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## BOOKS AND MUSIC IN HALIBURTON

### *Books and Reading*

Within the current half-century there were persons still living in Nova Scotia who remembered being present at "Clifton," in Windsor, when Haliburton's personal library was auctioned off there, preparatory to his removing from the province to make his home in England. Unfortunately for the gratification of my curiosity, I never met any of them able to recall the title of even one of the books then being offered for sale. Almost certainly among the lot would have been Haliburton's law books, for he had no intention of either pleading or hearing further cases in court. And if chance bound (or loose) volumes of weekly periodicals were placed on the block, they would undoubtedly have included files of the *New York Albion* and *The Spirit of the Times*, both of which publications we know he read, the second assiduously. For other and as likely clues to what his library may have contained, as well as to what were his life-long reading habits, we have to rely on the scores of quotations and literary allusions to be found scattered through frequent chapters of his humorous works. (In these notes no account has been taken of his serious works.)

The evidence of the lasting effects of his King's College training, in which "the attention of the students [was] chiefly directed to the acquisition of a perfect and intimate acquaintance with the classics," is repeatedly apparent. Among the many classical authors from whom he quotes in the main course of his writings or as epigraphs for his title-pages are nearly all of those listed in the King's College curriculum of required studies in his undergraduate days. And one of the most distinct impressions left by his quotations is that they come from a part of his cultural background that he had made thoroughly his own. There is nothing "looked up" about them; they belong naturally where they occur; and, apart from an occasional old common property stand-by like "*in medio tutissimus ibis*," or "*gnothi seauton*," or "*vox et praeterea nihil*," they are rarely drawn from routine literary use. Latin sources predominate almost exclusively over Greek, and show a definitely college-learned preference—and enjoyment. Horace leads in the array of Haliburton's choices, with lines from the *Odes*, *Satires*, *Epistles*, and *Ars Poetica*. Lines from Ovid and from Virgil occur next in order of frequency, the

former drawn from the *Metamorphoses* and the *Epistles*, and the latter from the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues*. Readily identifiable passages come from Cicero's *De Senectute*, Juvenal's *Satires*, and Plutarch's *Lives*; and others less easily located from Terence, Suetonius, Martial, and Longinus. But Haliburton was not content merely to quote. He derives, now and then, glosses for Western cant or Yankee idiom from classical analogues: "go ahead" (Davy Crockett) from Horace, "pull foot" (Sam Slick) from Euripides, and "I feel spotty on the back," i.e. irritated (Sam Slick) from Statius. He points out the parallel between his story of the warm-up to a skating race staged by a pair of ill-fated lovers at Snug Harbor (*The Old Judge*) and Ovid's account of Atalanta's foot-races with her suitors. His familiarity with the Scriptures and with the *Book of Common Prayer* is revealed by the thirty or more times he applies lessons drawn from their texts.

His acquaintance with the works of his contemporaries among British writers, or with those of their predecessors still being read in England during his lifetime, seems not to have been as intimate as his knowledge of the classics. But to that statement there is one evident and creditable exception: he knew his Shakespeare. At least he knew him well enough to quote from *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. To be sure he garbles a number of his Shakespearean quotations slightly, twice obviously, however, to enhance the comic appeal of Sam Slick's rendition of them. Doctor Johnson he looked upon as the redoubtable authority he actually was. He expresses his approval of Johnson's famous letter to Lord Chesterfield, quotes from *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and, in spite of his alleged pride in his supposed Scottish ancestry, speaks with no show of resentment of Johnson's detestation of the Scots, and recalls appreciatively Johnson's caustic definition of "oats" and (via Boswell) his statement in regard to what passes for a good road in Scotland. The *Dictionary* is cited three times. Pope's *Essay on Man* and his *Essay in Criticism* are also cited, and so (at some length) is Goldsmith's *Traveller*. *She Stoops to Conquer* is mentioned, and *The Vicar of Wakefield* is praised for being "written in common language." Two stanzas of Grey's *Elegy* are drawn upon to point a moral, a third is parodied, and the prolonged neglect of their author is lamented (Mason, Burns, and Mickle are named as other neglected authors). *Paradise Lost*, Cowper's *Task*, and Prior's *An Epitaph* are each quoted. Sam Slick reports that he has Smollett's "books" at home, and has read Fielding's. *Pilgrim's Progress* is alluded to, as are John Gilpin's ride, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and Ossian's heroes. Scott's *Rob Roy* and *The Legend of Montrose* are quoted, and Scott, along with Bacon, is held up as an exemplar of literary

