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# CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

## CONTENTS

[THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD.](#)  
[MARIE DE LA TOUR.](#)  
[CHEAP MINOR RAILWAYS.](#)  
[THE HUMOUR OF SOUTHEY.](#)  
[TRACKS OF ANCIENT ANIMALS IN  
SANDSTONE.](#)  
[AITON'S TRAVELS.](#)  
[GLEANING IN SCOTLAND.](#)  
[WOMEN IN SAVAGE LIFE.](#)  
[LANGUAGE OF THE LAW.](#)  
[CHANCES OF LIFE IN AMERICA.](#)  
[A SONG.](#)  
[LONGEVITY OF QUAKERS.](#)

[pg 241]



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## THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

WE all know that there are certain conventional laws by which our social doings and seemings are regulated; but what is the power which compels the

observance of these laws? There is no company police to keep people moving on, no fines or other penalties; nobody but the very outrageous need fear being turned out of the room; we have every one of us strong inclinations and strong will: then, how comes it that we get on so smoothly? Why are there no outbreaks of individual character? How is it that we seem dovetailed into each other, as if we formed a homogeneous mass? What is the influence which keeps up the weak and keeps down the strong, and spreads itself like oil upon the boiling sea of human passion? We have a notion of our own, that all this is the work of an individual of the female sex; and, indeed, even the most unconscious and unreflecting would appear to assign to that individual her true position and authority, in naming her the Woman of the World.

Society could never exist in a state of civilisation without the woman of the world. The man of the world has his own department, his own *métier*; but She it is who keeps up the general equilibrium. She is a calm, quiet, lady-like person, not obtrusive, and not easily put out of the way. You do not know by external observation that she is in the room; you feel it instinctively. The atmosphere she brings with her is peculiar, you cannot tell how. It is neither warm nor chill, neither moist nor dry; but it is repressive. You do not move in it with natural freedom, although you feel nothing that could be called *gêne*. Her manner is generally sweet, sometimes even caressing, and you feel flattered and elevated as you meet her approving eye. But you cannot get into it. There is a glassy surface, beautiful but hard, of which you can make nothing, and presently you feel a kind of strangeness come over you, as if you were not looking into the eye of a creature of your own kind. What you miss is sympathy.

It is to her want of sympathy the woman of the world owes her position. The same deficiency is indispensable in the other individuals—such as a great monarch, or a great general—who rule the fate of mankind; but with this difference, that in them it is partial and limited, and in her universal. In them, it bears relation to their trade or mission; in her, it is a peculiarity of her general nature. She is accused of inhumanity; of sporting with the feelings of those about her, and rending, when they interfere with her plans, the strings of the heart as ruthlessly as if they were fiddlestrings. But all that is nonsense. She does not, it is true, ignore the existence of strings and feelings; on the contrary, they are in her eyes a great fact, without which she could do nothing. But her theory is, that they are merely a superficial net-work surrounding the character, the growth of education and other circumstances, and that they may be twisted, broken, and fastened anew at pleasure by skilful fingers. No, she is not inhumane. She works for others' good and her own greatness. Sighs and tears may be the result of her operations; but so are they of the operations of the beneficent surgeon. She dislikes giving pain, and comforts and sustains the patient to the best of her power; but at the most, she knows sighs are but wind, and tears but water, and so she does her duty.

Although without sympathy, the woman of the world has great sensitiveness. She sits in the room like a spider, with her web fitting as closely to the whole area as the carpet; and she feels the slightest touch upon the slightest filament. So do the company: not understandingly like her, but instinctively and unconsciously, like a fly who only knows that somehow or other he is not at freedom. The thing that holds him is as soft and glossy and thin and small as silk; but even while dallying with its smoothness and pleasantness, a misty, indefinite sensation of impending danger creeps over him. Be quiet, little fly! Gently—gently: slip away if you can—but no defiance, no tugging, no floundering, or you are lost!

A mythic story is told of the woman of the world: how in early life she was crossed in love; how she lost faith in feelings that seemed to exist exceptionally only in her own solitary bosom; and how a certain glassy hardness gathered upon her heart, as she sat waiting and waiting for a response to the inner voices she had suffered to burst forth—

The long-lost ventures of the heart,  
That send no answers back again!

But this is a fable. The woman of the world was never young—not while playing with her doll. She grew just as you see her, and will suffer no change till the dissolution of the elements of her body. Love-passages she has indeed had like other women; but the love was all on one side, and that side not hers. It is curious to observe the passion thus lavished in vain. It reminds one of the German story of the Cave of Mirrors, where a fairy damsel, with beckoning hand and beseeching eyes, was reflected from a thousand angles. The pursuing lover, endeavouring to clasp his mistress, flung himself from one illusory image to another, finding only the sharp, polished, glittering glass in his embrace, till faint, breathless, and bleeding, he sank upon the ground.

The woman of the world, though a dangerous mistress, is an agreeable friend. She is partial to the everyday married lady, when presentable in point of dress and manners, and overwhelms her with little condescending kindnesses and caresses. This good lady, on her part, thinks her patroness a remarkably clever woman; not that she understands her, or knows exactly what she is about; but somehow or other she is *sure* she is prodigiously clever. As for the everyday young lady, who has a genius for reverence, she reveres her; and these two, with their male congeners, are the dress-figures the woman of the world places about her rooms like ivory pieces on a chessboard.

This admirable lady is sometimes a mother, and she is devotedly fond of her children, in their future. She may be seen gazing in their faces by the hour; but the picture that is before her mind's eye is the fulfilment of their present promise. An ordinary woman would dawdle away her time in admiring their soft eyes, and curly hair, and full warm cheeks; but the woman of the world sees the bud grown into the expanded flower, and the small cradle is metamorphosed into the boudoir by the magic of her maternal love. And verily, she has her reward: for death sometimes comes, to wither the bud, and disperse the dream in empty air. On such an occasion, her grief, as we may readily suppose, is neither deep nor lasting, for its object is twined round her imagination, not her heart. She regrets her wasted hopes and fruitless speculations; but the baby having never been present in its own entity, is now as that which has never been. The unthinking call her an unnatural mother, for they make no distinction. They do not know that death is with her a perfectly arranged funeral, a marble tablet, a darkened room, an attitude of woe, a perfumed handkerchief. They do not consider that when she lies down to rest, her eyes, in consequence of over-mental exertion, are too heavy with sleep to have room for tears. They do not reflect that in the morning she breaks into a new consciousness of reality from the clinging dreams of her maternal ambition, and not from the small visionary arms, the fragrant kiss, the angel whisper of her lost babe. They do not feel that in opening upon the light, her eyes part with the fading gleam of gems and satin, and kneeling coronets, and red right hands extending wedding-rings, and not with a winged and baby form, soaring into the light by which it is gradually absorbed, while distant hymns melt and die upon her ear.

The woman of the world is sometimes prosperous in her reign over society, and sometimes otherwise. Even she submits, although usually with sweetness and dignity, to the caprices of fortune. Occasionally, the threads of her management break in such a way, that, with all her dexterity, she is unable to reunite them: occasionally, the strings and feelings are too strong to rend; and occasionally, in rending, the whole system falls to pieces. Her daughter elopes, her son marries the governess, her husband loses his seat in parliament; but there are other daughters to marry, other sons to direct, other honours to win; and so this excellent woman runs her busy and meritorious career. But years come on at last, although she lingers as long as she can in middle life; and, with her usual graceful dignity, she settles down into the reward the world bestows on its veterans, an old age of cards.

Even now, she sometimes turns round her head to look at the things and persons around her, and to exult in the reputation she has earned, and the passive influence her name still exercises over society; but, as a rule, the kings and queens and knaves take the place of human beings with this woman of genius; the deepest arcana of her art are brought into play for the odd trick, and her pride and ambition are abundantly gratified by the circumvention of a half-crown.

The woman of the world at length dies: and what then? Why, then, nothing—nothing but a funeral, a tablet, dust, and oblivion. This is reasonable, for, great as she was, she had to do only with the external forms of life. Her existence was only a material game, and her men and women were only court and common cards; diamonds and hearts were alike to her, their value depending on what was trumps. She saw keenly and far, but not deeper than the superficial net-work of the heart, not higher than the ceiling of the drawing-room. Her enjoyments, therefore, were limited in their range; her nature, though perfect in its kind, was small and narrow; and her occupation, though so interesting to those concerned, was in itself mean and frivolous. This is always her misfortune, the misfortune of this envied woman. She lives in a material world, blind and deaf to the influences that thrill the bosoms of others. No noble thought ever fires her soul, no generous sympathy ever melts her heart. Her share of that current of human nature which has welled forth from its fountain in the earthly paradise is dammed up, and cut off from the general stream that overflows the world. None of those minute and invisible ducts connects it with the common waters which make one feel

instinctively, lovingly, yearningly, that he is not alone upon the earth, but a member of the great human family. And so, having played her part, she dies, this woman of the world, leaving no sign to tell that an immortal spirit has passed: nothing above the ground but a tablet, and below, only a handful of rotting bones and crumbling dust.

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## MARIE DE LA TOUR.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

THE basement front of No. 12 Rue St Antoine, a narrow street in Rouen, leading from the Place de la Pucelle, was opened by Madame de la Tour, in the millinery business, in 1817, and tastefully arranged, so far as scant materials permitted the exercise of decorative genius. She was the widow of a once flourishing *courtier maritime* (ship-broker), who, in consequence of some unfortunate speculations, had recently died in insolvent circumstances. At about the same time, Clément Derville, her late husband's confidential clerk, a steady, persevering, clever person, took possession of the deceased ship-broker's business premises on the quay, the precious savings of fifteen years of industrious frugality enabling him to install himself in the vacant commercial niche before the considerable connection attached to the well-known establishment was broken up and distributed amongst rival *courtiers*. Such vicissitudes, frequent in all trading communities, excite but a passing interest; and after the customary commonplaces commiserative of the fallen fortunes of the still youthful widow, and gratulatory good-wishes for the prosperity of the *ci-devant* clerk, the matter gradually faded from the minds of the sympathisers, save when the rapidly rising fortunes of Derville, in contrast with the daily lowlier ones of Madame de la Tour, suggested some tritely sentimental reflection upon the precariousness and instability of all mundane things. For a time, it was surmised by some of the fair widow's friends, if not by herself, that the considerable services Derville had rendered her were prompted by a warmer feeling than the ostensible one of respect for the relict of his old and liberal employer; and there is no doubt that the gentle, graceful manners, the mild, starlit face of Madame de la Tour, had made a deep impression upon Derville, although the hope or expectation founded thereon vanished with the passing time. Close, money-loving, business-absorbed as he might be, Clément Derville was a man of vehement impulse and extreme susceptibility of female charm—weaknesses over which he had again and again resolved to maintain vigilant control, as else fatal obstacles to his hopes of realising a large competence, if not a handsome fortune. He succeeded in doing so; and as year after year glided away, leaving him richer and richer, Madame de la Tour poorer and poorer, as well as less and less personally attractive, he grew to marvel that the bent form, the clouded eyes, the sorrow-sharpened features of the woman he occasionally met hastening along the streets, could be those by which he had been once so powerfully agitated and impressed.

[pg 243]

He did not, however, form any new attachment; was still a bachelor at forty-five; and had for some years almost lost sight of, and forgotten, Madame de la Tour, when a communication from Jeanne Favart, an old servant who had lived with the De la Tours in the days of their prosperity, vividly recalled old and fading memories. She announced that Madame de la Tour had been for many weeks confined to her bed by illness, and was, moreover, in great pecuniary distress.

'*Diantre!*' exclaimed Derville, a quicker and stronger pulse than usual tinging his sallow cheek as he spoke. 'That is a pity. Who, then, has been minding the business for her?'

'Her daughter Marie, a gentle, pious child, who seldom goes out except to church, and,' added Jeanne, with a keen look in her master's countenance, 'the very image of the Madame de la Tour we knew some twenty years ago.'

'Ha!' M. Derville was evidently disturbed, but not so much so as to forget to ask with some asperity if 'dinner was not ready?'

