

sin in this life can ever stain them so deeply as to destroy the glory of that original choice.

Let us unfog our minds, and abide by the eternal largesse of our hearts. It is for us to bring to fruition the chosen flower of their souls. The shelter we are building, whether it be the cottage roof of our humblest love or the Gothic loftiness of our highest dreams, shall not fail, for it is founded on the very stuff

of our heart and soul. On the tried and tested staunchness of these stones may we not strive for yet more ample roofs that shall aspire to be some day identical with the firmament itself; so that the trees of the forest, whose spirit seems so much mightier than their form, shall rejoice that they once descended "from the mountains to uphold the roof of men as faithful and necessary as themselves?"

*Charles R. Murphy.*

## G. P. R. JAMES IN AMERICA

BY S. M. ELLIS

### PART II\*

IT WAS in November, 1852, that G. P. R. James arrived at his new post, as British Consul, in Norfolk, Virginia, to look things over before his family followed. In the later words of his son Charles—a child of six at this period—"Had he understood the southern temper as well then as afterward, he might have looked them over a little longer before sending for us. However, he did so before the winter set in. I remember our descent of Chesapeake Bay in a steamer. For some cause, long since forgotten, I volunteered one of those unmelodious solos with which children of six or less not infrequently entertain their elders. Walter took me up and carried me into the ship's kitchen, prevailing dark, but lit with a fire of lurid red, around which black figures were moving, all so complete a cyclorama of the orthodox place where bad boys go when they die, that I, being very sensible of deserving it, was awed into silence, though the sceptical side of me was busy inquiring how hell came to be on board a steamboat. . . .

I remember coming in sight of the wharf at Norfolk, where we again saw my father waiting for us."

There, on the dreary quay in the dull and dismal December weather, the James family were reunited, and proceeded, no doubt forlornly, to a hotel, whence in a short time they removed, on January 6, 1853, to a house in East Street with surroundings and atmosphere compact of wharves, dead dogs and cats, poor Irish and concomitant pigs—a change indeed from the pleasant home at Stockbridge. But far worse things than these were to come. Poor James soon found that he had been appointed to the most undesirable and unhealthy and depressing station in the States. Although Norfolk was adjacent to the wide mouth of the River Elizabeth and the open sea of Chesapeake Bay, the climate was extremely deleterious owing to the proximity of the Great Dismal Swamp, forcing-pit of fever and ague; and yellow fever was brought every summer by ships from the West Indies, culminating in the terrible epi-

\*Part I of Mr. Ellis's article described the first two years in America (1850-52) of the great English romance writer, G. P. R. James. Many of our readers will recall the pleasure of reading some of those great historical romances of James, perhaps the best known of which are *Richelieu*, *Darnley*, *The Gipsy*, *Attila*, *The Robber* and *Forest Days*.—Editor's Note.

demic of 1855. In addition, mosquitoes abounded, the streets of Norfolk were very insanitary, and the place was often swept by hurricanes—"they would tear up large trees by the roots, throw down brick walls, suck up and scatter the water, and fill the streets with frogs and fish taken up at the same time." Such was the new home of G. P. R. James, who, bereft of all congenial society, and in failing health himself, had to work hard and late to set in order the affairs of the consulate, much neglected by an incompetent predecessor.

The Great Dismal Swamp, which lay a few miles to the south of Norfolk, had, however, its picturesque and romantic aspects. Its inner mysteries were unexplored, and many were the tales of runaway slaves and murdered maroons attaching to the great marsh. Ghost legends, too, of terrible people of the mist were numerous; and when a heavy fall of rain was impending at night the sky would be lit up by the Wind Lights—exhalations of the swamp. These aspects of the Great Dismal Swamp naturally appealed to the romantic imagination of James, and he fully described the locality in his subsequent tale, *The Old Dominion, or the Southampton Massacre* (1856). His picture of the district is of dense woods, then a track through breaks and fallen trees and mud, leading to the actual swamp—resembling a wild and dismal moor, hemmed in on every side by a belt of lowering forest. In the midst of all, the great lake, seven miles long. Thomas Moore also was much impressed by this weird district, and one of its legends was the basis of his ballad, *The Lake of the Dismal Swamp*:

They made her a grave, too cold and damp

For a soul so warm and true;  
And she's gone to the Lake of the Dismal Swamp,

Where, all night long, by a fire-fly lamp  
She paddles her white canoe.

