The Colonial Herald.

LITERATURE.

AMERICAN NOTES FOR GENERAL CIRCULATION.

BY CHARLES DICKENS, ESQUIRE.

Broadway, New York.—The beautiful metropolis of America is by no means so clean a city as Boston, but many of its streets have the same characteristics; except that the houses are not quite so gaudy, the gilded letters not quite so golden, the bricks not quite so red, the stone not quite so white, the blinds and area railings not quite so green, the knobs and plates upon the street doors not quite so bright and twinkling. There are many by-streets, almost as neutral in clean colours, and positive in dirty ones, as by-streets in London; and there is one quarter, commonly called the Five Points, which, in respect of filth and wretchedness, may be safely backed against Seven Dials, or any other part of famed St. Giles's. The great promenade and thoroughfare, as most people know, is Broadway—a wide and bustling street, which, from the Battery Gardens to its opposite termination in a country road, may be four miles long. Shall we sit down in an upper floor of the Carlton-House Hotel (situate in the best part of this main artery of New York), and when we are tired of looking upon the life below, sally forth, arm-in-arm, and mingle with the stream? Warm weather! The sun strikes upon our heads at this open window, as though its rays were concentrated through a burning-glass. But the day is in its zenith, and the season an unusual one. Was there ever such a sunny street as this Broadway? The pavement-stones are polished with the tread of feet until they shine again; the red bricks of the houses might be yet in dry hot kilns, and the roofs of the omnibuses look as though, if water were poured on them, they would hiss and smoke, and smell like half-quenched fires. No stint of omnibuses here! Half a dozen have gone by within as many minutes. Plenty of hackney cabs and coaches too; gigs, phætons, large-wheeled tilburies, and private carriages, rather of a clumsy make, and not very different from the public vehicles, but built for the heavy roads beyond the city pavement. Negro coachmen and white, in straw hats, black hats, white hats, glazed caps, fur caps; in coats of drab, black, brown, green, blue, nankeen, striped jean, and linen; and there, in that one instance (look while it passes, or it will be too late!) in suits of livery. Some southern Republican that, who puts his blacks in uniform, and swells with Sultan pomp and power. Yonder, where that phæton with the well-clipped pair of grays has stopped, standing at their heads now, is a Yorkshire groom, who has not been very long in these parts, and looks sorrowfully round for a companion pair of top boots, which he may traverse half the city without meeting. Heaven save the ladies, how they dress! We have seen more colours in these ten minutes than we would have seen elsewhere in as many days. What various parasols! What rainbow silks and satins! What pinking of thin stockings, and pinching of thin shoes, and fluttering of ribands and silk tassels, and display of rich cloaks with gaudy hoods and linings! The young gentlemen are fond, you see, of turning down their shirt collars and cultivating their whiskers, especially under the chin; but they cannot approach the ladies in their dress or bearing, being, to say the truth, humanity of quite another sort.