'In five minutes,' said Jeanne, but still holding the half-opened door in her hand. 'They are very, very badly off, monsieur, those unfortunate De la Tours,' she persisted. 'A *huissier* this morning seized their furniture and trade-stock for rent, and if the sum is not made up by sunset, they will be utterly ruined.'

M. Clément Derville took several hasty turns about the room, and the audible play of his fingers amongst the Napoleons in his pockets inspired Jeanne with a hope that he was about to draw forth a sufficient number for the relief of the

cruel necessities of her former mistress. She was mistaken. Perhaps the touch of his beloved gold stilled for a time the agitation that had momentarily stirred his heart.

'It is a pity,' he murmured; and then briskly drawing out his watch, added sharply: 'But pray let us have dinner. Do you know that it is full seven minutes past the time that it should be served?'

Jeanne disappeared, and M. Derville was very soon seated at table. But although the sad tidings he had just heard had not been able to effectually loosen his purse-strings, they had at least power utterly to destroy his appetite, albeit the *poulet* was done to a turn. Jeanne made no remark on this, as she removed the almost untasted meal, nor on the quite as unusual fact, that the wine *carafe* was already half emptied, and her master himself restless, dreamy, and preoccupied. Concluding, however, from these symptoms, that a fierce struggle between generosity and avarice was going on in M. Derville's breast, she quietly determined on bringing an auxiliary to the aid of generosity, that would, her woman's instinct taught her, at once decide the conflict.

No doubt the prosperous ship-broker *was* unusually agitated. The old woman's news had touched a chord which, though dulled and slackened by the heat and dust of seventeen years of busy, anxious life, still vibrated strongly, and awakened memories that had long slept in the chambers of his brain, especially one pale Madonna face, with its soft, tear-trembling eyes that— 'Ciel!' he suddenly exclaimed, as the door opened and gave to view the very form his fancy had conjured up: 'Ciel! can it be— Pshaw!' he added, as he fell back into the chair from which he had leaped up; 'you must suppose me crazed, Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle de la Tour, I am quite certain.'

It was indeed Marie de la Tour whom Jeanne Favart had, with much difficulty, persuaded to make a personal appeal to M. Derville. She was a good deal agitated, and gladly accepted that gentleman's gestured invitation to be seated, and take a glass of wine. Her errand was briefly, yet touchingly told, but not apparently listened to by Derville, so abstracted and intense was the burning gaze with which he regarded the confused and blushing petitioner. Jeanne, however, knew whom he recognised in those flushed and interesting features, and had no doubt of the successful result of the application.

M. Clément Derville *had* heard and comprehended what was said, for he broke an embarrassing silence of some duration by saying, in a pleased and respectful tone: 'Twelve Napoleons, you say, mademoiselle. It is nothing: here are twenty. No thanks, I beg of you. I hope to have an opportunity of rendering you—of rendering Madame de la Tour, I mean, some real and lasting service.'

Poor Marie was profoundly affected by this generosity, and the charming blushfulness, the sweet-toned trembling words that expressed her modest gratitude, were, it should seem, strangely interpreted by the excited ship-broker. The interview was not prolonged, and Marie de la Tour hastened with joy-lightened steps to her home.

Four days afterwards, M. Derville called at the Rue St Antoine, only to hear that Madame de la Tour had died a few hours previously. He seemed much shocked; and after a confused offer of further pecuniary assistance, respectfully declined by the weeping daughter, took a hurried leave.

There is no question that, from the moment of his first interview with her, M. Derville had conceived an ardent passion for Mademoiselle de la Tour—so ardent and bewildering as not only to blind him to the great disparity of age between himself and her—which he might have thought the much greater disparity of fortune in his favour would balance and reconcile—but to the very important fact, that Hector Bertrand, a young *menuisier* (carpenter), who had recently commenced business on his own account, and whom he so frequently met at the charming *modiste's* shop, was her accepted, affianced lover. An *éclaircissement*, accompanied by mortifying circumstances, was not, however, long delayed.

It occurred one fine evening in July. M. Derville, in passing through the *marché aux fleurs*, had selected a brilliant bouquet for presentation to Mademoiselle de la Tour; and never to him had she appeared more attractive, more fascinating, than when accepting, with hesitating, blushing reluctance, the proffered flowers. She stepped with them into the little sitting-room behind the shop; M. Derville followed; and the last remnant of discretion and common-sense that had hitherto restrained him giving way at once, he burst out with a vehement declaration of the passion which was, he said, consuming

him, accompanied, of course, by the offer of his hand and fortune in marriage. Marie de la Tour's first impulse was to laugh in the face of a man who, old enough to be her father, addressed her in such terms; but one glance at the pale face and burning eyes of the speaker, convinced her that levity would be ill-timed—possibly dangerous. Even the few civil and serious words of discouragement and refusal with which she replied to his ardent protestations, were oil cast upon flame. He threw himself at the young girl's feet, and clasped her knees in passionate entreaty, at the very moment that Hector Bertrand, with one De Beaune, entered the room. Marie de la Tour's exclamation of alarm, and effort to disengage her dress from Derville's grasp, in order to interpose between him and the new-comers, were simultaneous with several heavy blows from Bertrand's cane across the shoulders of the kneeling man, who instantly leaped to his feet, and sprang upon his assailant with the yell and spring of a madman. Fortunately for Bertrand, who was no match in personal strength for the man he had assaulted, his friend De Beaune promptly took part in the encounter; and after a desperate scuffle, during which Mademoiselle de la Tour's remonstrances and entreaties were unheard or disregarded, M. Derville was thrust with inexcusable violence into the street.

According to Jeanne Favart, her master reached home with his face all bloody and discoloured, his clothes nearly torn from his back, and in a state of frenzied excitement. He rushed past her up stairs, shut himself into his bedroom, and there remained unseen by any one for several days, partially opening the door only to receive food and other necessaries from her hands. When he did at last leave his room, the impassive calmness of manner habitual to him was quite restored, and he wrote a note in answer to one that had been sent by Mademoiselle de la Tour, expressive of her extreme regret for what had occurred, and enclosing a very respectful apology from Hector Bertrand. M. Derville said, that he was grateful for her sympathy and kind wishes; and as to M. Bertrand, he frankly accepted his excuses, and should think no more of the matter.

This mask of philosophic indifference or resignation was not so carefully worn but that it slipped occasionally aside, and revealed glimpses of the volcanic passion that raged beneath. Jeanne was not for a moment deceived; and Marie de la Tour, the first time she again saw him, perceived with woman's intuitive quickness through all his assumed frigidity of speech and demeanour, that his sentiments towards her, so far from being subdued by the mortifying repulse they had met with, were more vehemently passionate than ever! He was a man, she felt, to be feared and shunned; and very earnestly did she warn Bertrand to avoid meeting, or, at all events, all possible chance of collision with his exasperated, and, she was sure, merciless and vindictive rival.

Bertrand said he would do so; and kept his promise as long as there was no temptation to break it. About six weeks after his encounter with M. Derville, he obtained a considerable contract for the carpentry work of a large house belonging to a M. Mangier—a fantastic, Gothic-looking place, as persons acquainted with Rouen will remember, next door but one to Blaise's banking-house. Bertrand had but little capital, and he was terribly puzzled for means to purchase the requisite materials, of which the principal item was Baltic timber. He essayed his credit with a person of the name of Dufour, on the quay, and was refused. Two hours afterwards, he again sought the merchant, for the purpose of proposing his friend De Beaune as security. Dufour and Derville were talking together in front of the office; and when they separated on Bertrand's approach, the young man fancied that Derville saluted him with unusual friendliness. De Beaune's security was declined by the cautious trader; and as Bertrand was leaving, Dufour said, half-jestingly no doubt: 'Why don't you apply to your friend Derville? He has timber on commission that will suit you, I know; and he seemed very friendly just now.' Bertrand made no reply, and walked off, thinking probably that he might as well ask the statue of the 'Pucelle' for assistance as M. Derville. He was, naturally enough, exceedingly put out, and vexed; and unhappily betook himself to a neighbouring tavern for 'spirituous' solacement—a very rare thing, let me add, for him to do. He remained there till about eight o'clock, and by that time was in such a state of confused elation from the unusual potations he had imbibed, that Dufour's suggestion assumed a sort of drunken likelihood; and he resolved on applying—there could not, he thought, be any wonderful harm, if no good, in that—to the ship-broker. M. Derville was not at home, and the office was closed; but Jeanne Favart, understanding Bertrand to say that he had important business to transact with her master—she supposed by appointment—shewed him into M. Derville's private business-rooms, and left him there. Bertrand seated himself, fell asleep after awhile, woke up about ten o'clock considerably sobered, and quite alive to the absurd impropriety of

the application he had tipsily determined on, and was about to leave the place, when M. Derville arrived. The ship-broker's surprise and anger at finding Hector Bertrand in his house were extreme, and his only reply to the intruder's stammering explanation, was a contemptuous order to leave the place immediately. Bertrand slunk away sheepishly enough; and slowly as he sauntered along, had nearly reached home, when M. Derville overtook him.

'One word, Monsieur Bertrand,' said Derville. 'This way, if you please.'

Bertrand, greatly surprised, followed the ship-broker to a lane close by—a dark, solitary locality, which suggested an unpleasant misgiving, very pleasantly relieved by Derville's first words.

'Monsieur Bertrand,' he said, 'I was hasty and ill-tempered just now; but I am not a man to cherish malice, and for the sake of—of Marie—of Mademoiselle de la Tour, I am disposed to assist you, although I should not, as you will easily understand, like to have any public or known dealings with you. Seven or eight hundred francs, I understood you to say, the timber you required would amount to?'

'Certainly not more than that, monsieur,' Bertrand contrived to answer, taken away as his breath nearly was by astonishment.

'Here, then, is a note of the Bank of France for one thousand francs.'

'Monsieur!—monsieur!' gasped the astounded recipient.

'You will repay me,' continued Derville, 'when your contract is completed; and you will please to bear strictly in mind, that the condition of any future favour of a like kind is, that you keep this one scrupulously secret.' He then hurried off, leaving Bertrand in a state of utter amazement. This feeling, however, slowly subsided, especially after assuring himself, by the aid of his chamber-lamp, that the note was a genuine one, and not, as he had half feared, a valueless deception. 'This Monsieur Derville,' drowsily murmured Bertrand as he ensconced himself in the bed-clothes, 'is a *bon enfant*, after all—a generous, magnanimous prince, if ever there was one. But then, to be sure, he wishes to do Marie a service by secretly assisting her *futur* on in life. *Sapristie!* It is quite simple, after all, this generosity; for undoubtedly Marie is the most charming—charm—cha'—

Hector Bertrand went to Dufour's timber-yard at about noon the next day, selected what he required, and pompously tendered the thousand-franc note in payment. 'Whe-e-e-w!' whistled Dufour, 'the deuce!' at the same time looking with keen scrutiny in his customer's face.

'I received it from Monsieur Mangier in advance,' said Hector in hasty reply to that look, blurting out in some degree inadvertently the assertion which he had been thinking would be the most feasible solution of his sudden riches, since he had been so peremptorily forbidden to mention M. Derville's name.

'It is very generous of Monsieur Mangier,' said Dufour; 'and he is not famous for that virtue either. But let us go to Blaise's bank: I have not sufficient change in the house, and I daresay we shall get silver for it there.'

As often happens in France, a daughter of the banker was the cashier of the establishment; and it was with an accent of womanly commiseration that she said, after minutely examining the note: 'From whom, Monsieur Bertrand, did you obtain possession of this note?'

[pg 245] Bertrand hesitated. A vague feeling of alarm was beating at his heart, and he confusedly bethought him, that it might be better not to repeat the falsehood he had told M. Dufour. Before, however, he could decide what to say, Dufour answered for him: 'He says from Monsieur Mangier, just by.'

'Strange!' said Mademoiselle Blaise. 'A clerk of Monsieur Derville's has been taken into custody this very morning on suspicion of having stolen this very note.'

Poor Bertrand! He felt as if seized with vertigo; and a stunned, chaotic sense of mortal peril shot through his brain, as Marie's solemn warning with respect to Derville rose up like a spectre before him.