Away to the Dismal Swamp he speeds—  
His path was rugged and sore,

Through tangled juniper, beds of reeds,  
Through many a fen, where the serpent feeds

And man never trod before.

Till he hollowed a boat of the birchen bark,

Which carried him off from the shore;  
Far he followed the meteor spark,  
The wind was high and the clouds were dark,

And the boat returned no more.

But oft from the Indian hunter's camp

This lover and maid so true  
Are seen at the hour of midnight damp,  
To cross the Lake, by a fire-fly lamp,  
And paddle their white canoe.

The summer of 1853 proved to be appallingly hot. James remained in Norfolk some time after he had sent his family away for a sojourn in a more healthy part of the coast. The thermometer in his consulate office stood at 103 degrees for a long number of days in succession. His son relates: "Among our acquaintances was Commodore Barron of the United States Navy. He had been employed on the Guinea coast, under the equator, in stopping the exportation of slaves from Africa, but he said during this season America was the hottest country in the world, and Norfolk the hottest place in America." The great heat naturally increased the diseases rampant in the locality, including a variety peculiar to the Virginian swamps known as "black tongue fever." As a climax to his misfortunes, James had to endure unpopularity and calumny in Norfolk. The great slave agitation was then paramount, and James being reported as in favour of abolition, he was hated and attacked by the slave-owners of this southern town to an extent which culminated in eight incendiary outrages at or near his house. He also received an anonymous letter containing threats to kill him. He was advised to carry a pistol, but replied that his cane was good enough to break an assailant's head—his "cane" being a

heavy hunting crop, with ivory handle, a relic of his English days.

No wonder that at the end of his first year in Norfolk poor James was quite out of heart, and expressed his feelings thus in a letter to Charles Ollier, dated November 6, 1853:

. . . I cannot feel that an appointment, of very small value, to the dearest and most unhealthy city in the United States (with the exception of New Orleans) is altogether what I had a right to hope for or expect. You must recollect that I never asked for the consulate of Virginia, where there is neither society for my family, resources or companionship for myself, nor education to be procured for my little boy; where I am surrounded by swamps and marsh miasma, eaten up by mosquitoes and black flies, and baked under an atmosphere of molten brass, with the thermometer in the shade at 103; where every article of first necessity, with the exception of meat, is sixty per cent. dearer than in London; where the only literature is the ledger, and the arts only illustrated in the slave market.

I hesitated for weeks ere I accepted; and only did so at length upon the assurances given that this was to be a step to something better, and upon the conviction that I was killing myself by excessive literary labours. Forgive me for speaking somewhat bitterly; but I feel I have not been well used. You have known me more than thirty years, and during that time I do not think you ever before heard a complaint issue from my lips. I am not an habitual grumbler—but "the galled jade will wince."

I am very grateful to Scott for his kind efforts, and perhaps they may be successful; for Lord Clarendon,\* who is, I believe, a perfect gentleman himself, when he comes to consider the society in which I have been accustomed to move, my character, my habits of thought, and the sort of place which Norfolk is—if he knows anything about it—must see that I am not in my proper position there. He has no cause of enmity or ill-will toward me, and my worst enemy could not wish me a more unpleasant

position. If I thought that I was serving my country better than I could elsewhere, I would remain without asking for a change; but the exact reverse is the case. The slave dealers have got up a sort of outcry against me—I believe because, under Lord Clarendon's own orders, I have successfully prosecuted several cases of kidnapping negroes from the West Indies—and the consequence is that not a fortnight passes but an attempt is made to burn my house down. The respectable inhabitants of Norfolk are indignant at this treatment of a stranger, and the authorities have offered a reward for the apprehension of the offenders; but nothing has proved successful. This outcry is altogether unjust and unreasonable; for I have been perfectly silent upon the question of slavery since I have been here, judging that I had no business to meddle with the institutions of a foreign country in any way. But I will not suffer any men, when I can prevent or punish it, to reduce to slavery British subjects without chastisement.

You will be sorry to hear that this last year in Norfolk has been very injurious to my health; and I am just now recovering from a sharp attack of the fever and ague peculiar to this climate. It seized me just as I set out for the West—the great, the extraordinary West. Quinine had no effect upon it, but I learned a remedy in Wisconsin which has cured the disease entirely, though I am still very weak. What do you think of sulphur and treacle? Each time I felt the fit coming on, and found my fingers and lips turning blue, I took enough sulphur to make me odious to myself, and in ten or fifteen minutes the shivering subsided in gentle perspiration. Charlie has never recovered from the effects of a Norfolk spring, and is very thin, but as active in mind and body as ever. Walter has done all sorts of fine things in engineering and has got a good appointment. But I must end by once more bidding you believe me ever,

Yours faithfully,

G. P. R. JAMES.

\*The Fourth Earl, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1853-58.

