

**GLEANINGS IN EUROPE:  
ENGLAND. IN TWO  
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Gleanings in Europe: England. In Two Volumes, Vol. II by James Fenimore Cooper

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**JAMES FENIMORE COOPER**

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GLEANINGS IN EUROPE.

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ENGLAND:

BY

A N A M E R I C A N.

*J. F. Cooper*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# ENGLAND.

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## LETTER XV.

TO RICHARD COOPER, ESQ., COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.

THE last month has been one of severe duty with the knife and fork. Through the hospitality and kindness of Mr. Rogers I have dined no less than three times with him alone.

On the first occasion our party consisted of lords Lansdown, Grey, and Gower,\* Sir Thomas Lawrence, Mr. Luttrell, and myself. I have little to tell you of this dinner, which was like any other. I thought some of the company stood too much in awe of the great man, though I did not see why, for there is no one here with whom I feel less restraint, myself, than with Lord Grey. Of course one defers naturally to a man of his years and reputation, but beyond this, I found nothing to check conversation.

The painter is a handsome, well-behaved man, though he was not at his ease. In the course of the evening he inquired if I knew Gilbert Stewart.

\* The present Duke of Sutherland.

He had a slight acquaintance with him, and wished to know if "he were not a very facetious gentleman." I was of opinion that Stewart invented to amuse his sitters. This, Sir Thomas then observed, explained a report he had heard, according to which, Mr. Stewart had claimed him as one of his pupils; an honour I thought he rather pointedly disavowed. Our artist does not appear to be much known here. It is the fashion to decry Mr. West now, quite as much as it was to overrate him while the island, by the war, was hermetically sealed against continental art. We constantly run into the extreme of over-estimating the celebrity of our own people in this part of the world. So far as my experience goes, Washington and Franklin are the only two Americans who enjoy thoroughly European reputations. I mean by this, that were their names mentioned in a drawing-room, every one would know who they were, their peculiar merits, and the leading points in their histories. Jefferson would, I think, come next; after which, the knowledge of individuals would be confined chiefly to the respective professions. There are men who live by writing for the periodicals, and such is the craving for novelty, that they lay heaven and earth under contribution for subjects. In this way, an article occasionally appears that treats of American things and American names, and, in the simplicity of our hearts, we fancy the world is meditating on our growing greatness, when in fact, the

periodicals themselves scarcely attract attention. Indeed, one of the things that has struck me favourably here, is the practice which people have of doing their own thinking. Puffs and advertisements may help a work off, but they do not, as with us, bestow reputation. Nothing is more common than to hear opinions of books and pictures, but I do not remember ever to have heard a remark concerning the notions of the reviewers. Reviews may control the inferior classes, but they have little or no effect on the higher. Intelligence, breeding, tone, taste, and manners, rally in such masses in these huge capitals, that they not only make head against the inroads of vulgarity and ignorance, but they even send forth a halo that sheds a little light out of their own proper sphere; whereas, with us, like treasures exposed to invasion, they are in constant risk from an incursion of the barbarians, who sometimes fairly get them in their clutches.

Mr. Alston is less known than I had supposed, though where known he seems to be appreciated. I should say Mr. Leslie is more in possession of the public, here, than any other American artist, though scarcely known out of England, for a painting has not ubiquity, like a book. Mr. Newton's reputation is limited. We boast too much of these gentlemen; not on account of their merits, for each has great merits in his way; but because I think neither is particularly anxious to meet our prurient attachment. Mr. Leslie is a mild man, and cares