'I have heard of that circumstance,' said Dufour. And then, as Bertrand did not, or could not speak, he added: 'You had better, perhaps, mademoiselle, send for Monsieur Derville.'

This proposition elicited a wild, desperate cry from the bewildered young

man, who rushed distractedly out of the banking-house, and hastened with frantic speed towards the Rue St Antoine—for the moment unpursued.

Half an hour afterwards, Dufour and a bank-clerk arrived at Mademoiselle de la Tour's. They found Bertrand and Marie together, and both in a state of high nervous excitement. 'Monsieur Derville,' said the clerk, 'is now at the bank; and Monsieur Blaise requests your presence there, so that whatever misapprehension exists may be cleared up without the intervention of the agents of the public force.'

'And pray, monsieur,' said Marie, in a much firmer tone than, from her pale aspect, one would have expected, 'what does Monsieur Derville himself say of this strange affair?'

'That the note in question, mademoiselle, must have been stolen from his desk last evening. He was absent from home from half-past seven till ten, and unfortunately left the key in the lock.'

'I was sure he would say so,' gasped Bertrand. 'He is a demon, and I am lost.'

A bright, almost disdainful expression shone in Marie's fine eyes. 'Go with these gentlemen, Hector,' she said; 'I will follow almost immediately; and remember'— What else she said was delivered in a quick, low whisper; and the only words she permitted to be heard were: 'Pas un mot, si tu m'aime' (Not a word, if thou lovest me).

Bertrand found Messieurs Derville, Blaise, and Mangier in a private room; and he remarked, with a nervous shudder, that two gendarmes were stationed in the passage. Derville, though very pale, sustained Bertrand's glance of rage and astonishment without flinching. It was plain that he had steeled himself to carry through the diabolical device his revenge had planned, and the fluttering hope with which Marie had inspired Bertrand died within him. Derville repeated slowly and firmly what the clerk had previously stated; adding, that no one save Bertrand, Jeanne Favart, and the clerk whom he first suspected, had been in the room after he left it. The note now produced was the one that had been stolen, and was safe in his desk at half-past seven the previous evening. M. Mangier said: 'The assertion of Bertrand, that I advanced him this note, or any other, is entirely false.'

'What have you to say in reply to these grave suspicions?' said M. Blaise. 'Your father was an honest man; and you, I hear, have hitherto borne an irreproachable character,' he added, on finding that the accused did not speak. 'Explain to us, then, how you came into possession of this note; if you do not, and satisfactorily—though, after what we have heard, that seems scarcely possible—we have no alternative but to give you into custody.'

'I have nothing to say at present—nothing,' muttered Bertrand, whose impatient furtive looks were every instant turned towards the door.

'Nothing to say!' exclaimed the banker; 'why, this is a tacit admission of guilt. We had better call in the gendarmes at once.'

'I think,' said Dufour, 'the young man's refusal to speak is owing to the entreaties of Mademoiselle de la Tour, whom we overheard implore him, for her sake, or as he loved her, not to say a word.'

'What do you say?' exclaimed Derville, with quick interrogation, 'for the sake of Mademoiselle de la Tour! Bah! you could not have heard aright.'

'Pardon, monsieur,' said the clerk who had accompanied Dufour: 'I also distinctly heard her so express herself—but here is the lady herself.'

The entrance of Marie, accompanied by Jeanne Favart, greatly surprised and startled M. Derville; he glanced sharply in her face, but unable to encounter the indignant expression he met there, quickly averted his look, whilst a hot flush glowed perceptibly out of his pale features. At her request, seconded by M. Blaise, Derville repeated his previous story; but his voice had lost its firmness, his manner its cold impassibility.

'I wish Monsieur Derville would look me in the face,' said Marie, when Derville had ceased speaking. 'I am here as a suppliant to him for mercy.'

'A suppliant for mercy!' murmured Derville, partially confronting her.

'Yes; if only for the sake of the orphan daughter of the Monsieur de la Tour who first helped you on in life, and for whom you not long since professed regard.'



Derville seemed to recover his firmness at these words: 'No,' he said; 'not even for your sake, Marie, will I consent to the escape of such a daring criminal from justice.'

'If that be your final resolve, monsieur,' continued Marie, with kindling, impressive earnestness, 'it becomes necessary that, at whatever sacrifice, the true criminal—whom assuredly Hector Bertrand is not—should be denounced.'

Various exclamations of surprise and interest greeted these words, and the agitation of Derville was again plainly visible.

'You have been surprised, messieurs,' she went on, 'at Hector's refusal to afford any explanation as to how he became possessed of the purloined note. You will presently comprehend the generous motive of that silence. Monsieur Derville has said, that he left the note safe in his desk at half-past seven last evening. Hector, it is recognised, did not enter the house till nearly an hour afterwards; and now, Jeanne Favart will inform you *who* it was that called on her in the interim, and remained in the room where the desk was placed for upwards of a quarter of an hour, and part of that time alone.'

As the young girl spoke, Derville's dilated gaze rested with fascinated intensity upon her excited countenance, and he hardly seemed to breathe.

'It was you, mademoiselle,' said Jeanne, 'who called on me, and remained as you describe.'

A fierce exclamation partially escaped Derville, forcibly suppressed as Marie resumed: 'Yes; and now, messieurs, hear me solemnly declare, that as truly as the note was stolen, *I*, not Hector, was the thief.'

"'Tis false!' shrieked Derville, surprised out of all self-possession; 'a lie! It was not then the note was taken; not till—not till!—"

'Not till when, Monsieur Derville?' said the excited girl, stepping close to the shrinking, guilty man, and still holding him with her flashing, triumphant eyes, as she placed her hand upon his shoulder; 'not till *when* was the note taken from the desk, monsieur?'

He did not, could not reply, and presently sank, utterly subdued, nerveless, panic-stricken, into a chair, with his white face buried in his hands.

[pg 246]

'This is indeed a painful affair,' said M. Blaise, after an expectant silence of some minutes, 'if it be, as this young person appeared to admit; and almost equally so, Monsieur Derville, if, as I more than suspect, the conclusion indicated by the expression that has escaped you should be the true one.'

The banker's voice appeared to break the spell that enchained the faculties of Derville. He rose up, encountered the stern looks of the men by one as fierce as theirs, and said hoarsely: 'I withdraw the accusation! The young woman's story is a fabrication. I—I lent, gave the fellow the note myself.'

A storm of execration—'*Coquin! voleur! scélérat!*' burst forth at this confession, received by Derville with a defiant scowl, as he stalked out of the apartment.

I do not know that any law-proceedings were afterwards taken against him for defamation of character. Hector kept the note, as indeed he had a good right to do, and Monsieur and Madams Bertrand are still prosperous and respected inhabitants of Rouen, from which city Derville disappeared very soon after the incidents just related.

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## CHEAP MINOR RAILWAYS.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

'ON the day that our preamble was proved, we had all a famous dinner at three guineas a head—never saw such a splendid set-out in my life! each of us had a printed bill of fare laid beside his plate; and I brought it home as quite a curiosity in the way of eating!' Such was the account lately given us by a railway projector of that memorable year of frenzy, 1845. A party of committee-men, agents, engineers, and solicitors, had, in their exuberance of cash, dined at a cost of some sixty guineas—a trifle added to the general bill of charges, and of course not worth thinking of by the shareholders.

These days of dining at three guineas a head for the good of railway

undertakings are pretty well gone; and agents and counsel may well sigh over the recollection of doings probably never to return.

'The truth is, we were all mad in those times,' added the individual who owned so candidly to the three-guinea dinner. And this is the only feasible way of accounting for the wild speculations of seven years ago. There was a universal craze. All hastened to be rich on the convenient principle of overreaching their neighbours. There was robbery throughout. Engineers, landholders, law-agents, and jobbers, pocketed their respective booties, and it is needless to say who were left to suffer.

Looking at the catastrophe, the subject of railway mismanagement is somewhat too serious for a joke, and we have only drawn attention for an instant to the errors of the past in order to draw a warning for the future. It must ever be lamented that the introduction of so stupendous and useful a thing as locomotion by rail, should have become the occasion of such widespread cupidity and folly; for scarcely ever had science offered a more gracious boon to mankind. It is charitable to think that the foundation of the great error that was committed, lay in a miscalculation as to the relation between expenditure and returns. We can suppose that there was a certain faith in the potency of money. To spend so much, was to bring back so much; and it became an agreeable delusion, that the more was spent, the greater was to be the revenue. Unfortunately, it does not seem to have occurred to any one of the parties concerned, that all depends on how money is spent. There are tradesmen, we imagine, who know to their cost, that it is quite within the bounds of possibility to have the whole of their profits swept away by rent and taxes. Curious, that this plain and unpleasant and very possible result did not dawn on the minds of the great railway interests. And yet, how grave and calculating the mighty dons of the new system of locomotion—men who passed themselves off as up to anything!

Wonderfully acute secretaries; highly-polished chairmen; directors disdainful of ordinary ways of transacting business. A mystery made of the most common-place affairs! We may be thankful that the world has at last seen through these pretenders to superhuman sagacity. With but remarkably few exceptions, the great railway men of the time have committed the grossest blunders; and the stupidest blunder of all, has been the confounding of proper and improper expenditure; just as if a shopkeeper were to fall into the unhappy error of imagining that his returns were to be in the ratio, not of the business he was to do, but of his private and unauthorised expenses.

The instructive fact gathered from railway experience is, that there is an expenditure which *pays*, and an expenditure that is totally wasteful. Directors have made the discovery, that costly litigation, costly and fine stations, fine porticos and pillars, fine bridges, and finery in various other things, contribute really nothing to returns, but, on the contrary, hang a dead weight on the concern. No doubt, fine architecture is a good and proper thing in itself; but a railway company is not instituted for the purpose of embellishing towns with classic buildings. Its function is to carry people from one place to another on reasonable terms, with a due regard to the welfare of those who undertake the transaction. How carriages may be run well and cheaply, yet profitably, is the sole question for determination; and everything else is either subordinate or positively useless. A suitable degree of knowledge on these points would, we think, tend materially to restore confidence in railway property. Could there be anything more cheering than the well-ascertained fact, that *no railway has ever failed for want of traffic*? In every instance, the traffic would have yielded an ample remuneration to the shareholders, had there been no extravagant expenditure. Had the outlays been confined to paying for the land required, the making of the line, the laying down of rails, the buying locomotives and carriages, and working the same, all would have gone on splendidly; and eight, ten, twenty, and even a higher per cent., would in many instances have been realised. At the present moment, the lines that are paying best are not those on which there is the greatest amount of traffic, but those on which there was the most prudent expenditure. In order to judge whether any proposed railway will pay, it is only necessary to inquire at what cost per mile, all expenses included, it is to be produced. If the charge be anything under L.5000 per mile, there is a certainty of its doing well, even if the line be carried through a poorly-populated district; and up to L.20,000 per mile is allowable in great trunk-thoroughfares; but when the outlay reaches L.50,000 or L.100,000 per mile, as it has done in some instances, scarcely any amount of traffic will be remunerative. In a variety of cases, the expenditure per mile has been so enormous, that remunerative traffic becomes a physical impossibility. In plain terms, if the whole of these lines, from end to end, were covered with loaded carriages from morning to night, and night to morning, without intermission of a single moment, they would still be carried on at a

loss! Gold may be bought too dearly, and so may railways.

As there seems to be an appearance of a revival in railway undertakings, it will be of the greatest importance to keep these principles in view; and we are glad to observe that, taking lessons from the past, the promoters of railway schemes are confining their attention mainly to plans of a simple and economical class. Hitherto, railways have, for the most part, been adapted to leading thoroughfares, by which certain districts have been overcrowded with lines, leaving others destitute. Branch single lines of rail appear, therefore, to be particularly desirable for these forgotten localities. These branch-lines may prove exceedingly serviceable, not only as regards the ordinary demands of trade and agriculture, but those of social convenience. Among the prominent needs of our time, is ready access for the toiling multitudes to places rendered interesting by physical beauty and romantic association—fit objects for holiday excursions. The *excursion train*, suddenly discharging its hundreds of strangers at some antique town or castle, or in the neighbourhood of some lovely natural scenery, is one of the wonders of the day—and one, we think, of truly good omen, considering the importance that seems to be connected with the innocent amusements of the people. We rejoice in every movement which tends to increase the number of places to which these holiday-parties may resort, as we thoroughly believe, that the more of them we have, our people will be the more virtuous, refined, and happy.