The real cause of James's unpopularity among the slave-owners of the

Norfolk locality—in addition to the fact that he was the representative of England, a country opposed to slave traffic—was a curious literary incident, which dated back to his intimacy with Charles Lever. In *The Dublin University Magazine*, 1846,\* at a time when there was talk of American interference in Irish affairs, there appeared a mediocre poem purporting to be “Lines by G. P. R. James,” prefixed as follows by a note from Lever, who was himself the editor:

MR. EDITOR: The accompanying lines I forward for insertion in your Magazine, exactly as I received them; nor, although not intended for the public eye, do I fear any reproach from their distinguished writer in offering them for publication unauthorised. They are bold, manly, and well-timed.

Yours,  
L.

MY DEAR L:—I send you the song you wished to have. The Americans totally forgot when they so insolently calculated upon aid from Ireland in a war with England, that their own apple is rotten at the core. A nation with five or six millions of slaves, who would go to war with an equally strong nation with no slaves, is a mad people.

Yours,

G. P. R. JAMES.

A cloud is on the western sky,  
There's tempest o'er the sea,  
And bankrupt States are blustering high,  
But not a whit care we.  
Our guns shall roar, our steel shall gleam  
Before Columbia's distant stream  
Shall own another's sway.  
We'll take our stand,  
And draw the brand  
As in the ancient day.

They count on feuds within the Isle,  
They think the sword is broke,  
They look to Ireland and they smile—  
But let them bide the stroke.  
When rendered one in hand and heart,  
By robber war and swindler art,  
Home griefs are cast away,  
We take our stand,  
And draw the brand  
As in the ancient day.

\*Vol. XXVII, pp. 341, 342.

Oh, let them look to where in bonds  
For help their bondsmen cry—  
Oh, let them look ere British hands  
Wipe out that living lie.  
Beneath the flag of Liberty  
We'll sweep the wide Atlantic Sea,  
And tear their chains away;  
There take our stand,  
And draw the brand  
As in the ancient day.

Veil, starry banner, veil your pride,  
The blood-red cross before,  
Emblem of that by Jordan's side,  
Man's freedom-price that bore.  
No land is strong that owns a slave,  
Vain is it wealthy, crafty, brave:  
Our freedom for our stay,  
We'll take our stand,  
And draw the brand  
As in the ancient day.

Shout, dusky millions, through the world!  
Ye scourge-driven nations, shout!  
The flag of Liberty's unfurled,  
And Freedom's sword is out!  
The slaver's boastful thirst of gain,  
Tends but to break his bondsman's chain,  
And Britain's on the way  
To take her stand  
And draw the brand  
As in the ancient day.

One can well believe that when some busybody in Norfolk raked out this old volume of *The Dublin University Magazine* and circulated the poem in the district, resentment against James was keen—and justified from the slave-owners' point of view. But a truly Hibernian feature of the incident is that it is doubtful whether poor James wrote the poem, or knew anything at all about its publication in 1846! Both the biographers of Charles Lever, Mr. W. J. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Edmund Downey, came to the conclusion that the whole affair was a joke of Lever's at the expense of his rather prim friend, James. Mr. Downey has stated to the present writer that “Lever was very fond of this sort of humour, and his manner of introducing it to the Editor of *The D. U. M.*

supports the theory (or fact) that it was one of Lever's jests. He frequently had a dig at America (as Dickens had) in connection with its shrieking about Freedom while it employed slaves."