virtue for the benefit of young authors: "write like the first, map the mind like the second." A confirmed Tory in both politics and reading, Haliburton twice goes a little off the beaten track in search for what he wanted in the verse of the sometime "revolutionary" Romantics. From the first of these detours he comes back bearing a pair of lines from Coleridge's *The Devil's Thoughts*, with one word changed; and from the second with the "Hail to the Crown" opening passage of the sixth book of Wordsworth's *Excursion*, again with one word changed ("he" into "she"), to bring his find patriotically up to date. Watt's "How doth the little busy bee" is quoted for reasons not hard to surmise, though why his *Day of Judgment* "in English sapphick" should be referred to may not be so easy to determine. Byron, "trying to find inspiration and sublimity in gin and water," bedevilled the Rhine, and Scott, not so exemplary as in the previous mention of him, did no better by Loch Katrine. Among novelists, Dickens' *Oliver Twist* receives credit for "some touches of real feeling," but his *American Notes* is scored for omitting certain data regarding his reception in the United States, and so concealing proof of his lack of real popularity there. Thackeray gets no more than a mention, and that only for being, like Dickens and Sam Slick, a smoker. Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature* is barely named. Sidney Smith, the letter writer, is praised for his "reasoning"; and Horace Smith, the parodist, for calling "lawyers, doctors, and parsons" (the "three evils of England") "the black graces." Gladstone's Homeric studies are made light of, while the juveniles, *The Siege of Troy*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *The Babes in the Wood* are not.

Haliburton engaged in extended comment on but one of his fellow authors. "The Pleasures of Hope," a chapter in *The Attaché*, is devoted wholly to moralizing on the sad fact that honour had come to "poor [[Thomas]] Campbell" only after his death. Haliburton had attended the ceremonies incident to the interment of Campbell's remains in Westminster Abbey, and the occasion had proved mournful enough to touch off one of those trains of sentimental complaint in which he was all too prone to indulge. Doubt as to the sincerity of the tribute to the dead poet may be permitted, since its purpose is so obviously to point the lesson of neglecting the claims of deserving colonials and to contrast the treatment extended by Bentley (Haliburton's publisher) to his clientele with that shown by presumptive patrons of the literary arts towards needy authors. "Agitation, bullyin' governors, shootin' down sogers, and rebellin' [[in the colonies]] is the passport now-a-days," Sam Slick laments. "The English . . . don't see a man's merit till he's dead, and then they . . . start up all at once and patronize his body and bones when it can't do

him one morsel of good." Campbell, who "had charmed and delighted the nation, and given 'em another ondyin' name to add to their list of poets," had hoped for "a recompense at least in some government appointment that would have cheered and soothed his old age, and he was disappointed . . . . If poor Tom were alive and kickin', I'd tell him who to put his trust in—and that's Bentley. He's the only patron worth havin', that's a fact . . . . The great have nothin' but smiles and bows, Bentley has nothin' but the pewter . . . He is a patron, he don't wait for the pall." As for Campbell,

He knowed all about the world of imagination, and the realms of fancy; but he didn't know nothin' at all about this world of our'n, . . . . Do you go to Nova Scotia now, and begin at Cape Sable, and travel all down to Cape Canso,—the whole length of the province, pick out the two best lines from his 'Hope,' and ask every feller you meet, 'Did you ever hear these?' and how many would you find that has seen 'em, or heard tell of 'em?"

But if they were asked the answer to a silly riddle they had "heard the clown say to the circus," they would know what it was. But Campbell had attained his reward at last: "it was worth seventy years of 'hope,' was that funeral . . . . Peel held a string of the pall, Brougham came . . . [and] the Duke of Argyle . . . Disraeli said he was one of the 'Curiosities of Literature'; while Macauley . . . said, 'Poor fellow, this was always the object of his ambition; it was his 'hope beyond the grave.' " At this point Haliburton called a halt to Sam Slick's "lockrum" by having Mr. Hopewell interrupt and quote "a passage of great beauty and sublimity" from Campbell's poem that gave him his chapter title. Sam Slick, however, is given the last word:

" . . . let some misfortunate devil of an author do—what only one man in a century can, to save his soul alive, write a book that will live—a thing that *does* show the perfection of the human mind, and what do they do here [in England]? [[They]] let his body live on the 'Pleasures of Hope' all the days of his life, and his name live afterwards on a cold white marble in Westminster Abbey. They be hanged—the whole bilin' of them—them and their trumpery procession too, and their paltry patronage of standin' by the grave, and sayin' 'Poor Campbell!'"

