been as the strong ass, couching down between two burdens—the burdens of civil and sacerdotal oppression. Still the generous instincts of their hearts have survived oppression and barbarism. Let them be kindly welcomed to our wide New World home, and strike root in our soil, and grow up to the full stature of free and enlightened men! Their children's children will be like these New Hampshire boys; men capable of self-direction, of far-seeing projects, and extended responsibilities. The spirit that would reject from our unsown fields these poor creatures, who, in their barbarizing process, have narrowed down their wants to potatoes, and are blighted with the potato blight, is surely not the Christian spirit. They who are of this spirit seem to have forgotten that their title deeds to this New World were forced upon their fathers by the Old World despotism. They remind us of two friends, who, being permitted to walk in some beautiful private grounds, one, in the genuine spirit of elegant exclusiveness, said to the other, "This would

be very charming if we had it quite to ourselves.” “It seems not to occur to you,” replied his companion, “that we are here upon sufferance! ” In God's name, let our people remember this, and welcome their suffering brothers to their wide home; and give them ‘right of way’ to the untrodden wilderness which Providence has reserved for them. I beg pardon of my readers; these thoughts are naturally suggested by comparing our own and foreign laborers. While we feel pride in the one, let us be touched with pity for the other.

It is a gratifying exhibition of our Massachusetts population that we see in the cars, diverging from Boston in every direction. I have not the arrogance to claim for the gentlemen and ladies of Massachusetts general superiority to their class elsewhere, but placed as I was on this pleasant day, with people of fortune and education and habits of refinement, I could not but notice the simplicity of their manners, their freedom from pretension, and the quality of sympathy and general courtesy and kindness, that is well called ‘human beingism,’ which was exercised on the comfort of an aged person in our company, and in good natured civilities to poor women cumbered with many children, who got in and out at the several stations. One lady entertained a little fellow on her lap, while its martyr-mother hushed his baby-sister in her arms. One gentleman bribed, with an apple, a young marauder, whose particular fancy it was to stride up and down, first stumbling on one side, and then falling on the other. And my friend—as courteously as if he were attending a fine lady— helped a poor little body with her brood out of the cars, whose husband stood awaiting her with a horse and wagon, in a very ‘do n’t-care-and-rather- enjoying’ manner. I was reminded of the poor wife, who said, in similar circumstances, “Ah, madam, the men has it a *dale* pleasanter than the women.”

Our course lay along the Merrimack, brimfull from the late copious rains. It glided on its way, with the full-leafed trees waving like banners over it, with coronals of flowers hanging about it, and fields flushed with the purple lupin on its margin, as if it were made for the adornment of these lovely rural scenes, and not as it does, every drop of it, to distil showers of gold over our Midas manufactures. Prosperity be with them! their showers go up in beneficent dews, refreshing all the land. Their spindles endow our colleges, open fountains and baths for our “young barbarians,’ and run freely as the water that feeds their mills, in every channel of liberality and charity.\*

Arrived at Manchester, we made the most of our time, first, by going about to see the various processes of manufacturing by machinery, which has been brought to a degree of perfection only short of self-directing intelligence. Indeed, to my perception, to which the complicated operations are inexplicable mysteries, these machines seemed like the living operatives, reasoning, ‘calculating,’ and ‘concluding’ beings. One, of its own head, stopped its hundred spindles to rejoin a broken thread, another advanced slowly, and returned rapidly as befitted its purpose, and yet another received to its dark chamber the delicate white mousseline that glided down from an upper room, and by successive and, as it appeared to me, voluntary movements, delicately painted it, and then suffered it with quiet dignity to withdraw. The vestals who presided over these mysteries, were more prosaic than the machines themselves; and, with their nicely-plaited hair, gold beads, and

comfortable dresses, cut according to the universal fashion of the season, looked like duplicates of the ministers of our households. There was no sign of discontent or debility among them, but health quite up to the average, and a look of satisfaction,

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which is an unfailing indication of prosperity in our acquisitive race. The din of the machinery was insupportable to me, even for the brief time we were looking at it, and especially in one well-filled room, *four hundred and fifty feet in length*, but the 'young ladies' assured me, that after being accustomed to it, I could talk and listen there as well as elsewhere. Such is use! and such the supremacy of the social nature of man and woman! From the manufactories, a few of us drove, with our kind host, to the cemetery, where a lovely piece of woodland slopes on two sides to a little thread of a stream, of the yellow hue of topaz, and as bright and transparent. Shaded and flowery paths wind along the slopes; and there is here deep retirement and the solemn beauty of nature to inspire religious meditation, and pensive contemplation. The beautiful cemeteries that are springing up in our country indicate the rapid progress of civilization. The generous capitalists of Manchester, in their provision of this burial-place, and in the ample public squares, have shown a most laudable regard to the moral natures of their operatives. Whatever raises a man above the animal instincts and physical gratifications, advances him in the scale of being; and many an impress on immortal natures will be made, in moonlight walks, through the public squares and cemeteries of Manchester. Nature is most apt at this sublime ministry; and the falls and rapids of the Merrimack will develop the sense of beauty in their young people. They have, thank God, leisure and education, and freedom enough for its nurture; their immortal natures are not crushed by the mortal necessity of each day straining every nerve to earn precarious daily bread. That they have a choice of destiny seems to be forgotten by those who would limit by legislation their hours of labor. They can almost make their own terms in household service, they can have the independence of rural labor, or they can make haste to be rich, and tend the spindles. Thank God again fervently, that there are no dreary depths and cold shadows in our humble life to embitter prosperity to the most sensitive. So, after a morning of varied pleasure and observation, we sat down to a dinner (delicious, for it included the luxuries of the season—salmon, peas, and strawberries), sure that not one of the hundred operatives we had seen but had a dinner as abundant and wholesome, if not as luxurious as ours.

\* That this is no flight of fancy is known to every one who knows anything of the history of the wealthy manufacturers of Massachusetts. Mr. Abbot Lawrence's late munificent gift of \$50,000 to Harvard, and his brother, Amos Lawrence's repeated beneficences to Williams' College, are cases in point.