

MEMOIRS OF DEQUINCEY.

The Grandiloquent Language in Which He Asked for a Loan.

There are some slight but interesting notes on DeQuincey in a volume of memoirs by James Bertram, who was once an apprentice of the proprietor of the famous "Tait's Edinburgh Magazine." It was in this periodical that many of DeQuincey's most notable papers were published, and the boy apprentice was often sent with checks, proofs and messages to the author. DeQuincey's MSS. were delivered in odd ways. "Sometimes," says Mr. Bertram, "a young woman would enter the shop in the morning, whilst I was busy sweeping or dusting, and throwing down a roll of paper with an exclamation 'There!' would rush off as abruptly as she had entered. On examining the roll I would find it addressed in the neatest handwriting to 'William Tait, Esquire.' On more than one occasion a night policeman arrived early in the afternoon with a similar packet, for which he demanded and received a shilling; a coin destined to be divided into three parts, the packet having passed through as many pair of hands. 'Who gave you this?' I once heard Mr. Tait ask. 'It was my neighbor, sir, at the North Bridge.' 'And who gave it to him?' 'It was his neighbor, sir.' 'And where did he get it?' 'Oh he got it from the little man that makes the fine speeches and lives down yonder, sir,' was the reply."

One of these fine speeches was made to a fellow-apprentice of Bertram's, a youth who, coming one morning to the shop, found himself addressed by the occupant of a hackney carriage which was standing at the door: "I am Mr. De Quincey, and I presume that you are one of the young gentlemen who assist Mr. Tait in conducting his business. I am at the moment much embarrassed for want of a sum of money; the difficulty will not, however, I assure you, be permanent, but it is in the mean time most urgent, and I fancied that even at this early hour I should be able to obtain the required amount by coming here." George thought he might be wanting a five pound note at least, so he said to him anxiously, "How much do you require, Mr. De Quincey?" "You see, young sir, in arriving at my journey's end I shall require to pay the coachman his fare, including a small gratuity to himself, not less than three shillings in all, and having but half-a-crown in my pocket, I am anxious to be accommodated with the loan of sixpence." Not less astonished than relieved, George handed the coin to him at once, and after thanking his benefactor profusely for his great politeness, Mr. DeQuincey drove off.

THE EARLY RISING HABIT.

It may be all right, but let Your Neighbors Rest in Peace.

The praises of early rising have been sung from time immemorial; and mankind, in that indolent unquestioning spirit which is so ready and willing to accept almost any theory of dictum without troubling itself to ascertain if the encomiums bestowed upon it are merited, has taken it for granted that it is a cardinal virtue to leave one's bed at daybreak.

But that can hardly be a virtue which develops in the people who practice it a disposition to render themselves obnoxious to their fellow mortals.

Now, it has been observed that the first impulse of a man, woman or child who is addicted to the early rising habit upon quitting his couch is to awaken and keep awake as many other people as possible. Sometimes this abnormal predilection seeks the adventitious aid of a lawn mower, sometimes it utilizes the chopping block or the wood saw and sometimes again it brings to bear hammer and nails, and in extreme and violent cases it bangs upon the piano. Evidently the object sought is to make of one self an alarm clock to arouse the neighborhood, and it matters little, apparently, what kind of a noise is made as long as it is a noise of some sort.

This tendency to noise on the part of the early riser is not confined to the human species. It is found also among the early risers of the brute creation. The cock, the earliest of risers, is a notable offender with his shrill clatter; he sometimes carries the virtue of early rising to such excess that he apparently does not turn in at all, but keeps himself up, and by consequence his racket, all night long. The cat assails the dawn with his exasperated bleat; the cow is up bright and early with her mournful lowing; the horse neighs and the tuncful mule awakens the echoes with his stentorian heehaw.

In a word, be it among man or the lower animals, it is always the same. The early riser is a pestilential nuisance, and instead of being praised for his virtues, which he has not, he deserves the disapprobation and execration of all with consciences sufficiently tranquil to be able to sleep in the morning hours but for the malicious interference of the early risers.

The only humane person is he who sleeps until the early sun is high in the heavens, and he gets his reward as he goes along, for he not only permits others to enjoy sleep when sleep is most enjoyable, but he at the same time enjoys it himself.

Poetical in Every Line.

The poet Bryant, while editor of the New York Evening Post, insisted that young poets should be sympathetically noticed in the book column of the paper. Once a sub-editor handed him a thin volume of poems, saying that they were worthless.

Mr. Bryant looked through the book and said:

"You might say that it is prettily bound and clearly printed."

The editor of whom this story is told also had a soft side for young men who would write poetry.

"Give me your candid judgment on these lines," says the young man of literary aspirations. "Do they convey the idea of poetry at all?"

"Yes, sir," replied the editor, looking them over: "they do. There is something in every line that conveys the idea. Every line," continued the kind-hearted man, letting him down as gently as he could, "begins with a capital letter."

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THE FARMER'S WIFE.

A Fathetic Little Sketch of Her, by Octave Thanet.