One other of Haliburton's contemporary authors in England drew the epithet "poor" also, not from ceremonial mourners but from Haliburton himself. Haliburton's sympathy for Theodore Hook was occasioned by no failure of its occasioner to obtain literary honours. Rather it was prompted by Hook's chronic ill-health and his being made liable, through an unjust legal decision, for the theft of a considerable sum of money by a subordinate of his in Mauritius, where Hook held a non-resident government post. With Hook, and with Thomas Barham of *Ingoldsby*

*Legends* fame too, Haliburton became intimate as a fellow member of the Athenaeum Club in London. Haliburton had been elected to the Athenaeum, according to the records of the club, in February, 1839, under a rule permitting the admission each year of "a limited number of candidates of special eminence." His proposer for election was a Mr. James Haliburton (no relative), the noted Egyptologist to whom *The Bubbles of Canada* "by the author of 'The Clockmaker'" was dedicated, and, presumably, the same person with whom, as disclosed in a letter from Haliburton to his friend Judge Robert Parker in New Brunswick, Haliburton planned taking late in 1839 a business trip from Nova Scotia "to Canada and the States."

Haliburton's awareness of what was taking place in the literary scene in the United States is revealed by the many references to American authors and books to be found in various of his works. Among the authors, Cooper receives most attention, none of it flattering. His *Gleanings* contains an "absurd passage," in defense of which Sam Slick (mistaken for once) is prepared to show fight. To Cooper's fiction the remark, "Novels of the present day though founded in fact, [are] unlike reality," is undoubtedly meant to apply, for witness this description of the talk of Cooper's Indian chiefs: "half mist, foam, and cataract, and half sun, moon, and stars, with a touch of insanity running through [it] all." Cooper himself, like other Americans—Rush, Willis, and Stephenson (and Sam Slick?)—"bragged" too much. Readers are warned not to adopt his "maxims": "nobody approves [them] on either side of the water." Cooper was not called on while in England by any Tory except Sir Walter Scott, but he was patronized by the Whigs as "quite an oracle on ballot, universal suffrage, and all other democratic institutions." Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, with its pictures of England, "like a Dutch painting, is good because it is faithful." And his *Knickerbocker's History of New York* is accorded the tribute of imitation in being pretty clearly the inspiration of the Van Dam's, the Dutch governor's, council meeting in the third *Clockmaker*. G. W. Curtis's *Potiphar Papers* is mentioned, and so is Webster's *Dictionary* (revised in 1840). Bartlett's *Americanisms* and Inman's glossary of similar idioms are each laid under contribution for definitions of Yankee frontier lingo. Details in Harriet Beecher Stowe's portraiture of the American negro in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are questioned as to their accuracy, including one backed up by a Latin misquotation (Haliburton deplored negro slavery, but he was no abolitionist)<sup>1</sup>. Political writers and orators, early as well as late, such as Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, J. Q. Adams, Daniel Webster, and Edward Everett, are named again and again. De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is not an

American book, of course, but it was read almost widely enough in the United States to make it one. Haliburton knew it well.