On the other hand, there is no documentary evidence to prove the poem was written by Lever, for his remark on hearing of the persecution James suffered in Virginia in 1853—"God forgive me, it was my doing," might well refer to his printing lines "not intended for the public eye . . . publication unauthorised." If a joke, it was a pointless one, for Lever could not foresee in 1846 that James would hold an official position in America seven years later. Whatever the solution of the authorship of the poem, the consequences of its publication were very painful, as already related, to James. The situation was not improved by the part he took in another affair dealing with the slave question at this agitated period. A negro sailor was in danger of being hanged at Charleston, South Carolina, for aiding the escape of a fugitive slave. The accused claimed to be a British subject, having been born at St. Thomas, but as that island had been ceded to Denmark the question of the man's nationality was a nice one. The British Consul at Charleston being unable, apparently, to cut the Gordian knot, James was requested to deal with the matter. He was informed by the Governor of South Carolina that if the sailor was convicted in such a rapid city as Charleston his life was doomed, and the only hope for the man was an able lawyer. James at once secured the services of a barrister named Chandler, of Norfolk, who at the trial ably urged the legal point of the accused's nationality and the further fact that he, being a native of the West Indies, would not naturally know that a negro of South Carolina was almost certain to be a slave. He secured an acquittal—a great triumph in view of the fact that the jury was largely composed of slave-owners. James was delighted, though the incident increased the ill-will of his neighbours, the supporters of the

slave system that is, in Norfolk. However, as time went on and the new consul's merits both in official and private life were apparent, persecution died down, and even the slave-owners of Norfolk came to like and respect him. Charles James, in his *Autobiography*, often speaks of the slave question, and it seems that his father was not really a keen opposer of the system. He says:

It was not easy to manage without employing slave labour, but my father did not consider that his official position as agent of a government so anti-slavery as the British would allow of that. My mother, however, with her own money, hired a black cook who was a slave. She was just such another fat old creature as Aunt Chloe. My parents thought a great deal of her. Poor old soul, she died of yellow fever during the great visitation (we were in Wisconsin) and my father said, with tears in his eyes, that he expected nothing else on first hearing of her illness, for she had been taken sick once before since we had her, and nothing would keep up her courage but having "Massa" talk to her—"Massa" being himself; her legal owner, who let her out like a quadruped, was nothing to her.

Charles James also mentions the amazing insolence of the negro waiters at Willard's Hotel, Washington, before the outbreak of war, and how a Southerner shot one of them dead for misbehaviour, the result being a great uproar in the anti-slavery newspapers.

During the first year in Norfolk, James's two elder sons set out to seek their fortune farther afield. The second boy, Courtenay, then aged seventeen, sailed for Labrador (owing to attempted paternal chastisement for the crime of smoking); and Walter went to Wisconsin. He was accompanied thither by his father and sister. G. P. R. James rejoined his wife and youngest son at Winchester in November, 1853. During his Norfolk consulate, James generally had leave for three months, August to November, and he and his family travelled much, in addition to sojourns

at Old Point Comfort, Baltimore, and Washington. Among other celebrities of those regions, James knew Ole Bull, the violinist, Judge Taney, John Tyler (ex-President), and Madame Jerome Bonaparte, formerly Elizabeth Patterson. American society seems to have been very festive in those early days, and Charles James's account of its spontaneous gaiety and high spirits has been confirmed by the later reminiscences of his namesake, Mr. Henry James. Charles James says: "Dancing was the grown people's chief pleasure, and no lady was so indefatigable as Madame Bonaparte. She had no idea of ever growing old, and would dance off this mortal stage. My father once asked her if she believed in anything else, to which she promptly answered, 'No.' I shall not easily forget the great ballroom at Old Point Comfort on those hot nights, with the windows wide open, the mosquitoes, whom bats followed to devour, the glare of the lights, the fiddlers perched up high, the mint-juleps, the overheated multitude of the brave and fair; those were tremendously décolleté days."

On his return to Norfolk, James moved into a larger and better house in Granly Street, facing the open water, but even this dwelling was infested with the centipedes and rats so horribly numerous in Virginia. Here, on May 24, 1854, James gave his usual dinner in celebration of the Queen's birthday, and decorated his parlour with a huge British flag reaching from ceiling to floor.

Despite his official work, his ill-health and troubles, James continued to write, though in a much lesser degree than in the happy days of leisure and prosperity in England. In 1853 he published *Agnes Sorrel* and *Vicissitudes of a Life* (which contains some autobiographical matter), and in 1854 *Ticonderoga*, or *The Black Eagle*, a story he had commenced three years earlier. *Prince Life: A Story for My Boy*, 1856, was also belated in its public appearance, for Charles James notes in his copy: "This book was written for me at Stockbridge,

Massachusetts, about 1852. I wanted something written for me like *The Wonder Book* for Hawthorne's children. C. L. J."