An Indian Chief.—There chanced to be on board this boat, in addition to the usual dreary crowd of passengers, one Pitchlyn, a chief of the Choctaw tribe of Indians, who *sent his card* to me, and with whom I had the pleasure of a long conversation. He spoke English perfectly well, though he had not begun to learn the language, he told me, until he was a young man grown. He had read many books, and Scott's poetry appeared to have left a strong impression on his mind; especially the opening of the Lady of the Lake, and the great battle scene in Marmion, in which, no doubt, from the congeniality of the subjects to his own pursuits and tastes, he had great interest and delight. He appeared to understand correctly all he had read; and, whatever fiction had enlisted his sympathy in its belief, had done so keenly and earnestly, I might almost say, fiercely.—He was dressed in our ordinary every-day costume, which hung about his fine figure loosely, and with indifferent grace. On my telling him that I regretted not to see him in his own attire, he threw up his right arm for a moment, as though he were brandishing some heavy weapon, and answered, as he let it fall again, that his race was losing many things beside their dress, and would soon be seen on earth no more; but he wore it at home, he added, proudly. He told me that he had been away from his home, east of the Mississippi, seventeen months, and was now returning. He had been chiefly at Washington, on some negotiations pending between his tribe and the Government, which were not settled yet (he said, in a melancholy way), and, he feared, never would be; for what could a few poor Indians do, against such well-skilled men of business as the whites? He had no love for Washington; tired of towns and cities very soon, and longed for the forest and the prairie. I asked him what he thought of Congress? He answered, with a smile, that it wanted dignity in an Indian's eyes. He would very much like, he said, to see England before he died; and spoke with much interest of the great things to be seen there. When I told him of that chamber in the British Museum, wherein are preserved household memorials of a race that ceased to be, thousands of years ago, he was very attentive, and it was not hard to see that he had a reference in his mind to the gradual fading away of his own people. This led us to speak of Mr. Catlin's gallery, which he praised highly, observing that his own portrait was in the collection, and that all the likenesses were "elegant." Mr. Cooper, he said, had painted the Red Man well; and so would I, he knew, if I would go home with him and hunt buffaloes, which he was quite anxious I should do. When I told him that, supposing I went, I should not be likely to damage the buffaloes much, he took it as a great joke, and laughed heartily. He was a remarkably handsome man: some years past forty, I should judge; with long black hair, and an aquiline nose, broad cheek bones, a sunburnt complexion, and a very bright, keen, dark, and piercing eye. There were but 20,000 of the Choctaws left, he said, and their number were decreasing every day. A few of his brother chiefs had been obliged to become civilised, and to make themselves acquainted with what the whites knew, for it was their only chance of existence. But they were not many; and the rest were as they always had been. He dwelt on this; and said several times, that unless they tried to assimilate themselves to their conquerors, they must be swept away before the strides of civilised society. When he shook hands at parting, I told him he must come to England, as he longed to see the land so much: that I should hope to see him there one day; and that I could promise him that he would be well received and kindly treated. He was evidently pleased by this assurance, though he rejoined, with a good humoured smile and an arch shake of his head, that the English used to be very fond of the Red men when they wanted their help, but had not cared much for them since. He took his leave; as stately and complete a gentleman of Nature's making as ever I beheld; and moved among the people in the boat, another kind of being. He sent me a lithographed portrait of himself soon afterwards; very like, though scarcely handsome enough; which I have carefully preserved in memory of our brief acquaintance.

American Inquisitiveness.—There was a man on board this boat with a light fresh-coloured face, and a pepper-and-salt suit of clothes, who was the most inquisitive fellow that can possibly be imagined. He never spoke otherwise than interrogatively. He was an embodied enquiry. Sitting down or standing up, still or moving, walking the deck or taking his meals, there he was, with a great note of interrogation in each eye, two in his cocked ears, two more in his turned-up nose and chin, at least half-a-dozen more about the corners of his mouth, and the largest one of all in his hair, which was brushed partly off his forehead in a flaxen clump. Every button on his clothes said, "Eh? What's that? Did you speak? Say that again, will you?" He was always wide awake, like the enchanted bride who drove her husband frantic; always restless; always thirsting for answers; perpetually seeking and never finding. There never was so curious a man. I wore a fur coat at that time, and before we were well clear of the wharf, he questioned me concerning it, and its price, and where I bought it, and when, and what fur it was, what it weighed, and what it cost. Then he took notice of my watch, and asked what *that* cost, and whether it was a French watch, and where I got it, and how it went, and where the keyhole was, and when I wound it, every night or every morning, and whether I ever forgot to wind it at all, and if I did, what then? Where I had been to last, and where I was going next, and where I was going after that; and had I seen the President, and what did he say, and what did I say, and what did he say when I had said that? Eh? Lor now! Do tell! Finding that nothing would satisfy him, I evaded his questions after the first score or two, and in particular, pleaded ignorance respecting the name of the fur whereof the coat was made. I am unable to say whether this was the reason, but that coat fascinated him ever afterwards; he usually kept close behind me as I walked, and moved as I moved, that he might look at it the better; and he frequently dived into narrow places after me at the risk of his life, that he might have the satisfaction of passing his hand up the back, and rubbing it the wrong way.