I can see her, a faded, haggard, sorrow woman, tired from the weary rising in the dark winter mornings, to the crawling from the unfinished pile of mending to the room upstairs, at night. Her husband is kind to her; but he has his own work; and her back aches, she is dizzy and faint and life grows a heavier load on her shoulders every day. She does not consider that her health is part of the home's capital; and she is sure that they cannot afford to hire help, behindhand as they are; they can't afford a doctor (who would ride ten miles and charge five dollars); but she remembers that the last time she was at church she heard one of the society speak of a patent medicine that helped her last spring and she will send for the medicine. Or else she writes to the household paper (price fifty cents a year) which she takes, asking the editor's advice. What pathetic and suggestive things are the correspondence columns in these humble journals! How the ineradicable womanly longing to be attractive comes out in queer prescriptions to prevent the hair falling out, to remove freckles, or to make over old gowns with small sleeves into the flamboyant style of the day; how the woman's heart heeps through its thin disguise in those pitiful letters describing lonely lives and love that the strong years conquer, and the daily jar and fret of disillusioned toil, and all the rest of the dismal story. I seem to see the broken down woman who was a joyous and ambitious girl, tugging ever more wearily at her Sisyphean stone of duties, growing more irritable, more complaining as strength and heart fail, until the day shall come when the tired mother will not creep downstairs. Then the neighbors will watch and nurse by turns, and the doctor, who might have helped years ago, will be called in to witness properly the end that he cannot avert.

She Took all Due Precautions.

The many breach of promise cases of the present day will undoubtedly lend an additional interest to this story of bygone times:

Ludwig I., Duke of Bavaria, was completely captivated by the irresistible charms of the lovely Countess Ludmilla von Pogen (the daughter of a Bohemian king), whose husband had been slain in war not long after their marriage. The duke paid her constant visits at her castle of Frankenstein, and bequeathed her heart with great ardor, but for some time in vain.

One day, however, she summoned him to her presence, and announced that she was quite ready to give a decisive answer to his suit. Then, after dining together, the countess led the duke in a large room, where she directed his attention to a piece of tapestry on which were embroidered three knights in full armour, and thus addressed him:—

"My lord, you assure me of your love and wish me to reciprocate it; if you will promise on your sacred word of honour, in the presence of these three knights, that you will take me to be your wife, I will not reject your suit."

The noble lover did not hesitate to make the required promise.

No sooner had he done so than the arras parted asunder, and there appeared, fully equipped, three of the most famous Bohemian knights, and the Countess said to them:—"You are my witnesses!"

"We have heard the declaration of the Prince," was the united response.

Startled at this unexpected development, the Duke soon quitted the castle, and did not return until Ludmilla's year of mourning had expired, when he came to conduct her to the hymeneal altar.

Hannibal's War-Chest Found.

At Montevideo, in France, Hannibal's war chest turns up full of Tarantine coins still worth par after two thousand years of burial, the metal of which they are composed remaining uncorroded and the Punic devices stamped upon them retaining their primal legibility. They were probably deposited in the soil then, in some unrecorded season of panic, fiscal or military, and in the pressure and confusion of after events forgotten. It they could have drawn interest during this interval the increment would rebuild Carthage and restore the mosaic pavements and sculptured friezes of the temples of Baal and Melcarth, and set adrift again the flotillas of the Byrsa and unroll the banners of Dido above the citadel. But they reappear without usufruct, dim with burial and disuse, and will find their way into museums and repositories of such were, not helping any modern problem of finance or circulation, but pointing over again the moral that

The best outlasts the throne.

The coin, Tiberius.

A Recipe for Catching Bears.

One of the legends of Seaport, Me., has for its hero a man named Harrison who was much bothered by bears that invaded his planted fields. Meeting a neighbor, one day, he applied to him for advice as to what could be done to keep them out. The neighbor replied:—"Bears are fond of molasses. You just make a trough and fill it with molasses and rum and put it where they come into your field and they will drink it for the sake of the molasses and the rum will make them drunk, so you can go in the morning and knock them on the head." Mr. Harrison followed this advice and went to the field the next morning. There he found not a bear, but his neighbor drunk, as he had predicted the bear would be.

A Young Financier.

Mr. De Broker—"Well, my son, how did you and the boys come out on your peanut speculation?" Small Son—"When we got through, I owed the other boy fifty cents." Hum! "Oh, it's all right now. We reorganized." "Eh?" "Yes, I capitalized at one dollar, gave the other boys half the stock for their debt and then sold them the other half. So now they owe me fifty cents."

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RETURNED TO "LOVING TOM."

A Warning to Young Men Who are Wont to Write to Young Ladies.

"Do you know," said Mr. Man to his friend the other evening, "that the boys at the club have a merry and most distressing 'find' on me. I suppose it's one of the inevitable consequences of renouncing bachelorhood that a man lays himself open to attack from the most unsuspected quarters."