From only one of Haliburton's contemporaries who surveyed the situation, literary or other, in the United States has there come down to us, as far as I know, any substantial amount of comment about his own writings. Mrs. Frances Trollope published the first edition of her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* in 1833. A fifth edition of it appeared in 1839. In the meantime Haliburton had brought out the first and second series of *The Clockmaker*, in each of which he caricatured the recent procession of English visitors to North America who had presumed to set down in print their hastily gathered impressions of what they saw and heard: "They [don't] want facts to make opinions on, but facts to tally with opinions formed." "[They] run over five thousand miles of country in five weeks, . . . and then return [home], lookin' as wise as the monkey that had seen the world . . . [to write] wishy washy trash they call tours, sketches, travels, letters, and what not." Harriet Martineau, among them, is treated with especial severity as a pathetic, deaf old maid, being fooled to the top of her bent by Sam Slick in one of his most unscrupulous "bamming" moods. Though Mrs. Trollope was not included with the British travellers named in the first two *Clockmakers*, the belittling remarks there set down about them apply to her quite as well as to the others. That she read them there is no room for doubt whatever, but she chose to ignore them. Instead of hitting back with righteous anger as she might have been expected to do, she appended to the edition (the fifth) of her book that came out during, or shortly after, Haliburton's 1838-39 visit to England a footnote in which she paid a handsome compliment not only to Haliburton (without having the least idea, however, as to who he was) for his successful recreation of American character in Sam Slick, but to his predecessors in the same line of comic Yankee portraiture as well. Repudiating the assurance given to her earlier by a Philadelphia publisher that "no comic publication had ever yet been found to answer in America," she went on to insist that "though probably quite true at the time it was made, [it] must never be repeated. Major Downing's *Letters* [her editor says it was Seba Smith's Downing letters she meant, but more likely it was C. A. Davis's] prove, much beyond the power of contradiction, that humour, rich and original, does exist in the United States; and the popularity of the work shows with equal certainty, that when such a treat is given them, the people know how to enjoy it." Then, after warmly commending Jack Downing's ridicule of the mismanagement of the United States Bank and its attendant scandals (to which Haliburton, too, paid rather more than a due share of attention),

she went on again to predict that "in the progress of time, when other topics shall come to divide the public mind with dollars, they will chuckle at, and enjoy wit, otherwise employed," and continued with "This indeed is already proved by the cordial reception given to the inimitable Sam Slick, which, whether by a native hand or not, is as heartily enjoyed on the other [the American] side of the Atlantic as it is by all genuine lovers of true humour on this [the English]." Later on in her book she adds this further note: "The Yankees (as the New Englanders are called) will avow these qualities [slyness, persistence, selfishness, and trickery] themselves with a complacent smile, and boast that no people on earth can match them at over-reaching in a bargain. Vide the exquisite personification of 'Sam Slick, the watchmaker.' His 'soft soder, and his 'human natur' furnish an abstract and brief chronicle of the whole race."

It could have been only a little while after she had sent these notes to the printer that she found out who the creator of Sam Slick actually was. For Haliburton's travelling companion in England in 1838, C. R. Fairbanks of Halifax, records in his "Journal" on August 11 that "H. [is] now the greatest Lion in London. Mrs. Trollope . . . desire[s] to be acquainted with him." The granting of her desire (presumably without much delay) did not prevent Haliburton, however, with his usual show of envy in such matters, from permitting Sam Slick to make, in the third *Clockmaker*, the dubious remark that "we have every reason to believe" Mrs. Trollope received £5000 for "abusin'" the Americans. (For the same "service" Captain Hall received a like amount, Miss Martineau was promised a royal garter, and Captain Marryatt was made a Knight of the Royal Baths!) But Mrs. Trollope forgave even this breach of good manners. Her home in London from 1837 to 1848 became, as her son Thomas recalled many years afterwards in his *What I Remember* (1887), "the resort of pleasant people; and in my time [there] was a very agreeable one." His recollections proceed:

Among other frequenters of it, my diary makes frequent mention of Judge Haliburton, of Nova Scotia, better known to the world as Sam Slick, the Clockmaker. He was, as I remember him, a delightful companion,—for a limited time. He was in this respect exactly like his books,—extremely amusing reading if taken in rather small doses, but calculated to seem tiresomely monotonous if indulged in at too great length. He was a thoroughly good fellow, kindly, cheery, hearty, and sympathetic always; and so far always a welcome companion. But his funning was always pitched in the same key, and always more or less directed to the same objects. His social and political ideas and views all coincided with my own, which, of course, tended to make us better friends. In appearance he looked entirely like an Englishman, but not at all like a Londoner. Without being at all too fat, he was large and burly in person, with grey hair, a large

ruddy face, a humorous mouth, and bright eyes always full of mirth. He was an inveterate chewer of tobacco, and in the fullness of comrade-like kindness strove to indoctrinate me with that habit. But I was already an old smoker, and preferred to content myself with that mode of availing myself of the blessing of tobacco.

Another and more famous son of Mrs. Trollope, Anthony the novelist, has also left a pleasant word of recollection about Haliburton in one of his books. In his *North America* (1862) he wrote: "Looking around at our own magnificent colonies I hardly remember a considerable name [in literature] which they have produced, except that of my excellent old friend Sam Slick."

