

the best part of the exhibition were the round, ruddy, unthinking faces of the country-bred English, that had poured into town, to stare, wonder, purchase, and be happy. It was worth while paying one's penny for a sight of the fat boys and the little men, just to see the eager avidity with which they were seen, and the total want of suspicion with which all that was told regarding them was received. The countrywoman who, on seeing a negro for the first time, deemed him the painted monster of a show, and remarked that "mony was the way tried to wyle awa' the penny," betrayed her country not less by her suspicion than by her tongue. An Englishwoman of the true rural type would have fallen into the opposite mistake, of deeming some painted monster a reality. Judging, however, from what the Birmingham fair exhibited, I am inclined to hold that the preponderance of enjoyment lies on the more credulous side. I never yet encountered a better-pleased people: the very spirit of the fair seemed embodied in the exclamation of a pretty little girl from the country, whom I saw clap her hands as she turned the corner of a street where the prospect first burst upon her, and shriek out, in a paroxysm of delight, "O, what lots of — lots of shows!" And yet, certainly, the English character does lie very much in extremes. Among the unthinking, unsuspicious, blue-eyed, fair-complexioned, honest Saxons that crowded the streets, I could here and there detect, in gangs and pairs, some of the most disagreeably smart-looking men I almost ever saw, — men light of finger and sharp of wit, — full of all manner of contrivance, and devoid of all sort of moral principle.

Nothing in the English character so strikingly impressed me as its immense extent of range across the intellectual scale. It resembles those musical instruments of great compass, such as the pianoforte and the harpsichord, that sweep over the entire