[pg 247]

We lately had much pleasure in examining and learning some particulars of a short branch-railway which has added the ancient university city of St Andrews, with its many curious objects, to the number of those places which may become the termini of excursion trains. We find from Lord Jeffrey's Life, that in this town, fifty years ago, only one newspaper was received; a number (if it can be called a number) which we are assured, on the best authority, is now increased to *fifteen hundred per week*! Parallel with this fact, is that of its having, ten years ago, a single coach *per diem* to Edinburgh, carrying six or seven persons, while now it has three trains each day, transporting their scores, not merely to the capital, but to Perth and Dundee besides. Conceiving that there is a value in such circumstances on account of the light which they throw on the progress of the country, we shall enter into a few particulars.

The St Andrews Railway is a branch of the Edinburgh, Perth, and Dundee, and extends somewhat less than five miles. Formed with a single line only, over ground presenting scarcely any engineering difficulties, and with favour rather than opposition from the proprietors of the land, it has cost only L.25,000, or about L.5000 per mile. The main line agrees to work it, and before receiving payment, to allow the shareholders 4½ per cent. for their money; all further profits to be divided between the two companies, after paying working expenses. It was opened on the 1st July last, and hitherto the appearances of success have been most remarkable. On an assumption that the traffic inwards was equal to that outwards, the receipts for passengers during each of the first six weeks averaged L.52, 14s. This was exclusive of excursion trains, of which one carried 500 persons, another between 500 and 600, a third 1500; and so on. It was also exclusive of goods and mineral traffic, which are expected to give at least L.1000 per annum. The result is, that this railway appears likely to draw not much under L.4000 a year—a sum sufficient, after expenses are paid, to yield what would at almost any time be a high rate of percentage to the shareholders, while, in the present state of the money-market, it will be an unusually ample remuneration.

We have instanced this economically-constructed line, because we have seen it in operation, and can place reliance on the facts connected with its financial affairs. Other lines, however, more or less advanced, seem to have prospects equally hopeful. A similar branch is about to be made from the same main line to the town of Leven. One is projected to branch from the Eskbank station of the North British line to Peebles—a pretty town on the Tweed, which, up till the present time, has been secluded from general intercourse, and will now, for the first time, have its beautiful environs laid open to public observation. The entire cost of this line, rather more than 18 miles in length, is to be only L.70,000, or about L.3600 per mile. Another branch from the same line is projected to go to Lauder. One, of the same cheap class, is to connect Aberdeen with Banchory on the Dee. Another will be constructed between Blairgowrie and a point on the Scottish Midland. For such adventures, St Andrews is a model.<sup>[1]</sup>

The time is probably not far distant when single branch-lines will radiate over the country, developing local resources, as well as uniting the whole people in friendly and profitable intercourse. To be done rightly, however, rational foresight and the plain principles of commerce must inspire the projectors. It will be necessary to avoid all parliamentary contests; to do nothing without a

general movement of the district in favour of the line, so that no parties may be sacrificed for the benefit of others; to hold rigorously to an economical principle of construction; to launch out into no extravagant plans in connection with the main object contemplated. These being attended to, we can imagine that, in a few years hence, there will be a set of modest little railways which will be the envy of all the great lines, simply because they enjoy the distinction denied to their grander brethren, of *paying*, and which will not only serve important purposes in the industrial economy of the country, but vastly promote the moral wellbeing of the community, in furnishing a means of harmless amusement to those classes whose lot it is to spend most of their days in confinement and toil.

### FOOTNOTES:

[1] Since the materials of this brief paper were obtained, another short line has been opened, extending between Elgin and Lossie-mouth. It is said to have also enjoyed in its first few weeks an amount of traffic far beyond the calculations of the shareholders.

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## THE HUMOUR OF SOUTHEY.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

SOME of the critics of 'Robert the Rhymer, who lived at the lakes,' seem to be of opinion, that his 'humour' is to be classed with such nonentities as the philosopher's stone, pigeon's milk, and other apocryphal myths and unknown quantities. In analysing the character of his intellect, they would assign to the 'humorous' attribute some such place as Van Troil did to the snaky tribe in his work on Iceland, wherein the title of chapter xv. runs thus: 'Concerning Snakes in Iceland' and the chapter itself thus: 'There are no snakes in Iceland.' Accordingly, were they to have the composition of this article, they would abbreviate it to the one terse sentence: 'Robert Southey had no humour.' Now, we have no inclination to claim for the Keswick bard any prodigious or pre-eminent powers of fun, or to give him place beside the rollicking jesters and genial merry-makers, whose humour gives English literature a distinctive character among the nations. But that he is so void of the comic faculty as certain potent authorities allege, we persistently doubt. Mr Macaulay affirms that Southey may be always read with pleasure, except when he tries to be droll; that a more insufferable jester never existed; and that, often as he attempts to be humorous, he in no single occasion has succeeded further than to be quaintly and flippantly dull. Another reviewer warned the author of the *Doctor*, that there is no greater mistake than that which a grave person falls into, when he fancies himself humorous; adding, as a consolatory corollary to this proposition, that unquestionably the doctor himself was in this predicament. But Southey was not so rigorously grave a person as his graver writings might seem to imply. 'I am quite as noisy as ever I was,' he writes to an old Oxford chum, when in sober manhood. 'Oh, dear Lightfoot, what a blessing it is to have a boy's heart! it is as great a blessing in carrying one through this world, as to have a child's spirit will in fitting us for the next.' On account of this boyish-heartedness, he is compared by Justice Talfourd to Charles Lamb himself: 'In a certain primness of style, bounding in the rich humour which overflowed it, they were nearly akin; both alike revered childhood, and both had preserved its best attributes unspotted from the world.' In the fifty-fifth year of his age, he characterised himself as a man

[pg 248]

—by nature merry,  
Somewhat Tom-foolish, and comical, very;  
Who has gone through the world, not unmindful of  
pelf,  
Upon easy terms, thank Heaven, with himself,  
Along bypaths, and in pleasant ways,  
Caring as little for censure as praise;  
Having some friends, whom he loves dearly,  
And no lack of foes, whom he laughs at sincerely;  
And never for great, nor for little things,  
Has he fretted his guts<sup>[2]</sup> to fiddle-strings.  
He might have made them by such folly  
Most musical, most melancholy.

No one can dip into the *Doctor* without being convinced of this buoyancy of spirit, quickness of fancy, and blitheness of heart. It even vents its exuberance in bubbles of levity and elaborate trifling, so that all but the *very* light-hearted are fain to say: Something too much of this. Compared with our standard

humorists—the peerage, or Upper House, who sit sublimely aloft, like 'Jove in his chair, of the sky my lord mayor'—Southey may be but a dull commoner, one of the third or fourth estate. But for all that, he has a comfortable fund of the *vis comica*, upon which he rubs along pleasantly enough, hospitably entertaining not a few congenial spirits who can put up with him as they find him, relish his simple and often racy fare, and enjoy a decent quantum of jokes of his own growing, without pining after the brilliant banquets of comedy spread by opulent barons of the realm.

To support this apology for the worthy doctor by plenary proof, would involve a larger expenditure of space and letter-press than befits the economy of a discreet hebdomadal journal. We can but allude, and hint, and suggest, and illustrate our position in an 'off-at-a-tangent' sort of way. Look, for instance, at his ingenious quaintness in the matter of *onomatology*. What a name, he would say, is Lamb for a soldier, Joy for an undertaker, Rich for a pauper, or Noble for a tailor; Big for a lean or little person, and Small for one who is broad in the rear and abdominous in the van; Short for a fellow six feet without his shoes, or Long for him whose high heels barely elevate him to the height of five; Sweet for one who has either a vinegar face, or a foxy complexion; Younghusband for an old bachelor; Merryweather for any one in November or February, a black spring, a cold summer, or a wet autumn; Goodenough for a person no better than he should be; Toogood for *any* human creature; and Best for a subject who is perhaps too bad to be endured. Amusing, too, are the doctor's reasons for using the customary *alias* of female Christian names—never calling any woman Mary, for example, though *Mare*, being the sea, was, he said, too emblematic of the sex; but using a synonyme of better omen, and Molly therefore was to be preferred as being soft. 'If he accosted a vixen of that name in her worst mood, he *mollified* her. Martha he called Patty, because it came pat to the tongue. Dorothy remained Dorothy, because it was neither fitting that women should be made Dolls nor Idols. Susan with him was always Sue, because women were to be sued; and Winifred Winny, because they were to be won.' Or refer to that pleasant bit of erudite trifling upon the habits of rats, beginning with the remark, that wheresoever Man goes Rat follows or accompanies him, town or country being equally agreeable to him; entering upon your house as a tenant-at-will—his own, not yours—working out for himself a covered-way in your walls, ascending by it from one storey to another, and leaving you the larger apartments, while he takes possession of the space between floor and ceiling, as an *entresol* for himself. 'There he has his parties, and his revels, and his gallopades—merry ones they are—when you would be asleep, if it were not for the spirit with which the youth and belles of Rat-land keep up the ball over your head. And you are more fortunate than most of your neighbours, if he does not prepare for himself a mausoleum behind your chimney-piece or under your hearthstone, retire into it when he is about to die, and very soon afford you full proof that though he may have lived like a hermit, his relics are not in the odour of sanctity. You have then the additional comfort of knowing, that the spot so appropriated will thenceforth be used as a common cemetery or a family-vault.' In the same vein, homage is paid to Rat's imitation of human enterprise: shewing how, when the adventurous merchant ships a cargo for some foreign port, Rat goes with it; how, when Great Britain plants a colony at the antipodes, Rat takes the opportunity of colonising also; how, when ships are sent out on a voyage of discovery, Rat embarks as a volunteer; doubling the stormy Cape with Diaz, arriving at Malabar with Gama, discovering the New World with Columbus, and taking possession of it at the same time, and circumnavigating the globe with Magellan, and Drake, and Cook.

Few that have once read will forget the Doctor's philological contributions towards an amended system of English orthography. Assuming the propriety of discarding all reference to the etymology of words, when engaged in spelling them, and desirous, as a philological reformer, to establish a truly British language, he proposes introducing a distinction of genders, in which the language has hitherto been defective. Thus, in anglicising the orthography of *chemise*, he resolves that foreign substantive into the home-grown neologisms, masculine and feminine, of Hemise and Shemise. Again, in letter-writing, every person, he remarks, is aware that male and female letters have a distinct sexual character; they should, therefore, be generally distinguished thus—Hepistle and Shepistle. And as there is the same marked difference in the writing of the two sexes, he proposes Penmanship and Penwomanship. Erroneous opinions in religion being promulgated in this country by women as well as men, the teachers of such false doctrines he would divide into Heresiarchs and Sheresiarchs. That troublesome affection of the diaphragm, which every person has experienced, is, upon the same principle, to be called, according to the sex of the patient, Hecups and Shecups; which, upon the above principle of making our language truly British, is better than the more

classical form of *Hiccups* and *Hœccups*; and then in its objective use we have *Hiscups* and *Hercups*; and in like manner *Histerics* should be altered into *Herterics*, the complaint never being masculine.

None but a 'humorist' would have announced the decease of a cat in such mingled terms and tones of jest and earnest as the following:—'Alas! Grosvenor,' writes Southey to his friend Mr Bedford (1823), 'this day poor old Rumpel was found dead, after as long and happy a life as cat could wish for, if cats form wishes on that subject. His full titles were: "The Most Noble the Archduke Rumpelstiltzchen, Earl Tomlemagne,<sup>[3]</sup> Baron Raticide, Waowhler and Skaratch." There should be a court mourning in Catland; and if the Dragon [a cat of Mr Bedford's] wear a black ribbon round his neck, or a band of crape *à la militaire* round one of the fore-paws, it will be but a becoming mark of respect.... I believe we are, each and all, servants included, more sorry for this loss than any of us would like to confess. I should not have written to you at present had it not been to notify this event.' The notification of such events, in print too, appears to some thinkers *too* absurd. Others find a special interest in these 'trifles light as air,' because presenting 'confirmation strong' of the kindly nature of the man, taking no unamiable or affected part in the presentment of *Every Man in His Humour*. His correspondence is, indeed, rich in traits of quiet humour, if by that word we understand a 'humane influence, softening with mirth the ragged inequalities of existence'—the very 'juice of the mind oozing from the brain, and enriching and fertilising wherever it falls'—and seldom far removed from its kindred spirit, pathos, with which, however, it is *not* too closely akin to marry; for pathos is bound up in mysterious ties with humour—bone of its bone, and flesh of its flesh.