### *Song and Dance*

Whether Haliburton or his household was musical seems to be a matter about which it is now impossible to speak with any degree of certainty. The chances, however, are that both were. "The birds [at Clifton] when the family inhabited the house," Haliburton wrote in *Nature and Human Nature*, "listen[ed] with wonder at notes sweeter and more musical than their own,"—a statement that from one point of view may not be saying much, of course, but from another may be saying a good deal. We know that Haliburton's second son, Tom, before his untimely death at twenty-six, studied music in Germany with enough success to be known among his intimates and others as "the American Mozart." If his five sisters had some share of a like ability, the house at Windsor must often have been the scene of youthful festivity with singing and dancing a major part of the fun. And there is the repeated evidence throughout his books that Haliburton, in rounding out the varied equipment of Sam Slick as censor, mentor, and jester-at-large, possessed a most unusual acquaintance with and knowledge of the popular songs and dances of his day, whatever may have been his personal competence in either of the related arts involved.

Inevitable as I suppose it is for a native Nova Scotian to be disappointed that none of Sam Slick's songs, with the single exception of a four-line stanza of pathetic doggerel, is indigenous in origin or subject to Haliburton's homeland, such a reaction is wholly unreasonable. Sam Slick, though all too frequently inconsistent in his opinions, is to a marked extent consistent in character. Born and bred in the (fictional) "wooden nutmeg" state of Connecticut, most of what he sang or recited was learned there or elsewhere near at hand, north and south, and brought with him ready-for-use on his clock-vending or fisheries-inspection tours among the Bluenoses. While he claimed to have "larnt psalmody to singin' school," his repertoire in song was acquired mainly from what he could have heard



on the contemporary vaudeville stage, so-called music-hall "ballads" of the sort featured in "black-face" minstrel shows. Naturally there is not a traditional ballad among the lot nor a trace of communal composition, negro or other, unless it now and then appears in the course of a regressive evolution which took place as the headlined offerings passed from the status of "big name" performance to that of common property among the general public. Haliburton himself appears to have participated in that process in at least one instance. I have written previously (see *The Dalhousie Review*, Spring, 1957) of the speed with which the western frontier tall tales, and their tall heroes and tall talk, reached him in Nova Scotia. Something approaching that same rapid transit by word-of-mouth and newsprint circulation took place in the case of popular songs. One medium by which they were carried to his attention (and it is his, not Sam Slick's, that is here engaged) was the spring-time Nova Scotian visitations of the travelling American circus, with its coloured entertainers as described in *The Old Judge*. (Itinerant singing-masters arrived in the province at the same season, but they would hardly have offered instruction in the Sam Slick type of song!) A stanza of "Jim Brown" (copyrighted in 1835) which opens with the words "I went on to Washington, de capital ob de nation," turns up in the first *Attaché* (1843) parodied in this fashion:

I went up to London, the capital of the nation,  
 To see Lord Stanley, and git a sitivation.  
 Says he to me, "Sam Slick, what can you do?"  
 Says I, "Lord Stanley, just as much as you.  
 Liberate the rebels, and mancipate the niggers,  
 Horror for our side, and damn thimble-riggers!"

The original, as Sam Slick reminds us, contained a topical allusion to quite another personality and circumstance, the notorious head of the recently defunct first Bank of the United States and the current attacks upon his reputation:

Play upon the banjo, play upon the fiddle,  
 Walk about the town, and abuse old Biddle.

Two stanzas from "Old Zip Coon" (copyrighted in 1834) also turn up in the first *Attaché*, both without change. The allusions they contain are to one of Sam Slick's repeated excuses for indulging his proneness to Yankee brag. The first of the pair will suffice to show why:

Oh hab you nebber heerd ob de battle ob Orleans,  
 Where the dandy Yankee lads gabe de Britishers de beans;  
 Oh de Louisiana boys did it pretty slick,  
 When dey cotch old Packenham and rode him up a creek.  
 Wee my zippy dooden dooden dooden, dooden dooden dey, . . .

Two lines from "The Coast of Peru," and a stanza from "Sittin' on a Rail" (no dates available for either) are utilized in the text of the third *Clockmaker*. Contemporary interest in the exploits of the Nantucket whaling crews inspired the one:

When you double Cape Horn, as yer hopes for to do,  
There's a plenty of sparm whale on the coast of Peru.

