

# The Gleaner

AND

## NORTHUMBERLAND SCHEDIASMA.

VOLUME II.]

"Nec aranearum sane texus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus. ut apes."

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### THE GLEANER.

#### GREAT SHIP RAIL ROAD ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF SUEZ.

The railway and steam engine appear destined to produce a great revolution in the affairs of the world. What shall we say, for instance, to the astonishing feat wrought the other day on the Liverpool and Manchester Rail Road? The majestic travelling six times between those two places, thus going over a distance of 180 miles in a day—and conveying backwards and forwards 142 tons?—There are ten such engines employed on the road.

But a project is now conceived of railwaying the Isthmus of Suez, and carrying over it vessels of the heaviest burden from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. A paper of this effect has been read before the Society of Arts in London. The vessels are to be placed upon the railway, out of the water, by means of Morton's patent slips, and then transported to the opposite sea by means of locomotive steam engines.—By such slips the vessel becomes a sort of amphibious carriage, and the steam wafts her gently, crew, cargo and all, over the plains of Egypt to her native element. It is said the difficulties of the enterprise are not greater than those encountered in the construction of the Manchester and Liverpool Rail Road—and that the Pacha of Egypt has actually employed an Engineer to inspect Morton's Patent Ship.—What are we coming to next? Shall we CANAL or RAILWAY the Isthmus of Panama? moving bodily the whole mass of the vessel and cargo from the Mexican Gulf to the Pacific, instead of doubling Cape Horn? If our successors go on the next fifty years, and with the same accelerated velocity as we have done for the last fifty years, what prodigies will not be performed by human ingenuity? If we extend the calculation further onwards, where will be the limit of scientific improvement.

#### HELP ONE ANOTHER.

We have too often noticed a propensity among individuals of a compact and flourishing village, to make purchase and to trade generally with strangers in preference to a fair and mutual interchange, neighbor with neighbor. This is an evil, and we can only account for it by supposing that the individual who will not encourage business in his own village, is possessed of envious feelings towards his neighbors, and dislikes to see them prosper. When such feelings are cherished between man and man, they soon render the most flourishing village desolate, and paralyse the efforts of those who sincerely wish for the prosperity of the place where they chance to dwell. 'Help one another,' is the motto to for every Country Village, and when the inhabitants will throw aside all petty differences, which always exists in every community, and in defiance of personal feeling trade in their own villages, and let what little cash they may have to spare, go to support their own folks, instead of driving off a dozen miles at the expense of a dollar, to save a cent in trade, that village will be marked by every stranger as thriving and prosperous; the mansion of the Parson and its premises will afford ample token that his parishioners possess the means of paying him a liberal salary, the hammer of the mechanic will be heard at early dawn, buildings will rise as if by magic, and the whole village will present a prospect of industry and contentment. But mark the village whose inhabitants suffer their own mechanics to languish; while they are spreading their money with a liberal hand to support those of the neighboring towns, and the reverse of this picture may be seen; the parsonage will be found tenantless and in ruins, decay will be visible about every tenement, sloth will have settled upon the inhabitants, and the rising sun will generally find them snoring away the best of the day in bed; everything will wear the livery of desolation.

The mechanics of every village must be supported, and if you would have good ones they must be liberally supported. Their opposition in every branch

of business, and there are those who have the art of slighting work so as to afford it cheap; you go to a first rate mechanic, his price will perhaps appear to be high, even if he works as reasonable as he can possibly afford to work well, you leave him and employ a cheap workman in some other place, depend upon it your money is wasted, and your mechanics, by such a course, will either be forced to leave you or be ruined.—New Hampshire Spectator.

FROM THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

#### MR. JEFFREY, LORD ADVOCATE.

Most people have about as correct a notion of Jeffrey, as the English had of Napoleon at the commencement of the present century. Not a few associate his name with the wide and somewhat ponderous fame of the Edinburgh Review, and conjure up to themselves the phantasm of the Literary Atlas, not merely sustaining the universe, like him of old, but propelling it through time as a boy would chuck a law. Others, again, form their opinions by those sketches which smarting authors have drawn of an incubus who haunts their dreams,—sometimes in the form of a cold and senseless load,—sometimes as a merry, mocking, and malignant imp. Tories regard Jeffrey as nearly allied to him "we daurna name;" Whigs have a sneaking kindness for him, not unmixed with dread. Radicals hate him worse than the most intolerant of Ultras. It is easy to say that all these good people have a totally false idea of Jeffrey's character; but it is by no means so easy to substitute a true one.