[pg 249]

Nor can we assent to the assertion, that in his ballads, metrical tales, and rhyming *jeux-d'esprit*, Southey's essay to be comic results in merely 'quaint and flippant dulness.' Smartly enough he tells the story of the Well of St Keyne, whereof the legend is, that if the husband manage to secure a draught before his good dame, 'a happy man henceforth is he, for he shall be master for life.' But if the wife should drink of it first—'God help the husband *then!*' The traveller to whom a Cornishman narrates the tradition, compliments him with the assumption that *he* has profited by it in his matrimonial experience:—

'You drank of the well, I warrant, betimes,'  
He to the Cornishman said;  
But the Cornishman smiled as the stranger spake,  
And sheepishly shook his head.

'I hastened as soon as the wedding was done,  
And left my wife in the porch;  
But, i' faith, she had been wiser than me,  
For she took a bottle to church.'

And with all their extravagances of expression and questionable taste, the numerous stories which Southey delighted to versify on themes demoniac and diabolical, from the *Devil's Walk* to the *True Ballad of St Antidius*, are fraught with farcical import, and have an individual ludicrousness all their own. That he could succeed tolerably in the mock-heroic vein, may be seen in his parody on Pindar's *ariston men hydor*, entitled *Gooseberry Pie*, and in some of the occasional pieces called *Nondescripts*. Nor do we know any one of superior ingenuity in that overwhelming profusion of epithets and crowded creation of rhymes, which so tickle the ear and the fancy in some of his verses, and of which we have specimens almost unrivalled in the celebrated description of the cataract of Lodore, and the vivaciously ridiculous chronicle of Napoleon's march to Moscow.

### FOOTNOTES:

[2] Southey was no purist in his phraseology at times. The not very refined monosyllable in the text may, however, be tolerated as having a technical relation to the fiddle-strings by hypothesis.

[3] This patrician Bawdrons is not forgotten in Southey's verse; thus—

Our good old cat, Earl Tomlemagne,  
Is sometimes seen to play,  
Even like a kitten at its sport,  
Upon a warm spring-day.



# SANDSTONE.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

MANY of our readers must have heard of the interest excited a few years ago by the discovery, that certain marks on the surface of slabs of sandstone, raised from a quarry in Dumfriesshire, were the memorials of extinct races of animals. The amiable and intelligent Dr Duncan, minister of Ruthwell, who had conferred on society the blessing of savings-banks for the industrious poor, was the first to describe to the world these singular chronicles of ancient life. The subject was afterwards brought forward in a more popular style by Dr Buckland, in his lively book, the Bridgewater Treatise on Geology. Since then, examples of similar markings have been found in several other parts of Europe, and a still greater number in America.

Dumfriesshire is still the principal locality of these curious objects in our island; and they are found not only in the original spot—the quarry of Corncockle Muir, but in another quarry at Craigs, near the town of Dumfries. Ample collections of them have been made by Sir William Jardine, the famed naturalist, who happens to be proprietor of Corncockle Quarry, and by Mr Robert Harkness of Dumfries, a young geologist, who seems destined to do not a little for the illustration of this and kindred subjects. Meanwhile, Sir William Jardine has published an elegant book, containing a series of drawings, in which the slabs of Corncockle are truthfully represented.<sup>[4]</sup>

The Annandale footmarks are impressed on slabs of the New Red Sandstone—a formation not long subsequent to the coal, and remarkable for its comparative deficiency of fossils, as if there had been something in its constitution unfavourable to the preservation of animal remains. It is curious to find that, while this is the case, it has been favourable to the preservation of what appears at first sight a much more accidental and shadowy memorial of life—the mere impression which an animal makes on a soft substance with its foot. Yet such fully appears to be the fact. The sandstone slabs of Corncockle, lying in their original place with a dip of about 33 degrees to the westward, and separating with great cleanness and smoothness, present impressions of such liveliness, that there is no possibility of doubt as to their being animal foot-tracks, and those of the tortoise family. A thin layer of unctuous clay between the beds has proved favourable to their separation; and it is upon this intervening substance that the marks are best preserved. Slab after slab is raised from the quarry—sometimes a foot thick, sometimes only a few inches—and upon almost every one of them are impressions found. What is very remarkable, the tracks or series of footprints pass, almost without exception, in a direction from west to east, or upwards against the dip of the strata. It is surmised that the strata were part of a beach, inclining, however, at a much lower angle, from which the tide receded in a westerly direction. The animals, walking down from the land at recess of tide, passed over sand too soft to retain the impressions they left upon it; but when they subsequently returned to land, the beach had undergone a certain degree of hardening sufficient to receive and retain impressions, 'though these,' says Sir William, 'gradually grow fainter and less distinct as they reach the top of the beds, which would be the margin of drier sands nearer the land.' He adds: 'In several instances, the tracks on one slab which we consider to have been impressed at the same time, are numerous, and left by different animals travelling together. They have walked generally in a straight line, but sometimes turn and wind in several directions. This is the case in a large extent of surface, where we have tracks of above thirty feet in length uncovered, and where one animal had crossed the path of a neighbour of a different species. The tracks of two animals are also met with, as if they had run side by aide.'

With regard to the nature of the evidence in question, Dr Buckland has very justly remarked, that we are accustomed to it in our ordinary life. 'The thief is identified by the impression which his shoe has made near the scene of his depredations. The American savage not only identifies the elk and bison by the impression of their hoofs, but ascertains also the time that has elapsed since the animal had passed. From the camel's track upon the sand, the Arab can determine whether it was heavily or lightly laden, or whether it was lame.' When, therefore, we see upon surfaces which we know to have been laid down in a soft state, in a remote era of the world's history, clear impressions like those made by tortoises of our own time, it seems a legitimate inference, that these impressions were made by animals of the tortoise kind, and, consequently, such animals were among those which then existed, albeit no other relic of them may have been found. From minute peculiarities, it is further inferred, that they were tortoises of different species from any now existing. Viewing such important results, we cannot but enter

into the feeling with which Dr Buckland penned the following remarks:—"The historian or the antiquary,' he says, 'may have traversed the fields of ancient or of modern battles; and may have pursued the line of march of triumphant conquerors, whose armies trampled down the most mighty kingdoms of the world. The winds and storms have utterly obliterated the ephemeral impressions of their course. Not a track remains of a single foot, or a single hoof, of the countless millions of men and beasts whose progress spread desolation over the earth. But the reptiles that crawled upon the half-finished surface of our infant planet, have left memorials of their passage, enduring and indelible. No history has recorded their creation or destruction; their very bones are found no more among the fossil relics of a former world. Centuries and thousands of years may have rolled away between the time in which those footsteps were impressed by tortoises upon the sands of their native Scotland, and the hour when they were again laid bare and exposed to our curious and admiring eyes. Yet we behold them, stamped upon the rock, distinct as the track of the passing animal upon the recent snow; as if to shew that thousands of years are but as nothing amidst eternity—and, as it were, in mockery of the fleeting, perishable course of the mightiest potentates among mankind.'

The formation of the slabs, and the preservation of the footprints, are processes which the geologist can easily explain. A beach on which animals have left the marks of their feet, becomes sufficiently hardened to retain the impressions; another layer of sand or mud is laid down by perhaps the next tide, covering up the first, and protecting it from all subsequent injury. Thousands of years after, the quarryman breaks up the layers, and finds on the one surface the impression of the animal, while the lower face of the superincumbent layer presents a cast of that impression, thus giving us in fact a double memorial of one event. At Wolfville, on the Bay of Fundy, Sir Charles Lyell some years ago observed a number of marks on the surface of a red marly mud which was gradually hardening on the sea-shore. They were the footprints of the sand-piper, a bird of which he saw flights daily running along the water's edge, and often leaving thirty or more similar impressions in a straight line, parallel to the borders of the estuary. He picked up some slabs of this dried mud, and splitting one of them up, found a surface within which bore two lines of the same kind of footprints. Here is an example before our living eyes, of the processes concerned in producing and preserving the fossil footprints of the New Red Sandstone.

Some years after the Annandale footprints had attracted attention, some slab surfaces of the same formation in Saxony and England were found bearing an impression of a more arresting character. It resembled the impression that would be made by the palm and extended fingers and thumb of the human hand, but a hand much thicker and flabbier than is commonly seen. The appropriate name of *Cheirotherium* was proposed for the unknown extinct animal which had produced these marks. The dimensions in the several examples were various; but 'in all cases the prints of what appear to have been the hind-feet are considerably larger than those of the fore-feet; so much so, indeed, that in one well-preserved slab containing several impressions, the former measures eight inches by five, and the latter not more than four inches by three. In this specimen, the print of the fore-foot is not more than an inch and a half in advance of that of the hinder one, although the distance between the two successive positions of the same foot, or the length of a pace of the animal, is fourteen inches. It therefore appears, that the animal must have had its posterior extremities both much larger and much longer than the anterior; but this peculiarity it possessed in common with many existing species, such as the frog, the kangaroo, &c.; and beyond this and certain appearances in the sandstone, as if a tail had been dragged behind the animal, in some sets of footprints, but not in others, there is nothing to suggest to the comparative anatomist any idea of even the class of Vertebrata to which the animal should be referred.'<sup>[5]</sup> Soon after, some teeth and fragments of bones were discovered, by which Professor Owen was able to indicate an animal of the frog-family (Batrachia), but with certain affinities to the saurian order (crocodiles, &c.), and which must have been about the size of a large pig. It has been pretty generally concluded, that this colossal frog was the animal which impressed the hand-like foot-prints.

At a later period, footprints of birds were discovered upon the surfaces of a thin-bedded sandstone belonging to the New Red formation on the banks of the Connecticut River, in North America. The birds, according to Sir Charles Lyell, must have been of various sizes; some as small as the sand-piper, and others as large as the ostrich, the width of the stride being in proportion to the size of the foot. There is one set, in which the foot is nineteen inches long, and the stride between four and five feet, indicating a bird nearly twice the size of the African ostrich. So great a magnitude was at first a cause of incredulity; but the subsequent discovery of the bones of the Moa or Dinornis



of New Zealand, proved that, at a much later time, there had been feathered bipeds of even larger bulk, and the credibility of the *Ornithichnites Giganteus* has accordingly been established. Sir Charles Lyell, when he visited the scene of the footprints on the Connecticut River, saw a slab marked with a row of the footsteps of the huge bird pointed to under this term, being nine in number, turning alternately right and left, and separated from each other by a space of about five feet. 'At one spot, there was a space several yards square, where the entire surface of the shale was irregular and jagged, owing to the number of the footsteps, not one of which could be distinctly traced, as when a flock of sheep have passed over a muddy road; but on withdrawing from this area, the confusion gradually ceased, and the tracks became more and more distinct.'<sup>[6]</sup> Professor Hitchcock had, up to that time, observed footprints of thirty species of birds on these surfaces. The formation, it may be remarked, is one considerably earlier than any in which fossil bones or other indications of birds have been detected in Europe.

In the coal-field of Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, there were discovered in 1844, slabs marked with footprints bearing a considerable resemblance to those of the Cheirotherium, and believed to have been impressed by an animal of the same family, though with some important points of distinction. The hind-feet are not so much larger than the fore; and the two on each side, instead of coming nearly into one row, as in the European Cheirotherium, stand widely apart. The impressions look such as would be made by a rudely-shaped human hand, with short fingers held much apart; there is some appearance as if the fingers had had nails; and a protuberance like the rudiment of a sixth finger appears at the side. This was the first indication of reptile life so early as the time of the coal-formation; but as the fossil remains of a reptile have now been found in Old Red Sandstone, at Elgin, in Scotland, the original importance of the discovery in this respect may be regarded as lessened.