What occasioned the other remains conjectural. Sam Slick employs it to illustrate the redemptive power of conversation in overcoming the one-time combativeness of a negro preacher, whose former boast that

De Raccoon ginn to scratch and bite,  
I bitty once wid all my might,  
I bung his eye and spile his sight,  
Oh, I'se de child to fight!

gave way, in the pulpit, to the higher morality of

For little childer neber let  
De angry passions rise,  
Your little hands were neber made  
To tear each oder's eyes.

(Haliburton must have been partial to this nursery rhyme. He uses it again, in *Wise Saws*, without dialect.)

In the instance of his recalling, also in the third *Clockmaker* (1840),

Adam was de fust man  
Eve was de tudder,  
Cain was a wicked man  
Cause he killed him brudder,

as being sung with flute accompaniment, Sam Slick apparently reversed the usual procedure. The quoted stanza is the third in "De History ob de World," not published until 1847. "Old Dan Tucker," the earliest in date of composition (1830; published in 1843), and perhaps the most popular among its fellows in stage-negro minstrelsy, was the latest to find its way into Haliburton's works. It failed to appear there before *The Old Judge* (1849), and then rated a recall of only two lines. Another, perhaps the most authentic of these alleged negro songs, I have been unable to discover a date for, or even whether it was ever in common circulation. It is reported, by Sam Slick in *Nature and Human Nature*, as among the diversions afforded by the coloured cook aboard the semi-official fisheries-inspection schooner *Black Hawk*:

In Souf Carolina de niggers grow  
If de white man will only plant his toe,

Den dey water de ground wid baccy smoke,  
 And out ob de soil dere heads will poke.  
     Ring de hoop, blow de horn,  
     I nebber see de like since I was born.  
     Way down in de counte-ree,  
     Four or five miles from de ole Peedee.

By all odds the most surprising use Haliburton made of this type of song was the assignment of a stanza from "Oh, Susannah" (composed by Stephen Foster in 1848) to Ephriam Peabody for rendition in *The Season-Ticket*. It would be flattering to Haliburton as an innovator to think of him as thereby having helped to establish this favorite of the Gold Rush days in its long run of acclaim overseas. But the dates preclude the possibility. Haliburton was following, not setting, the fashion in British music hall appeal. In one respect, though, he contributed to the continuing interest in "Oh, Susannah." His reading of the first, third, and seventh lines of the second stanza of the original looks unique. I have found them in no other version:

I took a walk one moonlight night,  
     When ebbery ting was still,  
 I thought I saw dead Susan dere,  
     A coming down the hill.  
 De buckwheat cake was in her mouth,  
     De tear was in her eye;  
 Says I, "My lub, I'm from the South,  
     Susannah, don't you cry."

Sam Slick's concern with singing was not by any means confined to comic negro songs and ditties. In referring to the psalmody he had "larnt" he claimed, and rightly, that he could "do base [*sic*] to the nines, and sing complete," and, presumably, he vented his acquired skill on such vocal stand-bys as he recalled in this passage: "Beautiful tunes some o' them meetin' house ones are too. There is old Russian; that's one you never get tired of; and Washington's march is another, and so is Jim Crow zionized [*i. e.* spirituals?]." "Musick," he added, "I don't fear much, for I rather pride myself on my ear and my voice." He was as willing a listener as he was a performer, too. The first place among his preferences in others' singing must go to "The Canadian Boat Song," as rendered by Jessie, the half-breed daughter of Peter McDonald, at Ship Harbour, and described along with her (and her sister's) songs in the Indian tongue, in one of the several genuinely idyllic sections of *Nature and Human Nature*. Her Scottish songs also were esteemed highly, for, as he said, "[Scotch] music is the most touching, because the most simple." Among

other possibly equally touching songs he noted as worth mentioning (by quotation rather than by title) are "Auld Lang Syne," "My face is my fortune" (set down as an "Old Song"), "Meet me by moonlight alone," and "Oh my heart, my heart, is breaking / For the love of Alice Gray." In an altogether different category of his recordings is the amusing, though implausible, antiphonal duet sung by the demented captain of a Yankee fishing schooner and a mutinous sailor off Shelburne Harbour. It seems to have been omitted from all the now current collections of sea-songs and chanties:

[[Captain]]	Aloft, aloft Go up aloft, You sinner.
[[Sailor]]	I won't, that's flat, So just take that, You sinner.
[[Captain]]	May I never see bliss If I put up with this, You sinner.