Unhappily, James's health was ever getting worse and worse, as the following letter shows:

BRITISH CONSULATE,  
Norfolk, Virginia,  
7th April, 1855.

MY DEAR OLLIER:

It has been impossible for me to write to you, and it is now only possible for me to write a few lines, as I have already had to do more than my benumbed and feeble hands could well accomplish. For ten weeks I was nailed to my chair with rheumatic gout in knees, feet, hips, hands, shoulder. For some time I could only sign my despatches with my left hand and to some letters put my mark. Happily my feet, knees, etc., are well, but I cannot get the enemy out of my hands and arms. My shoulder is Sebastopol and will not yield.

I enclose you a cheque upon the Housatonic Bank, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as the only way I have of remitting you the money. Here, that cheque is better than any State Bank Note, but I am afraid neither the Housatonic Bank is well known, nor

Yours ever

G. P. R. JAMES.

In this summer came the terrible epidemic of yellow fever, and—in his later report to the government—James traced its origin to a Yankee vessel called the *Ben Franklin*. The captain of the ship had called upon James and wanted him to take charge of the effects of a sailor who had died in the hospital, on the plea that the deceased was a British subject. "Did he die of yellow fever?" asked James. "Oh, no," replied the captain, "merely common ship fever" (typhus). The consul said he would inquire at the hospital, and his visitor—an unsuccessful disciple of George Washington, it seems—took a hurried departure. At the hospital, James was informed the sailor had entered his nationality as American in the book, and that the case was a virulent one of yellow fever, for the patient



was dead in two hours. In spite of James's protestations, the port authorities allowed the *Ben Franklin* to remain for some time under inefficient quarantine regulations, and the result was the pestilence that devastated Norfolk and the surrounding places. Many friends of the Jameses died, including Mrs. and Miss Taney, wife and daughter of the judge of that name, and Mrs. Barron, wife of Commodore Barron. Charles James says: "Hers was a horrible case. A frequent, though not invariable, symptom of yellow fever is hemorrhage. In Mrs. Barron's case, it was stated that blood oozed from the pores of her face. As to the sweat of blood—that narrative about Jesus is among portions of Scripture which have been ridiculed, but apologists have shown similar things to occur in other cases of high nervous irritation, which is very characteristic of yellow fever."

Norfolk became a town of desolation and despair; everyone who could fled from the place, and the conditions were not unlike those that attended the Great Plague of London. James's second-in-command, Frederick Cridland (afterward British Consul at Mobile and Charleston) was stopped one night by a sort of press-gang authorised to secure men for the purpose of burying the dead, and it was only by flaunting the majesty of the British flag that he escaped this most unpleasant duty. After James had started for his annual leave, two of his negro servants had yellow fever,—one of them, Kitty, an old woman previously mentioned, dying very rapidly,—and it was Cridland who himself disinfected the rooms of his chief. He remained in Norfolk till the epidemic had abated, and did his duty very finely.

The James family this summer travelled via Detroit and Chicago to Wisconsin and Minnesota, where the novelist and his eldest son, Walter, had invested in land. This was still a very primitive part of America. Charles James relates:

We ascended from a steamer from Fond du Lac, then a very pretty village trying

hard to be a city, even into Menasha. We boarded uncomfortable weeks here at a damnably kept hotel. Menasha was a typical Western village at the back of beyond. Though open on most sides to the prairies, it was also in close contiguity to the piner-ies. The principal business was lumbering. Neenah already showed signs of out-running Menasha. Between them was Doty's Island, for aught I know the property of (territorial) Governor Doty, whose house appeared to be the only one there. Doty's Island was quite large. Trees were felled for lumber there: yet it seemed in the main a perfect wilderness. The house, huge and well furnished, received us during a visit of some days' duration, and had a *rus in urbe* atmosphere about it quite delightful after the frontier tavern. The friendship, here cemented, endured.

The climate seemed to me relaxing and depressing, and the barbarism of everything, except on Doty's Island, intolerable. The scenery I thought monotonous except when there were plenty of swamps. About the only occupations were fishing and hunting. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, I had to own some beauties of the Great West. The long, long twilight of the prairies was very agreeable, and the cool nights. There were some really pretty places among the rising towns accessible by buggy-ride.

