

LITERATURE, &c.

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AN IRISHMAN'S LUCK.

It was in a saloon of the Palais Royal, that I first met Arthur Mac Dermott; the night was wild, tempestuous, and disagreeable; the wind howled and so did the dogs; the rain splashed and so did the passengers; I was heart sick of Paris; tired of sights; abominated theatres; discovered that my valet was a rogue, and my mistress a roue; had been jockeyed in the morning, and jilted in the afternoon; and, not knowing how else to kill a dreary hour, as a last resource, dropped into hell itself.

Every body has played Rouge et Noir, if they had but the honesty to acknowledge it. Therefore, every body knows the locale of the table, and the character of the company. On this night there was the usual family party, with some black legs and some soft ones, a few small merchants were peddling cautiously, and the only dashing player was then regularly done up.

'May the curse of Cromwell attend you red and black,' ejaculated a tragi-comic voice, which issued from the mustachioed lips of a strapping Emerald. I looked at the plucked one; he was a fine, stout, dark haired fellow of six feet. 'He will be in the morgue to-morrow,' whispered a lemon-colored dwarf, with a nondescript ribbon at his button hole; 'he has lost five hundred Napoleons.' I examined the sufferer again. The Frenchman was wrong; the careless dare-devil indifference of the man, showed that he possessed that true mercurial temperament indigenous to the landlord's potatoes, which rises while fortune sinks, and sets calamity at defiance.

While I still gazed at the unlucky gambler, he had assumed his hat and gloves, preparatory to leaving the scene of his defeat, when a sudden the sight occurred that even yet luck might change, and the poor fellow retrieve his losses. I took ten Napoleons from my purse, called him apart, and whispered my wishes. A broad, suspicious stare from the stranger was succeeded by an enquiry of 'whether I was serious?' On this point I satisfied him, and the next moment he took out his ticket case, begged me to interchange cards, and returned as merrily to play as if he had already netted a thousand.

'The devil's in the fellow's carelessness,' said I, 'my Naps. are gone forever; and the very first movement at the table demolished the moiety of my subsidy. In silence I cursed my own folly, and determining not to witness the result, left the Palais Royal and hastened to my hotel, reprobating mankind and the elements.

Some hours passed; every lodger in the house was sleeping but myself. Suddenly a thundering knocking threatened destruction to the door, and the drowsy porter, muttering curses, 'deep, not loud,' rose to parley with the untimely visitor. A colloquy in broken English ensued. My name was mentioned—'Monsieur is in bed?'—'Monsieur is not visible.'

'Bedershin, my jewel!' roared a voice whose tones I began to recollect—'visible or not visible, I'll see him. I will, by every thing that's fortunate; and in the briefest space imaginable, the black-whiskered adventurer of the Palais Royal bore down all opposition, and was standing at my bed-side.

'We have been lucky, my darling boy,' exclaimed the excited Milesian, as he flung a handkerchief filled with notes and coin upon the coverlet. 'The old girl of the wheel proved herself a gentlewoman, stuck to me like a bird-lime, till, by Saint Patrick, I cleaned out the company and broke the bank—and now for a division.'

'A division—I have no claim beyond a return of the sum I lent you,' said I.

'No claim! arrah noboclish sure, we were regular co-partners in trade,' replied my loving countryman. I denied altogether the existence of the firm, and, after a stout demur on his part, received my ten Napoleons, with a squeeze of the hand that left mine aching for an hour afterwards. Taking up his hat, Mr. Mac Dermott rolled his treasure in the handkerchief, secured it with a knot, and promising that he would see me early next day, was in the act of taking leave, when the porter knocked and was admitted. He came to say that he observed two men, of very suspicious appearance, loitering before the hotel, and had no doubt but they had dogged the stranger thither, with evil designs against his purse or person.

The windows of my sitting room commanded a view of the street, and, leaving the candle in my chamber, to prevent our being discovered by those without, we peeped cautiously abroad. The light was variable as the clouds careered across the moon; presently she shone brilliantly for a moment, and in the passing gleam we saw distinctly two figures, such as the servant described, lurking in the opposite port coche. The truth was evident. The successful gambler had been pursued from that sink of villainy, the Palais Royal, and the

ruffians outside were waiting his leaving the hotel to rob and murder him. I shuddered when I thought how narrowly the unconscious victim had escaped assassination.