[pg 251]

Last year, some slabs from Potsdam, in Canada, were brought to England, and deposited in the museum of the Geological Society. Belonging as these slabs do to a formation coeval with those in which the earliest fossils were hitherto found, it was startling to find them marked with numerous foot-tracks of what appeared to have been reptiles. It seemed to shew, that the inhabitants of the world in that early age were not quite so low in the scale of being as had previously been assumed from the facts known; and that all attempts to describe, from positive knowledge, anything like a progression of being on the face of our globe, were at least premature. Professor Owen had, at first, scarcely any hesitation in pronouncing the footprints to be those of tortoises; but he afterwards changed his views, and expressed his belief that the impressions had been produced by small crustacean animals. Thus the views previously entertained regarding the invertebrate character of the *fauna* of the Silurian epoch, have ultimately remained unaffected, so far as these Potsdam slabs are concerned.

Slabs of sandstone and shale often retain what is called the ripple-mark—that is, the corrugation of surface produced by the gentle agitation of shallow water over sand or mud. We can see these appearances beneath our feet, as we walk over the pavement of almost any of our cities. Such slabs are also occasionally marked by irregular protuberances, being the casts of hollows or cracks produced in ancient tide-beaches by shrinkage. In many instances, the footprints of animals are marked by such lines passing through them, shewing how the beach had dried and cracked in the sun after the animals had walked over it. In the quarries at Stourton, in Cheshire, some years ago, a gentleman named Cunningham observed slab surfaces mottled in a curious manner with little circular and oval hollows, and these were finally determined to be the impressions produced by rain—the rain of the ancient time, long prior to the existence of human beings, when the strata were formed! Since then, many similar markings have been observed on slabs raised from other quarries, both in Europe and America; and fossil rain-drops are now among the settled facts of geology. Very fine examples have been obtained from quarries of the New Red Sandstone at Newark and Pompton, in New Jersey. Sir Charles Lyell has examined these with care, and compared them with the effects of modern rain on soft surfaces of similar materials. He says, they present 'every gradation from transient rain, where a moderate number of drops are well preserved, to a pelting shower, which, by its continuance, has almost obliterated the circular form of the cavities. In the more perfectly preserved examples, smaller drops are often seen to have fallen into cavities previously made by larger ones, and to have modified their shape. In some cases of partial interference, the last drop has obliterated part of the annular margin of a former one; but in others it has not done so, for the two circles are seen to intersect each other. Most of the impressions are elliptical, having their more prominent rims at the deeper end [a consequence of the rain falling in a

slanting direction]. We often see on the under side of some of these slabs, which are about half an inch thick, casts of the rain-drops of a previous shower, which had evidently fallen when the direction of the wind was not the same. Mr Redfield, by carefully examining the obliquity of the imprints in the Pompton quarries, ascertained that most of them implied the blowing of a strong westerly wind in the triassic period at that place.' A certain class of the impressions at Pompton are thought to be attributable to hail, 'being deeper and much more angular and jagged than the rain-prints, and having the wall at the deeper end more perpendicular, and occasionally overhanging.'<sup>[7]</sup>

### FOOTNOTES:

[4] *Ichnology of Annandale*. Lizars, Edinburgh. 1851.

[5] *Ansted's Introduction to Geology*, i. 303.

[6] *Lyell's Travels in North America*, i. 254.

[7] *Quarterly Journal of Geological Society*, April, 1851.

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## AITON'S TRAVELS.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

A WORK in any department of general literature rarely appears from the pen of a clergyman in the Church of Scotland, and therefore that to which we are about to refer, under the title noted beneath,<sup>[8]</sup> is in some respects a curiosity. The writer, a minister settled in a mountainous parish in Lanarkshire, may be said to have made a remarkable escapade for one in his obscure situation and reverend calling. With an immense and unclerical flow of animal spirits, evidently as fond of travelling as old William Lithgow, and as garrulous as Rae Wilson, of whose class he is a surviving type, Dr Aiton is quite the man to take a journey to the Holy Land; for no difficulty in the way of toil, heat, hunger, creeping or winged insects, wild beasts, or still wilder savages, disturbs his equanimity. He also never hesitates to use any expression that comes uppermost. He explicitly observes, that 'no man with the capacity of a hen,' should fail to contribute such information as he possesses on the sacred regions he has traversed. Alluding to some circumstances in the voyage of St Paul, he says he has 'no desire to cook the facts.' He talks of a supposition being 'checkmated.' And in going along the coast of Spain, he mentions that he took care to have 'a passing squint at Cape St Vincent.' Many similar oddities break out in the course of the narrative; not that we care much about them one way or other; it is only to be regretted that the author has by this looseness of expression, and his loquacious dragging in of passages from Scripture on all occasions, also by his inveterate love of anecdotic illustration, done what he could to keep down a really clever book to an inferior standard of taste. We would hope, however, that candid readers will have a kindly consideration of the author's intentions, and pass over much that is prosy and ridiculous for the sake of what is original and interesting. Traversing lands that have been described a hundred times before, it might be supposed that little was left for Dr Aiton to pick up; yet every traveller has his own method of observation. In justice to the doctor, it must be acknowledged that he made a judicious use of time during his travels in the East, and has told us many amusing particulars of what he saw. There is, at least, always a certain graphic painting in his off-hand descriptions; as, for instance, his notice of an incident that occurred on his arrival in Egypt.

'On landing at Alexandria I saw a ship unloading, and box by box were being handed to the lighter, according to the number each respectively bore. Some mistake, more or less important, had apparently been made by one of the native operatives on the occasion. Instantly two sticks were laid on his head with dreadful effect. The poor fellow seemed to be stunned and stupified for a time. On this account it probably happened, that he fell into a second similar blunder, when a stick was thrown, not horizontally, but perpendicularly, and so aimed that it struck the socket of the eye. In one moment he lost the sight of it, and the ball hung by a ligament on his cheek. He uttered a hideous yell, and staggered; notwithstanding of which other two cudgels were applied to his arm while he had the power to hold it up in protection of his head. Horror of horrors! I thought, verily in the fulfilment of prophecy, God has been pleased to curse this garden and granary of the world, and to permit foreigners terribly to tyrannise over its degraded people.' Proceeding onward to Cairo: 'What a hurry-skurry there was in the dark in getting into the vans at the hotel-door to be conveyed to the Mahmoudie Canal! When I arrived, I found the barge in which we were to be conveyed both very confined and

dirty. But it proceeded at tolerable speed, drawn by horses which were pursued by well-mounted Arabs yelling, lashing, and cracking with their whips. We all passed a fearful night of suffocation and jamping, fasting and feasted on by millions. Some red-coated bedlamites, unfortunately infatuated with wine, had to be held from jumping overboard. The ramping and stamping, and roaring and scrambling for room to sit or lie, was horrific. At last the day dawned, when matters were not quite so bad; but we moved over our fifty miles of ditch-water to Atfeh in a manner the most uncomfortable any poor sinners ever suffered.'

The account given of his entry to Cairo is also strikingly faithful. 'When I landed at Boulac, another Oriental scene of novelty was presented. Crowds of men and women, all in their shirts only—lazy looking-on watermen calling for employment, porters packing luggage on the camels, donkey-boys, little active urchins, offering their asses, crying: "Here him best donkey"—"you Englese no walk"—"him kick highest"—"him fine jackass"—"me take you to Cairo." There were also plenty of custom-house folks demanding fees to which they had no right, and sturdy rascals seeking buckshish, and miserable beggars imploring alms. Walking through this promiscuous crowd, with all the dignity they could muster, there were venerable sheiks, or Egyptian oolema, with white turbans, and long silvery beards, and tawny sinister faces. And there were passengers not a few, with a carpet-bag in the one hand and a lady hanging on the other arm, crowding from the deck to the shore.

'The moment I mounted the stair at the pier of Boulac, I found myself in the red dusky haze of an Egyptian atmosphere. It was near noon, and the rays of the hot sun trembled over the boundless Valley of the Nile on to the minarets of Cairo, and further still to the sombre Pyramids. Now, indeed, the scene before me presented a superb illusion of beauty. The bold range of the Mockattam Mountains, its craggy summits cut clearly out in the sky, seemed to run like a promontory into a sea of the richest verdure; here, wavy with breezy plantations of olives; there, darkened with acacia groves. Just where the mountain sinks upon the plain, the citadel stands on its last eminence, and widely spread beneath lies the city—a forest of minarets, with palm-trees intermingled, and the domes of innumerable mosques rising and glittering over the sea of houses. Here and there, green gardens are islanded within that ocean, and the whole is girt round with picturesque towers, and ramparts occasionally revealed through vistas of the wood of sycamores and fig-trees that surround it. From Boulac I was conveyed to the British Hotel at Cairo, the Englishman's home in Egypt, conducted by Mr Shepherd, the Englishman's friend in the East. The approach to Grand Cairo is charming and cheering, and altogether as fanciful as if I had been carried with Aladin's lamp in my hand through a fairy region to one of the palaces mentioned in the *Arabian Nights of Entertainment*. I passed along a broad level path, full of life and fancy, amid groves and gardens, and villas all glittering in grandeur. At every turn, something more Oriental and magnificent than anything I had yet seen presented itself. Along the level, broad highway, a masquerading-looking crowd was swarming towards Cairo. Ladies, wrapped closely in white veils, were carrying water on their heads. Long rows of dromedaries loaded with luggage were moving stately forward. Donkeys at full canter, one white man riding, and two black men driving and thumping the poor brutes most unmercifully with short thick sticks, were winding their way through the throng. Ladies enveloped in flowing robes of black silk, and veiled up to the eyes, were sitting stride-leg on richly-caparisoned asses, shewing off with pomp a pair of yellow morocco slippers, which appeared on their feet from under their flowing robes. And before these, clearing the way, there were eunuch slaves crying: "Darak ya Khowaga-riglak! shemalak!" which probably may mean: "Stand back, and let her ladyship pass!" There were walkers and water-carriers, with goat-skins full on their back; and fruit-sellers and orange-girls; and ourselves and others driving at full gallop, regardless of all the Copts, Abyssinians, Greeks, Turks, Parsees, Nubians, and Jews, which crowded the path. But curiosity of this sort is soon satisfied, and these novelties are passed, when I find myself in the midst of the city, more full of mud and misery, dark, dirty twisting lanes, arched almost over by verandas, and wretchedly paved or not paved at all, full of smells and disgusting sights—such as lean, mangy dogs, and ragged beggars quivering with lice, and poverty-stricken people; all this more than the whole world can produce anywhere else, not excepting even the Jewish city of Prague; which astonished me beyond comparison till I saw the poorer portions of Cairo.'