Appleton, already distinguished as a seat of learning, was one of them. A few civilised people had begun to drift out into the West. There were lots of foreigners belonging to the cruder social grades, and very scantily supplied with English. And ever-lordly, as throughout the continent, there was the true American of that variety who could read *The Advocate* with time enough to spell the words, but knew all there was to know without. There was an old hunter, a patriarch in woodcraft. Where he lived and how, it is not for such as I to know, but I saw him a few times, clad in buck-skins, paddling the placid surface of the Lake Des Morts in a dugout whose primitiveness entirely defies description, and wearing a venerable growth of grey hair, whiskers, beard, and moustache, which made the existence of osseous or fleshly features a mere question for impertinent curiosity.

We started at last from Menasha homeward on the Lake Winnebago steamer. Just about sunset I began to shiver. My father was much alarmed, for there was about a good deal of what they call here typhoid. He had almost overstayed his leave and was anxious to get on, but the doctors told him it would be at the risk of my life to move immediately, so he determined to hold back. After lying sick for some days at Fond du Lac, I was pronounced movable. The railroad terminus was at Wausau. To this place from Fond du Lac we had to stage it. Recent rains had brought it to the highest state of perfection. Before we reached Wausau, darkness overtook us. Every few minutes the vehicle sunk over the hubs in a mud hole. At last it became so dark and the holes so fathomless that we concluded it dangerous to attempt proceeding, and stopped at a wayside house which frequently did duty for a tavern. . . . Henceforth we had the railroad, but I was too sick for even railroad travelling when we reached Milwaukee, and lay there for several days more. One of them was my ninth birthday, October 23, 1855. . . . When we left Detroit the slaughter recommenced. It was evening. A violent thunderstorm came on, and being bound in the same direction as ourselves, it accompanied us all along the Lakes with dazzling lightning, pouring rain, and reports like the bursting of cannon. As we crossed the suspension bridge at Niagara, my father saw what must have been the unique spectacle of the Falls revealed by lightning. He asked if I did in a tone of such admiration that, not to disappoint him, I committed the departure from truth involved in saying "Yes."

Thus, after this not unexciting journey from the West, and short sojourns at Albany and Washington, the James family returned once more to Norfolk, where yellow fever had now fortunately abated. But as the disease had been actually in the Granly Street house, the consul established his family at Portsmouth, in the Macon House, a combination of inn and boarding establishment. In the following year the consulate was removed inland to Richmond, after

strong representations that a more healthy situation than Norfolk was essential, and the date of the change is given in the following letter:

BRITISH CONSULATE,  
Norfolk, Virginia,  
3d May, 1856.

MY DEAR MR. KENNEDY:

. . . Lord Clarendon has ordered me to make every preparation for moving the Consulate of Virginia up to Richmond, but not to do so until he has nominated a Vice-Consul for Norfolk. He also wishes me to send him a detailed report regarding the late epidemic here; and what between house hunting, office hunting, and trying to run down those foxes called rumours into their holes, and to draw Truth up from the bottom of her well in a place where people are as fanatical upon contagion and non-contagion as if they were articles of faith, I have had no peace of my life. My book\* I would have sent you, but I could not get a copy worth sending. It has found favour in the South and is powerfully abused in the North, both of which circumstances tend to increase the sale, so that it has been wonderfully well read.

I wish you a pleasant time in the Old World, and have the pleasure of enclosing some letters, though you will hardly need any introduction anywhere. You carry your own with you. These are all I have time to write before you go; but I will tell some others of my friends to find you out and call upon you at your hotel. I am sorry I did not think of taking notes of all the evening conversations at Berkeley. We might have made out together some few from the *Noctes Berkelianæ*.

Yours ever,  
G. P. R. JAMES.

In a letter to Commander J. McKeever, a few weeks earlier, he alluded to his press of work and ill-health:

A completely new Code of Instructions were waiting my arrival from the West, and these Instructions have nearly doubled

\**The Old Dominion, or The Southampton Massacre*, published this year. 1856.



the former labours of a consul, which were heavy enough before, so that I am quite overworked. I trust, however, in a few days to have finished the innumerable annual reports required at the end of each year, when my first gratification will be that of waiting upon you, although I have been so unwell ever since my return that I never should count upon health enough here to be certain of anything.

James's health was now beyond repair. His constant tendency to lameness, the miseries of suppressed gout, the irregularity of his heart's action, all increased year by year. And now, during his first winter at Richmond, he suffered from the prevailing epidemic of diphtheria—a disease then but little understood by the medical profession—and soon after contracted inflammation of the lungs. The season was exceptionally severe. Richmond was snowed up, there was difficulty in getting fuel, and so scarce were provisions that the negro population indulged largely in a diet of rats. James took an active part in organising measures of relief for the starving poor.