Peculiarities of the Pig in New York.—We are going to cross here. Take care of the pigs. Two portly sows are trotting up behind this carriage, and a select party of half-a-dozen gentlemen-hogs have just now turned the corner. Here is a solitary swine lounging homeward by himself. He has only one ear; having parted with the other to vagrant dogs in the course of his city rambles. But he gets on very well without it, and leads a roving, gentlemanly, vagabond kind of life, somewhat answering to that of our clubmen at home. He leaves his lodgings every morning at a certain hour, throws himself upon the town, gets through the day in some manner quite satisfactory to himself, and regularly appears at the door of his own house again at night, like the mysterious master of Gil Blas. He is a free-and-easy, careless, indifferent kind of pig, having a very large acquaintance among other pigs of the same character, whom he rather knows by sight than conversation, as he seldom troubles himself to stop and exchange civilities, but goes grunting down the kennel, turning up the news and small-talk of the city, in the shape of cabbage stalks and offal, and bearing no *tails* but his own, which is a very short one, for his old enemies, the dogs, have been at that, too, and have left him hardly enough to swear by. He is in every respect a republican pig, going wherever he pleases, and mingling with the best society, on an equal, if not superior footing; for every one makes way when he appears, and the haughtiest give him the wall if he prefers it. He is a great philosopher, and is seldom moved except by the dogs before mentioned. Sometimes, indeed, you may see his small eye twinkling on a slaughtered friend, whose carcase garnishes a butcher's door-post; but he grunts out, "Such is life: all flesh is pork!" buries his nose in the mire, and waddles down the gutter; comforting himself with the reflection that there is one snout the less to anticipate stray cabbage-stalks, at any rate. They are the city scavengers, these pigs. Ugly brutes they are; having, for the most part, scanty, brown backs, like the lids of old horse-hair trunks, spotted with unwholsome black blotches. They have long, gaunt legs, too, and such peaked snouts, that if one of them could be persuaded to sit for his profile, nobody would recognise it for a pig's likeness. They are never attended upon, or fed, or driven, or caught, but are thrown upon their own resources in early life, and become preternaturally knowing in consequence. Every pig knows where he lives much better than any body can tell him. At this hour, just as evening is closing in, you will see them roaming towards bed by scores, eating their way to the last. Occasionally some youth among them, who has over-eaten himself, or has been much worried by dogs, trots shrinkingly homeward like a prodigal son; but this is a rare case; perfect self-possession and self-reliance, and immovable composure, being their foremost attributes.

The Value of the Poor Man's Virtues.—Cant as we may, and as we shall to the end of all things, it is very much harder for the poor to be virtuous than it is for the rich; and the good that is in them shines the brighter for it. In many a noble mansion lives a man, the best of husbands and of fathers, whose private worth in both capacities is justly lauded to the skies. But bring him here, upon this crowded deck. Strip from his fair young wife her silken dress and jewels, unbind her braided hair, stamp early wrinkles on her brow, pinch her pale cheek with care and much privation, array her faded form in coarsely patched attire, let there be nothing but his love to set her forth or deck her out, and you shall put it to the proof indeed! So change his station in the world, that he shall see in those young things who climb about his knee, not records of his wealth and name, but little wrestlers with him for his daily bread, so many poachers on his scanty meal, so many units to divide his every sum of comfort, and farther to reduce its small amount. In lieu of the endearments of childhood, in its sweetest aspect, heap upon him all its pains and wants, its sicknesses and ills, its fretfulness, caprice, and querulous endurance; let its prattle be, not of engaging infant fancies, but of cold, and thirst, and hunger; and if his fatherly affection outlive all this, and he be patient, watchful, tender, careful of his children's lives, and mindful always of their joys and sorrows; then send him back to Parliament, and Pulpit, and to Quarter sessions, and when he hears fine talk of the depravity of those who live from hand to mouth, and labour hard to do it, let him speak up, as one who knows, and tell those holders forth that they, by parallel with such a class, should be High Angels in their daily lives, and lay but humble siege to Heaven at last. Which of us shall say what he would be, if such realities, with small relief or change, all through his days, were his! Looking round upon these people—far from home, houseless, indigent, wandering, weary with travel and hard living, and seeing how patiently they nursed and tended their young children; how they consulted ever their wants first, then half supplied their own; what gentle ministers of hope and faith the women were; how the men profited by their example, and how very, very seldom, even a woman's petulance or harsh complaint broke out among them—I felt a stronger love and honour of my kind come glowing on my heart, and wished to God there had been many Atheists in the better part of human nature there to read with me this simple lesson in the book of life.