During his stay in Cairo, the doctor visited the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, the short journey being performed early in the morning, and with a guide. The toils and pleasures of the excursion are fairly described. 'I had read so much of the bulk of the Pyramids, and they now appeared so positively insignificant in their dimensions, that I, felt mortified; but I remembered that I had the

same impression many years ago when first approaching the Alps; and I began to consider, that as the extreme clearness of the atmosphere gave them the appearance of proximity in the far distance, so it would also partly account for the diminutive aspect they persisted in presenting. I dismounted, and scrambled up the bold ledge of rock, and found myself already a hundred feet above the level of the Nile. Here my Arab guide produced cold fowl, bread, wine, and Nile water in plenty at the foot of this mountain of stone, which now began to indicate its colossal magnitude. Standing beside the pyramid, and looking from the base to the top, and especially examining the vast dimensions of each separate stone, I thus obtained an adequate impression of the magnitude of its dimensions, which produced a calm and speechless but elevated feeling of awe. The Arabs, men, women, and children, came crowding around me; but they seemed kind and inoffensive. I was advised to mount up to the top before the sun gained strength; and, skipping like chamois on a mountain, two Arabs took hold of me by each wrist, and a third lifted me up from behind, and thus I began, with resolution and courage, to ascend the countless layers of huge stones which tower and taper to the top. Every step was three feet up at a bound; and, really, a perpendicular hop-step-and-leap of this sort was no joke, move after move continuing as if for ever. I found that the Arabs did not work so smoothly as I expected, and that one seemed at a time to be holding back, while another was dragging me up; and this soon became very tiresome. Perceiving this, they changed their method, and I was directed to put my foot on the knee of one Arab, and another pulled me up by both hands, while a third pushed me behind; and thus I bounded on in my tread-mill of tedious and very tiresome exertion. I paused half-way to the top, and rested at the cave. I looked up and down with a feeling of awe, and now I felt the force of Warburton's remark, when he calls it the greatest wonder in the world. But in the midst of these commonplace reflections, a fit of sickness came over me. Everything turned dark before me; and now for a moment my courage failed me; and when looking at my three savage companions—for my guide and his friend were sitting below finishing the fragments of my breakfast, and the donkeys were munching beans—I felt myself alike destitute of comfort and protection; and when they put forth their hands to lift my body, I verily thought myself a murdered man. When I came out of my faint, I found that they had gently turned me on my belly, with my head flat upon the rock, and that they had been sprinkling my face and breast with water. A profuse perspiration broke out, and I felt myself relieved. I rested ten or fifteen minutes, and hesitated for a moment whether to go up or down; but I had determined that I should reach the top, if I should perish in the attempt. I resumed, therefore, the ascent, but with more time and caution than before; and fearing to look either up or down, or to any portion of the frightful aspect around, I fixed my eye entirely on each individual step before me, as if there had been no other object in the world besides. To encourage me by diverting my attention, the Arabs chanted their monotonous songs, mainly in their own language, interspersed with expressions about buckshish, "Englese good to Arabs," and making signs to me every now and then how near we were getting to the top. After a second *dwam*, a rest and a draught of water prepared me for another effort at ascending; and now, as I advanced, my ideas began to expand to something commensurate with the grandeur and novelty of the scene. When I reached the top, I found myself on a broad area of about ten yards in every way of massive stone-blocks broken and displaced. Exhausted and overheated, I laid me down, panting like a greyhound after a severe chase. I bathed my temples, and drank a deep, cool draught of Nile water. After inhaling for a few minutes the fresh, elastic breeze blowing up the river, I felt that I was myself again. I rose, and gazed with avidity in fixed silence, north and south, east and west. And now I felt it very exhilarating to the spirit, when thus standing on a small, unprotected pavement so many hundred feet above the earth, and so many thousand miles from home, to be alone, surrounded only by three wild and ferocious-like savages. The Arabs knew as well as I did that my life and property were in their power; but they were kind, and proud of the confidence I had in them. They tapped me gently on the back, patted my head, kissed my hand, and then with a low, laughing, sinister growl, they asked me for buckshish, which I firmly refused; then they laughed, and sang and chatted as before. In calmly looking around me, one idea filled and fixed my mind, which I expressed at the time in one word—magnificence!... I remained long at the top of the pyramid, and naturally felt elevated by the sublimity of the scenery around, and also by the thought, that I had conquered every difficulty, and accomplished my every purpose. The breeze was still cool, although the sun was now high in the sky. I laughed and talked with the Arabs; and advanced with them holding my two hands, to the very edge, and looked down the awful precipice. Here again, with a push, or a kick, or probably by withdrawing their hands, my days would have been finished; and I would have been buried in the Desert among the ancient kings, or more likely worried up by hungry hyænas. I looked around at my leisure, and began carefully to read the names

cut out on the stones, anxious to catch one from my own country, or of my acquaintance, but in this I did not succeed. Seeing me thus occupied, one of the Arabs drew from his pocket a large murderous-looking *gully*, and when he advanced towards me with it in his hand, had I believed the tenth part of what I had heard or read, I might have been afraid of my life. But with a laughing squeal, he pointed to a stone, as if to intimate that I should cut out my name upon it. Then very modestly he held out his hand for buckshish, and I thought him entitled to two or three piasters.... In coming down, I felt timid and giddy for awhile, and was afraid that I might meet the fate of the poor officer from India, who, on a similar occasion, happened to miss his foot, and went bouncing from one ledge of stone to another, towards the bottom, like a ball, and that long after life was beaten out of him. Seeing this, the Arabs renewed their demand for buckshish, and with more perseverance than ever; but I was equally firm in my determination that more money they should not have till I reached the bottom. At last they took me by both hands as before, and conducted me carefully from step to step. By and by I jumped down from one ledge to another without their assistance, till I reached the mouth of the entrance to the interior. I descended this inlet somewhat after the manner of a sweep going down a chimney, but not quite so comfortable, I believe. In this narrow inclined plane, I not only had to encounter sand-flies, and every variety of vermin in Egypt, but I was afraid of serpents. The confined pass was filled, too, with warm dust, and the heat and smoke of the lights we carried increased the stifling sensation. In these circumstances, I felt anxious only to go as far as would enable me to fire a pistol with effect in one of the vaults. This is well worth while, inasmuch as the sound of the explosion was louder than the roar of a cannon. In fact, it almost rent the drum of my ears, and rolled on like thunder through the interior of the pyramid, multiplied and magnified as it was by a thousand echoes. The sound seemed to sink, and mount from cavity to cavity—to rebound and to divide—and at length to die in a good old age. The flash and the smoke produced, too, a momentary feeling of terror. Having performed this marvellous feat, I was nowise ambitious to qualify myself further for giving a description of the interior.'

After visiting Suez, the author returned to Cairo, descended to the coast of the Levant, and took shipping for Jaffa, on the route to Jerusalem. Every point of interest in the holy city is described as minutely as could be desired. Next, there was a visit to the Dead Sea, regarding which there occur some sagacious remarks. The doctor repudiates the ordinary belief, that the waters of this famed lake are carried off by exhalation. Six million tons of water are discharged every day by the Jordan into the Dead Sea; and to suppose that this vast increase is wholly exhaled, seems to him absurd. He deems it more likely that the lake issues by subterranean passages into the Red Sea. The only remark that occurs to us on this point is, that the saltiness of the lake must be held as a proof that there is at least a large exhalation from the surface.

Dr Aiton also visited Bethlehem, where he saw much to interest him; and had the satisfaction of being hospitably entertained by the fathers of the Greek convent. 'I left the convent,' he says, 'soothed and satisfied much with all that I had seen, and went round to take a parting and more particular view of the plain where the shepherds heard the angels proclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men!" The plain is still mainly under pasture, fertile and well watered, and there I saw shepherds still tending their flocks. These shepherds have great influence over their sheep. Many of them have no dogs. Their flocks are docile and domestic, and not as the black-faced breed of sheep in Scotland, scouring the hills like cavalry. The shepherd's word spoken at any time is sufficient to make them understand and obey him. He sleeps among them at night, and in the morning he leadeth them forth to drink by the still waters, and feedeth them by the green pastures. He walks before them slow and stately; and so accustomed are the sheep to be guided by him, that every few bites they take they look up with earnestness to see that he is there. When he rests during the heat of the day in a shady place, they lie around him chewing the cud. He has generally two or three favourite lambs which don't mix with the flock, but frisk and fondle at his heel. There is a tender intimacy between the Ishmaelite and his flock. They know his voice, and follow him, and he careth for the sheep. He gathereth his lambs, and seeketh out his flock among the sheep, and gently leadeth them that are with young, and carrieth the lambs in his bosom. In returning back to Jerusalem, I halted on a rugged height to survey more particularly, and enjoy the scene where Ruth went to glean the ears of corn in the field of her kinsman Boaz. Hither she came for the beginning of barley harvest, because she would not leave Naomi in her sorrow. "Entreat me not to leave thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if

aught but death part thee and me." How simple and tender! Here, when looking around me, honoured I felt for ever be her memory, not only for these touching sentiments, worthy of our race even before the fall, and when the image of God was not yet effaced; but also in respect that she who uttered these words was the great-grandmother of David, and as of the generation of Jesus. Here also I looked back to the city of Bethlehem with lingering regret, uttering a common-place farewell to the scene, but never to its hallowed recollections.'

We may conclude our extracts with a passage descriptive of the doctor's departure from the Holy Land, from which it will be seen that he was not indisposed to keep his part when necessity demanded. 'The steamer *Levant* was ordered to sail at midnight on the day it arrived at Jaffa, and there was a vast crowd and great confusion at the embarkation. All the villainy of the Arab watermen was in active operation. With the assistance of Dr Kiat's Italian servant, an arrangement had been made that I and my friend were to be taken out to the steamer for a stipulated sum; but while all the boats of the natives were going off; ours was still detained at the pier under a variety of flimsy pretences. Then a proposal was made to carry the luggage back to the shore, and to take away the boat somewhere else, a promise being given by the Arabs that they would return with it in plenty of time to take us on board before midnight. By this time, I was too old a traveller amid ruffians of this sort to permit so simple a fraud to be perpetrated. The crew insisted on taking hold of the oars, and my friend and I persisted in preventing them. We soon saw that nothing but determined courage would carry the day. I therefore did not hesitate to grasp the skipper firmly by the throat till I almost choked him, threatening to toss him headlong into the sea. We also threatened loudly to go back to the English consul, and to have them punished for their conduct. Awed a little, and seeing that we were not to be so easily done as they expected, notwithstanding that we had been so simple as to pay our fare before we started, they did at last push off the boat; but it was only after a fashion of their own. Every forty yards their oars struck work, and they demanded more money. The sea was rough even beyond the breakers, and the gravestone which I had seen in the garden at Jaffa was enough to convince me, that the guiding of a boat by savages in the dark, through the neck of such a harbour, with whirling currents and terrifying waves, was a matter of considerable danger. There was no remedy for it, but continuing to set the crew at defiance, knowing that they could not upset the boat without endangering their own lives as well as ours. They wetted us, however, purposely, with the spray, and did their best to frighten us, by rocking the boat like a cradle. First one piaster (about twopence-halfpenny) was given to the skipper, then the boat was advanced about a hundred yards, when the oars were laid down once more. Another row was the consequence, at the end of which another piaster was doled out to him, and forward we moved till we were fairly within cry of the ship, when I called out for assistance, and they pushed us directly alongside, behind the paddle-box. Here again they detained the luggage, and demanded more buckshish; but I laid hold of the rope hanging down from the rails of the steamer, and crying to my companion to sit still and watch our property, I ran up the side of the ship and called for the master, knowing that the captain was on shore. Looking down upon them, he threatened to sink them in the ocean if they did not bring everything on deck in a minute. When I saw the portmanteaus brought up, and my friend and I safely on board, I thought that all was well enough, although we had got a ducking in the surf; but in a little, my friend found that he had been robbed of his purse, containing two sovereigns and some small money; but nobody could tell whether this had been done in the crowd on the pier, or when he was in the boat, or when helped up the side of the ship. The anchor was weighed about midnight, and we steamed along the coast of Samaria, towards the once famous city and seaport of Herod.'

Having taken the liberty to be jocular on the doctor's oddities of expression, we beg to say, that notwithstanding these and other eccentricities, the work he has produced is well worthy of perusal, and of finding a place in all respectable libraries.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[8] *The Lands of the Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope, as Visited in 1851.* By John Aiton, D.D., Minister of Dolphinton. Fullarton & Co. 1852.



LIKE most other ubiquitous customs, corn-gleaning has been frequently described by the painter and the poet, yet I much question whether in any case the picture is true to nature. A certain amount of idealism is infused into all the sketches—indeed, in the experience of numbers of readers, this is the sole feature in most of them. Such a defect is easily accounted for. Those who have depicted the custom were practically unacquainted with its details, and invariably made the sacred story the model of their picture, without taking into consideration the changes induced by time or local peculiarity. Even the beautiful and glowing description of English corn-gleaning given by Thomson, is felt by practical observers to be greatly too much of the Oriental hue, too redolent of the fragrance of a fanciful Arcadia. It is a pity that this interesting custom is not more faithfully transcribed into our national poetry; and it is with the hope that a future Burns may make the attempt, that the writer of this article ventures to give a short history of his gleaning-days, believing the subject to be interesting enough to engage the attention of the general reader.