'Now, what the plague can these fellows want of me?' inquired my countryman, with provoking indifference.

The porter grinned, shrugged up his shoulders, and replied with a polite bow, 'nothing more than to qualify Monsieur for the morgue in the morning.'

'Phew,' said the Milesian with a peculiar whistle, 'and is it that they'r after? Well, I have the luck of thousands to-night. I saw a very decent looking pair of marking-irons on your table. I'll borrow them if you please. Just when I go out, do you lift the window, and if, in the course of your travels, you ever saw a couple of private gentlemen more beautifully taken in, never trust me with the tools again.'

'Now would it not save you some trouble, and me a charge or two of powder, if you would not interfere with the executioner, and remain contented for a few hours where you are? There is an excellent sofa, wood enough in the grate, candles, wine, and you may make a pillow of your property, and sleep upon Napoleons and bank notes.'

'Egad, you are right; but—'

'You are dying for a row,' said I.

'Why, faith, I would give a few pieces to accommodate the scoundrels with the wrong metal, and while they expect gold, make lead answer.'

'Well, I have no doubt but finishing a brace of cut-throats would be a pleasant wind up to a night of play; but still I recommend the sofa to you, and them to the hangman.'

'You are right,' said Mac Dermott, 'but it is unfair to let the honest men without, waste time in useless expectation.' He opened the window. 'Gentlemen of the pave, the top of the morning to ye, as we say in Tipperary. Toodle off, if ye please. I'm going to practice at the post beside ye, and as the light's but indifferent, why, monamondiaoul! I might, by mistake, shoot into the gate-way.'

The address of Mac Dermott was understood, and indeed it would be surprising had it not been, as he delivered it in three languages, English, Irish, and French. A shuffling of feet, a muttered sacre! a momentary glimpse of two persons stealing round the corner, showed that the hint was attended to.

In a little time my unexpected guest had arranged the sofa to his perfect satisfaction, heaped on a blazing wood fire, fortified his stomach with by far the largest portion of a bottle of Lafitte, and, long before I could compose myself to sleep in the inner chamber, a heavy breathing in the outer one told that he was 'fast as a watchman.'

THE SACRED HISTORY OF THE WORLD BY S. TURNER.

ORIGIN OF THE EARTH.

OUR globe consists of its earthly structure—of the ethereal fluids which move upon it and above it—of the watery masses and effusions—of the vegetable kingdom—and of the animated races. It is subjected to the potent and varied agencies of the sun and moon. It rolls, with undisputed and unsupported freedom, through a boundless space; and it is connected by immediate relations with the planets of our system, more remotely with the splendid stars, whose nature and numbers we have not yet ascertained; and occasionally, at intervals, some of which are recurrent, with the rapidly-moving comets. These rush suddenly and unexpectedly, for the most part, into our visible heavens, by laws and for purposes yet unknown; rather advertising us of their appearance, than exercising any perceptible effect or imparting any knowledge of their composition or the causes of their journey, or of the places from which they come, and to which they so mysteriously depart. In this grand system of existence, man is the most intelligent being that is visible to our material sense; and we have as yet no decisive evidence that any thing, below the Creator, will be ultimately his superior. The sacred history of the world is built on the grand truth expressed in the first verse of the Pentateuch:

'In the beginning, God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.'

This is the foundation of all religion, whether popular or philosophical. The intellectual world possesses an invaluable treasure in this simple, but emphatic, information. It deserves the epithet invaluable, because it is a fact which could be certainly known to us only from revelation, as no human eye could have witnessed the event; and because the greatest minds of antiquity were in doubt and darkness, and in opposition to each other, on this subject, as we should still be, if the book of Genesis had not descended to us. Instead of deriving the world from God, it was more common among the classical nations to derive their gods from the world. Hesiod, as well as Epicurus, makes his divinities to be an order of beings springing out of the material universe. Several Pagan nations, even in our own times, thus account for their existence. Few have thought of the Deity to be the Creator of the earth or of the heavens; and the mind had become so confused on this point, that it was more generally supposed, that either these were eternally what they are, or that they were united into what we see them to be, by a fortuitous concurrence of self-moving atoms. Such ideas were highly patronized in ancient times; and until the prevalence of Christianity diffused the knowledge and authenticity of the Mo-

saic record as to the origin of things, nothing was positively known or rationally believed about it. The more we investigate the conflicting and chimerical opinions of mankind on this great topic, the more we shall appreciate the first chapter of Genesis. On no subject of its thought has the human mind been more fantastic, than in its suppositions on the origin of the gods whom it chose to worship, and of the material world in which it was residing. Revelation has banished these, by giving to us the desirable certainty.