"Now, loyal citizen as I am, I have received a bitter blow from the government. It stabbed me, using the Dead Letter office as a dagger. It was like this: Just a month ago at that club I wrote a letter to the girl I am going to marry. I had told only one or two of my intimate friends of the engagement, and we were going to announce it until fall. Well, as I was saying, I wrote to Alice Jevons that day at the club, and told her how fond I was of her. I loved her very hard that day, and I used some strong expressions: I suppose my heart ran away with my pen, so to speak."

"To make a short story a little longer, I sat down by the window to direct the envelope. I got to gazing out on the fleecy clouds floating across the blue depths of the sky, and thinking about her, as a man does, you know. Well, I suppose I directed the letter wrong. It never reached her. Instead of that, a month later, came a nasty-looking official envelope addressed to 'Loving Tom,' in care of the club. The postoffice people hadn't been able to find the girl, so they tried to send the driver back to the one who wrote it, and their only clue was the signature and the engraved letter head."

"Well, nobody at the club could fancy who 'Loving Tom' was, so the House Committee opened the envelope. The first thing they saw was 'Dearest Alice,' and the first sentence was absolute inanity. Then they recognized my writing and forbore to read further."

Mr. Man stopped to wipe from his brow the perspiration which sprang forth at the thought of his mortification. "Well, there's just one thing about it," he added thoughtfully, "I'll never again sign myself anything but my full name, even if I live to be a regular Methuselah and write to Mrs. Methuselah every day."

A UNIQUE BOOK CRITICISM.

Mark Twain on Professor Dowden's Book About the Shelleys.

Something unique in the history of book criticism is Mark Twain's opening article "In Defence of Harriet Shelley" in the July "North American." It must be said that the quaint and homely language suits the subject which has aroused more or less indignation among Professor Dowden's readers; and there is an agreeable flavor in New World common-sense applied to some of the sickly stuff in Dowden's book. The worshippers of Matthew Arnold would be struck with horror probably at the following characterization of the biography—and yet there is unimpeachable truth in it:

This Shelley biography is a literary cake-walk. The ordinary forms of speech are absent from it. All the pages, all the paragraphs, walk by sedately, elegantly, not to say mincingly, in their Sunday best, shiny and sleek, perfumed, and with bouffantiers in their buttonholes; it is rare to find even a chance sentence that has forgotten to dress. If the book wishes to tell us that Mary Godwin, child of sixteen, had known afflictions, the fact saunters forth in this nobby outfit: "Mary was herself not unlearned in the lore of pain"—meaning by that, that she had not always travelled on asphalt; or, as some authorities would frame it, that she had "been there herself," a form which, while preferable to the book's form, is still not to be recommended. If the book wishes to tell us that Harriet Shelley hired a wet-nurse, that commonplace fact gets turned into a dancing-master, who does his professional bow before us in pumps and knee-breeches, with his fiddle under one arm and his crush hat under the other, thus: "The beauty of Harriet's motherly relation to her babe was marred in Shelley's eyes by the introduction into his house of a hiring nurse to whom was delegated the mother's tenderest office."

A Valuable Whale.

The Sydney, New South Wales, Bulletin is responsible for the following ambergris story: Two years ago one of Macgregor's (Tasmania) whaling captains, having cut the blubber from a whale, was about to cast the rest of it adrift, when there came alongside two Hobart fishermen—"Portuguese Joe" and his mate, an African negro. The Portuguese begged to be given the carcass, so that they might tow it ashore and make what they could out of it. "All right," said the skipper, with the generosity of a satisfied exploiter who knew the blubber business to its omega. Joe, having got the leviathan's framework on the beach, began to search for ambergris, which drug was quoted at that time in the current price lists at somewhere about \$65 per ounce. He found 174 pounds. Many people interviewed him, and wanted to give him \$25,000 to \$45,000 for the lot; but the man understood the luck of his find.

Meanwhile the ambergris was lodged in a bank, which was presently served with an injunction on behalf of the Macgregor firm to restrain the sale of the precious prize pending a discussion on the ownership. But these legal fireworks fizzled out, and the ambergris is still being realized in London, the two fishermen having already received several thousand pounds apiece.

Reading to the Blind Gladstone.

This is the way in which Mr. Gladstone passes the greater part of his day. He will not be allowed to read or use his eyes for another month, and he has to sit all day with his eyes closed and with dark spectacles. Meanwhile he is read to by relays of friends who take each other's places and give Mr. Gladstone some remarkable varied samples of reading. One day, for instance, a lady friend read to the ex-Premier a novel, and she was followed by Mr. George Russell, the Under secretary for the Home Office. Mr. Russell asked Mr. Gladstone what he preferred. The ex-Premier replied, "Read me the second 'Enid.'"

Mr. Russell read for lines, the old man stopping him now and then for comment, or to ask the reader to pause while he himself took up the recitation with some remembered lines. It is a pathetic reminiscence, for the second 'Enid' has always been a great favorite with Mr. Gladstone, and he used it copiously in the far away historic encounters with Mr. Disraeli.

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