Curious Habits of Intrusion.—After dinner, we went down to the railroad and took our seats in the cars for Washington. Being rather early, these men and boys who happened to have nothing particular to do, and were curious in foreigners, came (according to custom) round the carriage in which I sat; let down all the windows; thrust in their heads and shoulders; hooked themselves on conveniently, by their elbows; and fell to comparing notes on the subject of my personal appearance, with as much indifference as if I were a stuffed figure. I never gained so much uncompromising information with reference to my own nose and eyes, the various impressions wrought by my mouth and chin on different minds, and how my head looks when it is viewed from behind, as on these occasions. Some gentlemen were satisfied by exercising their sense of touch; and the boys who are suprisingly precocious in America) were seldom satisfied even by that, but would return to the charge over and over again. Many a budding president has walked into my room with his cap on his head and hands in his pockets, and stared at me for two whole hours: occasionally refreshing himself with a tweak at his nose, or a draught from the water-jug; or by walking to the windows and inviting other boys in the street below, to come up and do likewise; crying, 'Here he is!' 'Come on!' 'Bring all your brothers!' with other hospitable entreaties of that nature.

Washington.—Here is Washington, fresh in my mind and under my eye. Take the worst part of the City-road and Pentonville, preserving all their oddities, but especially the small shops and dwellings occupied there (but not in Washington) by furniture brokers, keepers of poor eating-houses, and fanciers of birds. Burn the whole down, build it up again in wood and plaster, widen it a little, throw in part of St. John's wood, put green blinds outside all the private houses, with a red curtain and a white one in every window; plough up all the roads; plant a great deal of coarse turf in every place where it ought not to be; erect three handsome buildings in stone and marble anywhere, but the more entirely out of every body's way the better; call one the Post-office, one the Patent-office, and one the Treasury; make it scorching hot in the morning, and freezing cold in the afternoon, with an occasional tornado of wind and dust; leave a brick-field without the bricks in all central places where a street may naturally be expected; and that's Washington. The hotel in which we live is a long row of small houses, fronting on the street and opening at the back upon a common yard, in which hangs a great triangle. Whenever a servant is wanted, somebody beats on this triangle, from one stroke up to seven, according to the number of the house in which his presence is required; and as all the servants are always being wanted, and none of them ever come, this enlivening engine is in full performance the whole day through. Clothes are drying in this same yard; female slaves, with cotton handkerchiefs twisted round their heads, are running to and fro on the hotel business; black waiters cross and recross with dishes in their hands; two great dogs are playing upon a mound of loose bricks in the centre of the little square; a pig is turning up his stomach to the sun, and grunting, "that's comfortable!" and neither the men, nor the women, nor the dogs, nor any created creature, take the smallest notice of the triangle, which is tingling madly all the time. I walk to the front window, and look across the road upon a long straggling row of houses, one story high, terminating nearly opposite, but a little to the left, in a melancholy piece of waste ground with frowzy grass, which looks like a small piece of country that has taken to drinking, and has quite lost itself. Standing anyhow and all wrong, upon this open space, like something meteoric that has fallen down from the moon, is a lop-sided, one-eyed kind of wooden building, that looks like a church, with a flag-staff as long as itself sticking out of a steeple something larger than a tea-chest. Under the window, is a small stand for coaches, whose slave drivers are sunning themselves on the steps of our door, and talking idly together. The three most obtrusive houses near at hand, are the three meanest. On one—a shop which never has anything in the window, and never has the door open—is painted in large characters, 'The City Lunch.' At another, which looks like the back way to somewhere else, but is an independent building itself, oysters are procurable in every style. At the third, which is a very little tailor's shop, pants are fixed to order; or, in other words, pantaloons are made to measure. And that is our street in Washington.