Though born amid the grandeur and sublimity of Highland scenery, I was, at a very early age, brought to reside in a small village on the east coast—small now, but once the most famous and important town in that part of Scotland. Among the scenes of these times, none stand out more vividly than the 'gathering-days'—the harvest of the year's enjoyment—the time when a whole twelvemonth's happiness was concentrated in the six weeks' vacation of the village-school. I do not recollect the time when I began to glean—or *gather*, as it is locally termed—probably I would, when very young, follow the others to the near farms, and gradually become, as I grew older, a regular gleaner. At that time the gleaners in our district were divided into two gangs or parties. One of these was headed by four old women, whose shearing-days were past; and as they were very peaceable, decent bodies, it was considered an honour to get attached to their band. The other was composed of the wilder spirits of the place, who thought nothing of jumping dikes, breaking hedges, stealing turnips, and committing other depredations on the farms which they visited. Fortunately, my quiet disposition, and supposed good character, procured my admittance into the more respectable gang; and I had the honour of sharing its fortunes during the five or six years I continued a gleaner. I was surprised to see one of these old ladies toddling about the village only a few weeks ago, though her gathering-days are long since past. She is the last survivor of the quorum, and is now fast fading into dotage.

[pg 255]

Although the two gleaning-parties never assumed a positive antagonism, they took care to conceal their movements from each other as well as possible. When one of our party received information of a field being 'ready,' the fact was secretly conveyed to all the members, with an injunction to be 'in such a place at such an hour' on the following morning; and the result generally was, that we had a considerable portion of the field gleaned before the other gang arrived. But we did not always act on previous information. Many a morning we departed on the search, and frequently wandered all day without 'lifting a head.' These were the best times for us young ones, whose hearts were too light to care for more than the fun of the thing, as we then had a glorious opportunity of getting a feast of bramble-berries and wild raspberries in the woods and moors; but to the older members of our party the disappointment was anything but pleasant.

I have spoken of a field being *ready*. Now, to some readers, this may convey a very erroneous idea. We learn that in early times not only were the gleaners admitted among the sheaves, or allowed to 'follow the shearers,' as the privilege is now termed, but, in a certain instance, the reapers were commanded to leave a handful now and then for the gleaner. Now, that custom is entirely changed: the sheaves are all taken away from the field; and instead of the reapers leaving handfuls expressly for the gleaners, the farmer endeavours by raking to secure as much as possible of what they accidentally leave on the stubble. I am not inclined to quarrel with the condition that requires the stocks to be removed ere the gleaners gain admittance; because many would be tempted to pilfer, and besides, the ground on which they stand could not be reached. But there is no doubt that the custom of gleaning was originally a public enactment; while the fact that it has spread over the whole earth, and descended to the present time, shews that it still exists on the statute-book of justice, in all the length and breadth of its original signification; and it amounts almost to a virtual abrogation of the privilege when the stubble is thus gleaned. At all events, if these sentiments are not in consonance with the new lights of the day, let them be pardoned in a *ci-*

*devant* gleaner.

Upon arriving at a field, our first object was to choose a locality. If we were first on the ground, we took a careful survey of its geographical position, and acted accordingly. When the field was level, and equally exposed, it mattered little to what part we went; but in the event of its being hilly, or situated near a wood, we had to consider where the best soil lay, and where the sun had shone most. It was in the discovery of these important points that the sagacity and experience of our aged leaders were most brilliantly displayed, and gave to our party an immense superiority over the other, whose science was much more scanty; it therefore happened that we had generally the largest quantity and best quality of grain. These preliminaries being settled—and they generally took less time than I have done to write—we began work, commencing, of course, at the end of the field by which we entered, and travelling up or down the rigs.

The process of gleaning may be generally considered a very simple one; but in this, as in everything else, some knowledge is necessary, and no better proof of this could be had, than in the quantities gathered by different persons in the same space of time. A careless or inexperienced gatherer could easily be detected by the size and *shape* of his single. The usual method practised by a good gleaner was as follows:—Placing the left hand upon the knee, or behind the back, the right was used to lift the ears, care being taken to grasp them close by the 'neck.' When the right hand had gathered perhaps twenty or thirty ears, these were changed into the left hand; the right was again replenished from the ground; and this process was continued till the left was full, or rather till the gleaner heard one of his or her party exclaim: 'Tie!' when the single was obliged to be completed. Thus it is clear that a good eye and a quick hand are essential to a good gleaner.

Whenever one of the members of the party found that the left hand was quite full, he or she could compel the others to finish their singles whether their hand was full or not, by simply crying the afore-mentioned word 'Tie!' At this sound, the whole band proceeded to fasten their bundles, and deposit them on the rig chosen for their reception. The process of 'tying' it is impossible to explain on paper; but I can assure my readers it afforded great scope for taste and ingenuity. Few, indeed, could do it properly, though the singles of some were very neat. The best 'tyer' in our party, and indeed in the district, was a little, middle-aged woman, who was a diligent, rapid gatherer, and generally the first to finish her handful. Her singles were perfectly round, and as flat at the top as if laid with a plummet. Having finished tying, we laid down our singles according to order, so that no difficulty might be felt in collecting them again, and so proceeded with our labour.

When we got to the end of the field, the custom was, to finish our handfuls there, and retrace our steps for the purpose of collecting the deposits, when each of us tied up our collected bundles at the place from which we originally started. To the lover of the picturesque, the scene while we sat resting by the hedge-side, was one of the most beautiful that can be imagined. Spread over the field in every direction were the gleaners, busily engaged in their cheerful task; while the hum of their conversation, mingling with the melody of the insect world, the music of the feathery tribes, and the ripple of the adjoining burn, combined to form a strain which I still hear in the pauses of life.

On our homeward road from a successful day's, gathering, how merry we all were, in spite of our tired limbs and the load upon our heads! Indeed it was the load itself that made us glad; and we should have been still merrier if that had been heavier. How sweet it was to feel the weight of our industry—no burden could possibly be more grateful; and I question much whether that was not the happiest moment in Ruth's first gleaning-day, when she trudged home to her mother-in-law with the ephah of barley, the produce of her unflagging toil.

When harvest was over, and the chill winds swept over cleared and gleaned fields, our bond of union was dissolved, each retired to his respective habitation, and, like Ruth, 'beat out that he had gleaned.' In many cases, the result was a sufficient supply of bread to the family for the ensuing winter. It was singular that, during the rest of the year, little or no intercourse was maintained between those who were thus associated during harvest. They lived together in the same degree of friendship as is common among villagers, but I could never observe any of that peculiar intimacy which it was natural to suppose such an annual combination would create. They generally returned to their ordinary occupations, and continued thus till the sickle was again heard among the yellow corn, and the *stacks* were growing in the barn-yard. Then, as if by instinct, the members of the various bands, and the independent stragglers, left their monotonous tasks, and eagerly entered on the joys and



pleasures of the gathering-days.

I might add many reminiscences of the few seasons I spent in this manner; but I am afraid that, however interesting they might prove in rural districts, they are too simple to interest the general reader. Let me observe, however, before concluding, that the great majority of the farmers at the present day are decidedly unfavourable to gleaning, although the veneration that is generally entertained for what is ancient, and the traditionary sacredness which surrounds this particular custom, prevent them from openly forbidding its continuance. They have introduced, however, laws and rules which infringe sadly its original proportions, and which, in many instances, are made the instruments of oppression.

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## WOMEN IN SAVAGE LIFE.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

The division of labour between the man and wife in Indian life is not so unequal, while they live in the pure hunter state, as many suppose. The large part of a hunter's time, which is spent in seeking game, leaves the wife in the wigwam, with a great deal of time on her hands; for it must be remembered that there is no spinning, weaving, or preparing children for school—no butter or cheese making, or a thousand other cares which are inseparable from the agricultural state, to occupy her skill and industry. Even the art of the seamstress is only practised by the Indian woman on a few things. She devotes much of her time to making moccasins and quill-work. Her husband's leggins are carefully ornamented with beads; his shot-pouch and knife-sheath are worked with quills; the hunting-cap is garnished with ribbons; his garters of cloth are adorned with a profusion of small white beads, and coloured worsted tassels are prepared for his leggins. In the spring, the corn-field is planted by her and the youngsters, in a vein of gaiety and frolic. It is done in a few hours, and taken care of in the same spirit. It is perfectly voluntary labour, and she would not be scolded for omitting it; for all labour with Indians is voluntary.—*Schoolcraft's Indian Tribes.*

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## LANGUAGE OF THE LAW.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

If a man would, according to law, give to another an orange, instead of saying, 'I give you that orange,' which one would think would be what is called in legal phraseology 'an absolute conveyance of all right and title therein,' the phrase would run thus:—'I give you all and singular my estate and interest, right, title, and claim, and advantage of and in that orange, with all its rind, skin, juice, pulp, and pips, and right and advantages therein, with full power to bite, cut, suck, and otherwise eat the same, or give the same away, as fully and as effectually as I, the said A. B., am now inclined to bite, cut, suck, or otherwise eat the same orange or give the same away, with or without its rind, skin, juice, pulp, or pips, anything heretofore or hereinafter, or in any other deed or deeds, instrument or instruments, of what nature or kind soever, to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding;' with much more to the same effect. Such is the language of lawyers; and it is gravely held by the most learned men among them, that by the omission of any of these words, the right to the said orange would not pass to the person for whose use the same was intended.—*Newspaper paragraph.*

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## CHANCES OF LIFE IN AMERICA.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

10,268 infants are born on the same day and enter upon life simultaneously. Of these, 1243 never reach the anniversary of their birth; 9025 commence the second year; but the proportion of deaths still continues so great, that at the end of the third only 8183, or about four-fifths of the original number, survive. But during the fourth year the system seems to acquire more strength, and the number of deaths rapidly decreases. It goes on decreasing until twenty-one, the commencement of maturity and the period of highest health. 7134 enter upon the activities and responsibilities of life—more than two-thirds of the original number. Thirty-five comes, the meridian of manhood, 6302 have reached it. Twenty years more, and the ranks are thinned. Only 4727, or less than half of those who entered life fifty-five years ago, are left. And now death

comes more frequently. Every year the ratio of mortality steadily increases, and at seventy there are not 1000 survivors. A scattered few live on to the close of the century, and at the age of one hundred and six the drama is ended; the last man is dead.—*Albany Journal*.

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## A SONG.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

THE little white moon goes climbing  
Over the dusky cloud,  
Kissing its fringes softly,  
With a love-light, pale as shroud—  
Where walks this moon to-night, Annie?  
Over the waters bright, Annie?  
Does she smile on your face as you lift it, proud?  
God look on thee—look on thee, Annie!  
For I shall look never more!

The little white star stands watching  
Ever beside the moon;  
Hid in the mists that shroud her,  
And hid in her light's mid-noon:  
Yet the star follows all heaven through, Annie,  
As my soul follows after you, Annie,  
At moon-rise and moon-set, late and soon:  
Oh, God watch thee, God watch thee, Annie,  
For I can watch never more!

The purple-black sky folds loving,  
Over far sea, far land;  
The thunder-clouds, looming eastward,  
Like a chain of mountains stand.  
Under this July sky, Annie,  
Do you hear waves lapping by, Annie?  
Do you walk, with the hills on either hand?  
Oh, God love thee, God love thee, Annie,  
For I love thee evermore!

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## LONGEVITY OF QUAKERS.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Quakerism is favourable to *longevity*, it seems. According to late English census returns, the average age attained by members of this peaceful sect in Great Britain is fifty-one years, two months, and twenty-one days. Half of the population of the country, as is seen by the same returns, die before reaching the age of twenty-one, and the average duration of human life the world over is but thirty-three years; Quakers, therefore, live a third longer than the rest of us. The reasons are obvious enough. Quakers are temperate and prudent, are seldom in a hurry, and never in a passion. Quakers, in the very midst of the week's business—on Wednesday morning—retire from the world, and spend an hour or two in silent meditation at the meeting-house. Quakers are diligent; they help one another, and the fear of want does not corrode their minds. The journey of life to them is a walk of peaceful meditation. They neither suffer nor enjoy intensity, but preserve a composed demeanour always. Is it surprising that their days should be long in the land?—*National Intelligencer*.

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