At a period of his starting in life, the Tory party had the ascendancy in Scotland to an extent that our readers can scarcely conceive. The knot of leaders who managed affairs in Edinburgh have never been backward in wooing talent to their ranks. The legal profession is the only one that there affords scope for advancement, and the number of situations that can only be filled by members of the Bar renders it an easy matter for a dominant faction to reward its supporters. Yet with this prospect before him, and knowing the calamities to which he exposed himself, he selected his party; and through good report and evil report, in hours of darkness and danger, he has adhered to it, until it has become (mainly through his own exertions) triumphant. Nor has he stooped to solicit the applause of the popular party by consenting that his principles did not go the full length of theirs. He has on all occasions avowed his opinions, as freely against the abuses of the Liberals, as the prosecutions of the Tories. We do not here stop to inquire whether his principles be right or wrong,—we say he has adhered to them openly and fearlessly.

As a critic we are not inclined to rank Jeffrey very high. He began to write so early in life that great allowance must be made for his first criticisms. A young man, of a volatile and restless energy, trained in the school of a debating society, and unaccustomed to hear the literary dogmas of his professors arraigned, was ill-prepared to sit in judgment upon a nascent literature. He was like a monarch called upon to ascend the throne during the first ferment of a revolution. He had been duly trained in all the formulas of established criticism; still that he, at the period when man is most susceptible of enthusiasm and new impressions, should have ranked himself on the side of form and decorum as opposed to power and feeling, gave cause to suspect that his mind was not of the very highest order.

And so it has proved. He is deficient in originality, intensity, depth, and imagination. After reading all that he has given to the world, we rise with an impression that he has said much that is just, and more that is ingenious, but we do not recollect one new view of man, art, or nature, that he has suggested to us. His dissertations are always lively, his arguments felicitously and beautifully illustrated, but one never finds him fathom the depths of science. We feel that there is a want of power and continuity in his writing,—it is the production of a clever, not of a great man. In return, however, he lays a close and strong grasp upon everything that bears upon active life. He has feeling enough to receive into his soul the mighty thoughts of loftier intellects. He has a memory that retains everything, and a readiness and versatility ever prompt and able to make the most of what he has stored up in his mind.

It seems to us that we have been describing a man of talent, not of genius,—to use a distinction introduced by Coleridge; and to appreciate such a man aright we must study him in active life. But before we can portray Jeffrey to our readers in this his field of action, we must present to them a sketch of his outer man.

He is of low stature, but his figure is elegant and well-proportioned. This he seems to be aware of by the assiduity with which he takes care that his little personage shall always be set out to the best advantage. The continually varying expression of his countenance renders it impossible to say what its features are. They have baffled our best artists. The face is rather elongated, the chin deficient, the mouth well-formed, with a mingled expression of determination, sentiment, and arch mockery; the nose is slightly curved, the distance from the bridge to the eyebrow being disproportionately long. The brow never presents the same appearance for two moments consecutively; it is now smooth and unfurrowed, lofty and vaulted;—look again, and the skin is contracted upwards into a thousand parallel wrinkles, offering the semblance of a "forehead villainous low." The eye is the most peculiar feature of the countenance; it is large and sparkling, but with a

want of transparency that gives it the appearance of a heartless epigma. He has two tones in his voice; the one harsh and grating the other rich and clear, though not powerful. His pronunciation is minced,—the naturalized defect of youthful affectation.