Although Richmond was a great improvement upon Norfolk in matters of health, wealth, and civilisation, possessed handsome Capitol Buildings and a theatre with a stock company (irradiated at times by passing meteors such as Edwin Forrest, in *Richelieu*, and the English actor Loraine), it was still in an elementary state. The population of forty thousand contained many wild elements, and disputes often ended in pistol fusillades in the streets, for Colt revolvers were commonly carried. There were public sales of negro slaves, fugitive and refractory blacks received severe floggings in the calaboose, and there was a slave warehouse—all in the style described by Mrs. Beecher Stowe in her rather too egregious romance. In James's time, Richmond was still unconnected by train with Washington, and the journey had to be made by an inefficient, ill-smelling steamboat service via the James and Potomac rivers to Acquia Creek. Thackeray came to lecture in Richmond early

in 1853, and visited James (who was then still at Norfolk).

The James family lived at first at the Exchange Hotel, in Franklin Street, which was connected by a bridge across the street with a sort of annex, called the Ballad House after the name of its proprietors. In the summer of 1856 they moved out to Montgomery Springs, a beautiful place among the mountains, where they adopted the southern practice of living in a rustic cabin and merely going to an hotel for meals. It was a primitive country, surrounded by woodland, and just then the neighbourhood was indulging in one of its frequent scares of a negro insurrection, which was regarded so seriously that even little Charles James was armed with a pistol. In the autumn the family proceeded on a tour through Western Virginia, visiting the Otter Peaks, Lexington, and Liberty, from thence returning to Richmond late in November. Charles James relates an incident which occurred at Lexington illustrative of the summary manner in which the Americans of the fifties settled their quarrels:

Christian and Blackburn had quarrelled about a girl. It was Sunday evening, and the fight, which had been long pending, began at the church door, under a lofty hill. . . . They went up the hill, sparring with fists, Blackburn driving Christian, who had the advantage of the ground, before him. At the top of the hill, Blackburn, who was now on his own level, knocked him down and piled on to him. After bidding him get off once or twice, Christian stabbed him in the neck with a knife. There were third parties present when the fight began, but none of them seemed to think they ought to interfere with the gentlemen who went off and cut each other's throats in satisfactory privacy.

Christian, when tried for this murder, was acquitted. The following summer, 1857, was spent at Ashland, and after that the Jameses moved into their new house, near the Capitol grounds, at Richmond, where, however, they were des-

tined to remain but a short time. During this season, James, as British Consul, took part in the unveiling of the equestrian statue of George Washington in Richmond, and at night had the front of his house adorned with an arch of gas jets, which in those days was considered a very gorgeous mode of illumination.

In 1857 James published *Leonora D'Orco*, a romance of Italy in the fifteenth century; in 1858 appeared *Lord Montagu's Page*, and in 1859 a sequel entitled *The Cavalier* when published in America: this was his last work, and the title was changed to *Bernard Marsh* when it was republished posthumously, in 1864, in London.

G. P. R. James had long desired a change of consulate, and urged his claims to promotion. In 1858 he was offered the post of consul-general for the Black Sea with headquarters at Odessa. While he was considering this proposal there came the offer of the similar post for the Adriatic, with residence at Venice, and this he at once accepted. As soon as the news of his impending departure became known in Virginia, regret was expressed on all sides; and the impulsive, warm-hearted southerners—former feuds on the slave question all forgotten—were profuse with compliments and hospitalities. They presented James with a punch bowl at a farewell banquet in Richmond, when the following gracefully complimentary verses by John R. Thompson, the Virginian poet, were read\*:

Good-bye! they say the time is up—

The "solitary horseman" leaves us,  
We'd like to take a "stirrup cup,"

Though much indeed the parting grieves us:

We'd like to hear the glasses clink

Around a board where none was tipsy,  
And with a hearty greeting drink

This toast—The Author of *The Gypsy!*

The maidens fair of many a clime

Have blubbered o'er his tearful pages,  
The Ariosto of his time,

Romancist of the Middle Ages:

In fiction's realm a shining star,  
(We own ourselves his grateful debtors):  
Who would not call our G.P.R.—  
"H.B.M.C."—a "Man of Letters"?