In *The Old Judge*, Haliburton, without the intervention of Sam Slick or any other of his creations, brings back to mind a group of as vividly sentimental songs as could ever have caricatured Halifax "high society," made the more devastatingly effective by the masterly miscasting of their singers. The recall of these lyric absurdities must have sent blood pressures soaring at Government House, Army and Navy Headquarters, and, by association, at the Anglican Bishop's residence. The considerable pains Haliburton at times took to impress the authorities in England with his merits as a writer were evidently not always taken to produce a like effect on their representatives at home.

Prone as he was to sound off about his gifts in the art of song, Sam Slick boasted even more often about his skill in dancing. And well he might. "Tante every one that's soople enough to dance real complete," is the somewhat less than modest assertion with which, early in the *Clock-maker* series, he called attention to his all-round superiority in executing the various steps and other graces required of former-day devotees of the light fantastic. His addiction to dancing had begun soon enough to forestall his going into the ministry, for which his life-time spiritual adviser, the Reverend Mr. Hopewell, had once, probably none too seriously, intended him; for as he confessed in *Nature and Human Nature*, he knew "he could n't help waltzing with the gals," a diversion held in his youth as ill consorting with the dignity of a clergyman. (In Haliburton's day waltzing was looked upon in Nova Scotia as a scarcely decorous

diversion, though slowly coming into favour there.) And he still further confessed that the dance music of a violin, "if in tune and played right," was a temptation to "footing it" that he consistently found quite irresistible—except on Sundays! (A Puritan hang-over from his near training for the ministry?) ". . . but show me a pretty gal, and give me good music, and see if I don't dance any other day." His scorn for those prudes and conscience-stricken sinners that "can't dance, and call it wicked," he makes clear in *Wise Saws*, was unqualified.

By all odds his most redoubtable dancing feat was the frequently repeated credulity-taxing stunt recalled in the third *Clockmaker*, to the accompaniment of "several evolutions" of intricate foot-work "which would have puzzled an opera-dancer to imitate": ". . . dancin' is what I can take the shine off most folks in . . . . Many's the time I have danced 'Possum up a gum tree' at a quilting frolic or a huskin' party, with a tumbler full of cider on my head, and never spilt a drop;—I have upon my soul." But at the very moment of thus concluding his boast, on the eve of his departure for London to begin his duties as an attaché at the American Legation there, he was dreaming of even greater dancing triumphs yet to come:

"Show me any Lord to England that could do that, and I'll give him leave to brag, that's all. Oh dear, I'll whirl them maids of honor to the palace round and round so fast in a waltz, no livin' soul can see me a-kissing of them. I've done it to Phoebe Hopewell afore her father's face and he never knowed it, tho' he was lookin' on the whole blessed time—I hope I may be shot if I hante. She actilly did love them waltzes, the wickedest I ever did see. Lick! there is some fun in that are, ain't they? It ain't often they [the English maids-of-honour] get a smack from right-down good genuwine Yankee lips, sweet fed on corn and molasses, I know."

Stephen Richardson, in many respects the Nova Scotian double of Haliburton's itinerant peddler, barely missed duplicating Sam Slick's headline performance, but came a cropper in the finale. Like Sam Slick he started off with a veritable "ring-tailed" vaunt about his pre-eminence in dance-step technique. The setting is the "keeping-room" of the inn at Mount Hope on the road from Halifax to Windsor during the storm-stayed interlude described in *The Old Judge*. "I will show you, my beauties [his young hostesses and their friends], he said, the prettiest and spryest, and difficultest dance you ever see—'the kitchen dance!' Few men can go through that with the cross-hop and double back shuffle, quick as a wink, without as much as touching or brushing with a heel or toe . . . . It requires a quick eye, a clear head, and an active foot, I can tell you, and with boots like mine I defy any one here or elsewhere to do it as supple as I can."<sup>2</sup> Before going into his dance, Stephen has some difficulty