It will be farther necessary, before attempting to describe his public appearance, that we introduce our Southern readers to what has hitherto been the great theatre of his display. The Parliament House (the building in which the Supreme Court of Scotland holds its sittings) must present rather an astonishing spectacle to one who sees it for the first time. You enter a long and lofty hall, dimly lighted by a row of dirty windows stretching along one side, and by one of larger dimensions at the end, the stained glass of which does its best to represent Justice, with her usual accompaniments of the sword and scales, standing upon a chimney-top with volumes of black smoke curling up around her. At the opposite end of the hall stands a colossal statue of white marble, elevated upon a pedestal more than six feet high. The whole area of room is thronged with human beings, some in gowns and whigs, others in apparel of every cut and color, tumbling over each other in that dim light, as close and frequent as mites in a cheese. The air is close and loaded with dust. An incessant tread and shuffling of feet is heard, mixed with the loud whispering of a thousand simultaneous voices. At brief intervals a shrill voice raised itself in a harsh monotonous din, and then abruptly sinks to silence.

Venturing further, one finds himself absorbed as into a whirlpool, squeezed, elbowed, and driven from side to side after the most unceremonious fashion. Every man is intent upon his own business, and looks neither to the right nor to the left in his eagerness to push after it. By degrees, however, he learns to accommodate himself to the situation—to steady himself, by yielding to the pressure—to retain a fixed place by keeping up a constant wriggling, like a rooted weed stretching its lank length down a stream, quivering and coiling at each fresh gush of water. He is now enabled to remark, that the Judges, clad in robes of red and blue, are placed upon elevated benches in alcoves built into the wall, that behind each stands an attendant with a roll of causes in his hand—the individuals from whom proceed at intervals the shrill notes that astonished him on entering. Before the Judges, and rather lower, clerks are seated at each side of a table, with huge bales of paper between them,—one busily writing, while another, perhaps, sways his chair backwards upon one of its had legs, and yawns. At the end of this table is a bar, at which the Advocates stand when they address the Bench. How their Lordships manage to hear, or whether they manage to decide without hearing—upon the principle that Justice ought to be deaf, as well as blind—Heaven knows. For the din of which we have already spoken, continues to rise around and above them. On further acquaintance, however, a stranger discovers that the motions, at least, of the Barristers, are more regular than he at first supposed. Two long streams are continually crossing each other, the whole length of the hall—in deep debate. The regularity of their coming and going, is only interrupted when one is summoned to attend to business; or when some busy brother, hopping from bar to bar, darts across them, followed by his breakless agent, pouring the last words of instruction into his listening ear.

This is what is called the Outer House. Here cases are prepared for decision, and first judgments pronounced, which, if not satisfactory to the parties, may be carried before the Judges, who sit in the Inner House, to be re-considered. These sit in two divisions, of equal power, to decide. The Jury has of late years been introduced into Scotland, as a mode of establishing facts, and frequently Jury trials are held on the same days that the Court of Session sits. The same council is uniformly retained throughout all the stages of a case. Our readers, therefore, may form some slight notion of the distraction of a well-employed Scotch Advocate, when he reflects that he may have in one day some twenty causes on hand, at different stages of advancement—that he must be master of all the intricate details, facts, and legal views of each—and that he must occasionally pass from the Inner House to the Jury Court, and from either to the Outer House, threading his way through all its jostling and gabbling.

Here then was the scene of Jeffrey's power and glory. Ever quick, but never boisterous nor pushing, he would his way like an eel, from one bar to another. If what he had to do was a mere matter of form, it was despatched in as few words as possible; generally wound up, when circumstances admitted, with some biting jest. If a cause were to be formally argued, his bundle of papers was unloosed, his glass applied to his eye, and his discourse began, without a moment's pause. He plunged at once into the MARE MAGNUM of the question, confident that his train of argument would arrange itself in a lucid order almost without any exertion on his part. When once he had made himself master of a case and its bearings, he was always ready to debate it, even at a moment's warning, however heterogeneous the subject to which he had been tasking his faculties the moment before. This might be owing to a habit which he had, in previous conversations with the party of his agent, to ply them with all the arguments that could be brought against them. Often have we known an honest countryman, perplexed by his objections, remonstrate with his attorney for having encouraged him to proceed with a hopeless case, or for having employed a plender of so desponding a temperament; and immediately thereafter have we seen his honest face grow momentarily broader and broader, brighter and brighter, as Jeffrey, on stepping to the bar, proceeded to demonstrate his right in a train of the closest and most irrefragable reasoning.