The theory, that the component atoms or particles of things could have moved themselves into the beautiful forms and scientific arrangements and motions of visible nature, was felt to be incredible by some of the finest minds of antiquity, and finds no patronage now from the true philosopher. Design, contriving thought, the adaptation of things to each other, and the skilful production of important ends by the application and co-operation of the fittest means, are so manifest in the structure of the earth, in the formations of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and in all the astronomical phenomena, that no judicious inquirer will attempt to support the Lucietan reveries. The more favoured opinion of some, who desire to remove the Creator from the material universe, is the arbitrary assumption, that the system and course of things which we admire, has had no origin at all, but has been eternally what we see it to be. This is no new conception of the human mind, but it is that to which those who are adverse to religion, and who discredit revelation, seem to be now most inclined to adopt. For this reason it may be useful to suggest an observation, which seems to prove it to be an impossible hypothesis.

If the material world had been one uniform homogeneous mass, its external existence would have been always a possibility. It would then not have contained any evidence in itself to contradict the supposition. But the actual fact is, that all visible nature is a multifarious association of very compounded substances. Nothing is simple—nothing is uncompounded. Every thing we see, feel, or handle, is a composition, a mixture or union of more particles or of more elements than one. Not merely the grosser earthly bodies are so, but even the water, the air, and the light, are in this compound state. Now, it is impossible that any compound can have been eternally a compound. Composition and eternity are as incompatible, as to be and not to be. The particles of which compounds consist, must have been in some other state before they were compounded together. The single condition of the elements must have preceded their union in the composition; and thus it is physically impossible that a compound can have been eternal. The school boy perceives at once that his plum-cake cannot have been eternal. The plums, the flour, the butter, the eggs, and the sugar, of which it is composed, must have been in some other places and state, before they were brought together to make the substance which gratifies him. So the mighty world we live on, the rocks, the mountains, the minerals—so every substance around us, animate, and inanimate—cannot have been eternal, because every one is a combination of numerous particles, usually very heterogeneous, and the primary elements of each must have been in their elementary state, and in some other position, before they moved and joined into their compound one.

The process of creation, in the primitive construction of our earthly fabric, has not been detailed by the Hebrew legislator. He mentions no more of its massive composition than this short sentence:—

'The earth was without form, and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters.'

'The earth was without form.' It had therefore to be put into form. Its material substance had been created, but had not been arranged in any specific formation. It was also 'void;' it was therefore empty; vacant of all that now adorns its surface, or that was afterwards made within it. It had to receive and to be replenished, both internally and externally, with all those additional and organized things and beings, or more specific metals and minerals, which were intended to be within it and upon it. As 'darkness was upon the face of the deep,' there was in its primeval state a deeper abyss—a vast obscure concavity; and as 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,' its surface must have been covered with the aqueous fluid. Thus the first state of our earth which is noticed to us after the general creation, is that of a dark mass, unformed and void, with an abyss within, and whose surface was covered with moving waters, but on which the Divine Spirit was operating. The effects of this operation are not stated, but we may presume them to have been to produce those formative arrangements which constitute its present structure—its great masses of rocks and strata—its geological system and construction.

At this point of time, when its specific composition was taking place, the Divine command was issued for the appearance of the luminous fluid. The introduction of this grand agent of the creative process is mentioned with that sublimity of diction which arises from the emphatic conciseness of imperative dignity:—

'And Elohim said, 'LIGHT' BE,' and light was'

It came instantaneously, pouring on, and pervading the terrestrial mass; and the operations of this beautiful element, whose penetrating, universal, and marvellous agencies are yet so little understood, fulfilled its author's wishes:

'Elohim saw the light, that it was good.'

The next act of the Deity was to make a boundary, or division, between the effect of the visible presence or action of life, and that darkness which arises from its latest state or disappearance: calling the duration of our luminous sense of it 'day,' and the time of its absence 'night.' Their succession was made to constitute that portion of time which we designate by a natural day. 'The evening and the morning were the first day.' Our earthly day is that space of time in which our globe