An American Abomination.—Both houses (the Houses of Legislature,) are handsomely carpeted; but the state to which these carpets are reduced by the universal disregard of the spittoon with which every honourable member is accomodated, and the extraordinary improvements on the pattern which are squirted and dabbled upon it in every direction, do not admit of being described. I will merely observe, that I strongly recommend all strangers not to look at the floor; and if they happen to drop any thing, though it be their purse, not to pick it up with an ungloved hand on any account. It is somewhat remarkable, too, at first, to say the least, to see so many honourable members with swelled faces; and it is scarcely less remarkable to discover that this appearance is caused by the quantity of tobacco they contrive to stow within the hollow of the cheek. It is strange enough, too, to see an honourable gentleman leaning back in his tilted chair, with his legs on the desk before him, shaping a convenient "plug" with his penknife, and when it is quite ready for use, shooting the old one from his mouth, as from a pop-gun, and clapping the new one in its place. I was surprised to observe, that even steady old chewers of great experience are not always good marksmen, which has rather inclined me to doubt that general proficiency of the rifle of which we have heard so much in England. Several gentlemen called upon me, who, in course of conversation, frequently missed the spittoon at five paces; and one (but he was certainly shortsighted) mistook the closed sash for the open window, at three. On another occasion, when I dined out, and was sitting with two ladies and some gentlemen round a fire before dinner, one of the company fell short of the fire-place six distinct times. I am disposed to think, however, that this was occasioned by his not aiming at that object; as there was a white marble hearth before the fender, which was more convenient, and may have suited his purpose better. * * It was a fine evening when we were passengers in the train; and watching the bright sunset from a little window near the door by which we sat, my attention was attracted to a remarkable appearance issuing from the window of the gentlemen's car immediately in front of us, which I supposed for some time was occasioned by a number of industrious persons inside ripping open feather beds and giving the feathers to the wind. At length it occurred to me that they were only spitting, which was indeed the case; though how any number of passengers which it was possible for that car to contain could have maintained such a playful and incessant shower of expectoratation, I am still at a loss to understand, notwithstanding the experience in all salvatory phenomena which I afterwards acquired. In all the public places of America this filthy custom is recognised. In the courts of law, the judge has his spittoon, the crier his, the witness his, and the prisoner his, while the jurymen and spectators are provided for, as so many men who, in the course of nature, must desire to spit incessantly. In the hospital, the students of medicine are requested, by notices upon the wall, to eject their tobacco juice into the boxes provided for that purpose, and not to discolour the stairs. In public buildings, visitors are implored, through the same agency, to squirt the essence of their quids, or "plugs," as I have heard them called by gentlemen learned in this kind of sweatmeat, into the national spittoons, and not about the base of the marble columns. But in some parts this custom is inseparably mixed up with every meal and morning call, and with all the transactions of social life. The stranger, who follows in the track I took myself, will find it in its full bloom and glory, luxuriant in all its alarming recklessness, at Washington, and let him not persuade himself (as I once did, to my shame), that previous tourists had exaggerated its extent. The thing itself is an exaggeration of nastiness which cannot be outdone.

An American Hotel.—There is no smoking-room in any hotel, and there was none consequently in ours; but the bar is a large room with a stone floor, and there people stand and smoke and lounge about all the evening; dropping in and out as the humour takes them. There, too, the stranger is initiated into the mysteries of gin sling, cocktale, sangaree, mint julep, sherry-cobbler, timber doodle, and other rare drinks. The house is full of boarders, both married and single, many of whom sleep upon the premises, and contract by the week for their board and lodging, the charge for which diminishes as they go nearer to the sky to roost. A public table is laid in a very handsome hall for breakfast, and for dinner, and for supper. The party sitting down together to these meals will vary in number from one to two hundred; sometimes more. The advent of each of these epochs in the day is proclaimed by an awful gong, which shakes the very window frames as it reverberates through the house, and horribly disturbs nervous foreigners. There is an ordinary for ladies, and an ordinary for gentlemen. In our private room the cloth could not, for any earthly consideration, have been laid for dinner without a huge glass dish of cranberries in the middle of the table; and breakfast would have been no breakfast unless the principle dish were a deformed beef-steak with a great flat bone in the centre, swimming in hot butter, and sprinkled with the very blackest of all possible pepper. Our bed-room was spacious and airy, but (like every bed-room on this side of the Atlantic) very bare of furniture, having no curtains to the French bedstead or to the window. It had one unusual luxury, however, in the shape of a wardrobe of painted wood, something smaller than an English watch-box; or, if this comparison should be insufficient to convey a just idea of its dimensions, they may be estimated from the fact of my having lived for fourteen days and nights in the firm belief that it was a shower-bath.—*Dicken's Notes on America.*

Iron Boats.—It is worthy of remark that, while there are this year seven or eight iron steam-boats building at Glasgow, three of them of large seagoing dimensions, (400 or 500 tons admeasurement,) there are no wooden steamers whatever.

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J. SIDNEY DEALEY.

Charlottetown, 28th Oct. 1842.

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DAVID ROSS,
Receiver in Chancery.

Hillsborough River, May 1st, 1841.

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