in hitting upon a tune which his volunteer accompanist, a fiddling officer from the army commissariat staff in Halifax, can play. After rejecting such apparently well-known airs of the day as "Jinny Kitoory," "High Betty Martin," and Sam Slick's "Possum Up a Gum Tree" favourite, the commissary, as Haliburton calls him, agrees to try his luck with "Oh, My Kitten, My Kitten." (Other seemingly once popular dance tunes in Nova Scotia mentioned in *The Old Judge* are "Zacky in the Meal Tub," "Come Tickle My Nose With a Barley Straw," and "Off She Goes to Miramichi.")<sup>3</sup> Over-elated with the showing of Terpsichorean virtuosity evoked from him by the playing of "Oh, My Kitten," Stephen launches once more into his extravagant boasting, though not without an anticipatory face-saving excuse for the discomfiture about to befall him: "That's nothin', my hearties, to what I oncet could do, and guess I can still do; but these confounded boots are as hard as a ploughshare. Who can do this?" Then "taking up a tumbler full of water, he held his head erect, and, placing the glass on his crown, he put his arms a-kimbo, and commenced anew the difficult evolutions of the 'Tongs and Shovel' or 'Kitchen Dance.'" But his grotesque contortions were too much for the composure of the fiddler. The time and tune wavered. Stephen, endeavouring to follow the broken rhythm, tripped over the fire-place tongs and shovel laid transversely in front of him, lost control of the tumbler, and fell with it ignominiously to the floor.

Sam Slick's longest drawn out dancing spree, practically an all-night breakdown recorded in *Nature and Human Nature*, took place at Peter McDonald's hospitable home at Ship Harbour. Though Sam Slick was master of ceremonies and an active participant in the goings-on, in the end the figure of central interest was the Quaco trader, the hypocritical "come-outer," Jehu Judd. At first morosely adamant against participating in anything so "sinful" as dancing, before long he succumbed to the combined lure of the McDonald girls and their guests in "a most joyous and rapid jig" and an eight-handed reel, and the stimulus of Peter's extra potent brandy, "that warn't half-and-half, but almost the whole hog." Once "warmed up," he proved as adept at the "double-shuffle and curlicues" as the nimblest-footed others of those present. He "snapped his fingers over his head, and stamped his feet to mark the time, and hummed the tune in a voice that from its power and clearness astonished us all." But eventually Peter's "likker" got the better of him, and, consciousness lost, he was lugged away to sleep off the effect of his revel.

Haliburton's familiarity with the song and dance of his day and the diverting use he made of it suggest that when he wrote in *Wise Saws*, "We are full of chords, from the deepest toned silver string, like that of

the harp, up to the little upper sharp one that is only two inches long. Strike one of your own that is in tune with that of another person, and see if they don't harmonize," he wrote, however crudely (he was quoting Sam Slick, more or less in character), what he sincerely felt to be a lucky fact about life.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The allegation that Mrs. Stowe's "Topsy," the child who was never brought up but "just growed," had her prototype in Haliburton's "pretty maiden" in the first *Clockmaker*, who guessed "I warn't brought up at all, I growed up," needs to be based on something more solid than antecedent authorship. Haliburton later employed two amusing variants of the statement without betraying any annoyance over a possible intervening "borrowing" of what was clearly his own conceit, an indifference he would hardly have shown had he thought himself the victim of plagiarism. Both these variants occur in *Nature and Human Nature*, and so postdate Mrs. Stowe's book. They are worth putting in evidence as proof of Haliburton's equanimity when faced with a supposed (by others) appropriation of his private property. In the first Sam Slick says of himself that he "wasn't raised at all, but was found one fine morning pinned across a clothes line, after a heavy washing to hum"; and in the second he tells of a negro girl who, when asked where she was raised, replied "she warn't raised, she growed up." (Let anyone who likes to play with the notion that Haliburton ever influenced the humour of another make what he can of the fact that, 68 years after Haliburton, in *Nature and Human Nature*, had joked about the malaprop pronunciation of "Buffon" as "Buffoon," George Bernard Shaw, in the preface to *Back Methuselah*, recalled overhearing an elderly man in a Dublin bookshop inquiring for the works of "the celebrated Buffoon.")

<sup>2</sup>In the first *Clockmaker* Haliburton sets down almost enough of a square dance routine to enable one given the proper tune, to call it: "...they (the dancers) cross hands and back again, set to their partners, and right and left in grand style, and slick it off at the end, with a rael complete bow."

<sup>3</sup>There is a title to prompt a query. Has the tune it names, if ever known along the valley of the Miramichi, continued in favour there? Or has it come back into popularity anywhere with other revivals that have marked the widespread return to square-dancing?