But not with us his pen avails  
To win our hearts—this English scion,  
Though there are not so many tales  
To every roaring British Lion—  
For he has yet a prouder claim  
To praise than dukes and lords inherit,  
Or wealth can give, or lettered fame—  
His honest heart and modest merit.

An Englishman, whose sense of right  
Comes down from glorious Magna Charta,  
He loves, and loves with all his might,  
His home, his Queen, Pale Ale, the Gar-  
ter;  
The last embraces much, 'tis best  
To comprehend just what is stated—  
For Honi soit—you know the rest  
And need not have the French translated.

O! empty bauble of renown,  
So quickly lost and won so dearly,  
Our Consul wears the Muses' crown,  
We love him for his virtues merely;  
A Prince, he's ours as much as Fame's,  
And reigns in friendship kindly o'er us,  
Then call him George Prince Regent James,  
And let his country swell the chorus.

His country! we would gladly pledge  
Its living greatness and its glory—  
In Peace admired, and "on the edge  
Of battle" terrible in story:  
A little isle, its cliff it rears  
'Gainst wind and waves in wrath united,  
And nobly for a thousand years  
Has kept the fire of freedom lighted.

A glowing spark in time there came,  
Like sunrise o'er the angry water,  
And here is fed, an altar flame,  
By Britain's democratic daughter—  
From land to land a kindred fire  
Beneath the billow now is burning,  
O! may it thrill the magic wire  
With only love and love returning!

But since we cannot meet again  
Where wine and wit are freely flowing,  
Old friend! this measure take and drain  
A brimming health to us in going:

And far—beneath Italia's sky

Where sunsets glow with hues prismatic,—  
Bring out the bowl when you are dry

And pledge us by the Adriatic!\*

James thus left America with the kindest feelings. Maunsell B. Field states:

I was with him during the last evening that he spent in America, at the Union Place Hotel, in New York. Washington Irving, between whom and himself there existed a sincere friendship, was also with us. Mr. James was telling about all the kindness which he had received in Virginia. "They're a warm-hearted people—they're a warm-hearted people," he said, while tears came into his eyes. The next morning I accompanied him to the steamer, and took my final leave of him. . . . He was a big-hearted man, too tender, merciful, and full

\*These verses were published shortly after in *The Southern Literary Messenger*.

of religious sentiment; a good husband, a devoted father, and a fast friend.

So, after eight adventurous years in America, James and his family left the New World for its extreme antithesis—Venice, where the novelist was destined to end life's journey less than two years later. His last days were passed amid the exciting period of the Italian-Austrian war situation, for adventure attended James to the last. He died, after long and acute suffering, on June 9, 1860, aged sixty, and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery of St. Michele, on the Island of the Dead, about a mile from the city of Venice.

In the following year, his widow returned to America; she survived until June 9, 1891, dying at Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The surviving children of G. P. R. James also settled in the New World: they are now dead, but their descendants continue there, and are of American rationality.

## THREE BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WILLIAM ARCHER'S "GOD AND MR. WELLS"\*

NOBODY is more orthodox than your orthodox agnostic. When John Stuart Mill left in manuscript *Three Essays on Religion*, whose publication proved to the world that he was not far from the Kingdom of God, Herbert Spencer was troubled, and all the agnostics with him. An almost amusing account of this incident is given in Lord Morley's *Recollections*. Morley says the book "dismayed his disciples," and that "it made a sort of intellectual scandal." Morley felt that Mill had somehow been tainted with treason. To see signs of weakness in one who his whole life long had fought the good faith, was indeed disquieting. For if a man like Mill was to show religious conviction, how much greater the

danger besetting those less mentally robust!

One feels sorry for both the agnostics and the pessimists; they have such tremendous difficulty in living up to their convictions, in remaining firm in the unfaith. As old Bishop Blougram says, just when they are "safest," something or other happens that whispers in the depths of their hearts the treasonable suggestion that there may be some truth in religion. Christianity, like its Founder, refuses to stay dead. It has been repeatedly and confidently proclaimed a corpse; then suddenly it shows signs of life in the citadel of its enemies, making most unexpected converts. Before the year 1916, it had seemed that if all the world became religious except one man, that man would be H. G. Wells. Then came Mr. Britling, teaching and practising Christianity. At the same moment that *Advocatus Diaboli*, Bernard Shaw, enrolled himself formally under the ban-

\*God and Mr. Wells. A Critical Examination of *God the Invisible King*. By William Archer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1917.