

LANDOR, THE ODD POET.

PASTOR FELIX TELLS MORE ABOUT THIS STRANGE WRITER.

Second Paper on the Subject—Pedigree of the Poet—His Early Home—School Life at Rugby—He Aids Spain Against Napoleon—Not a Man of Meanness.

The subject of so much praise, and so much blame,—of cordial approbation rising into veneration, on the one side, and of bitter repudiation, on the other,—was the son of a physician at Warwick, born at Ipsley Court, 30th January, 1775. He derived his second name from the family to whom his mother belonged; who was an heiress, descended from a noble, historic race, and having in her own right two Warwickshire estates—Ipsley Court and Tachbrook, as well as a reversionary interest in a Buckinghamshire home, called Hughenden Manor. To this,—valued at £80,000, her eldest son Walter was heir. Ipsley Court, the favorite family abode, was a pleasure long enjoyed in the summer seasons by his mother, and afterwards by his sister. It stood near the chapel and was at that time the finest house in the town, having a particularly beautiful front, richly ornamented. But the charm of the place was a spacious garden, shadowy with large horse chestnuts and lofty elms, the haunts of numerous blackbirds, thrushes and wood-pigeons. Here his youth was passed, and to this house he refers more than once in his writings; and to the old-fashioned, ample staircase, up which a horse had once been led. Also, in his poem, "Written in Wales" he says:

Ipsley I when hurried by malignant fate
I passed thy court, and heard thy closing gate,
I sighed, but sighing to myself I said,
Now for the quiet cot and mountain shade.
Oh! what resistless madness made me roam
From cheerful friends and hospitable home!
Whether in Arden's vale, or Tachbrook's grove
My lyre resounded liberty and love.

His first school days were passed at Rugby; where he was renowned for athletics and Latin verses, and for that assertive pugnacity, that loud opinionativeness, never in all his life successfully curbed. He outstepped their rules to such a degree that they were not reluctant to hand him over to Oxford. He entered Trinity college in 1803; but from the like causes his stay there was brief. For firing off a gun in the quadrangle he was rusticated, and refused to return. He asserted it was never his intention to take a degree at Oxford.

A characteristic and droll anecdote is related of his Rugby days; that having been surprised by a farmer, while fishing in his ponds, and threatened with confiscation of his casting net, he threw it over the fellow's head, and held it there till he begged to be let off, without the fulfillment of any of his threats against Landor. A characteristic of his life at school, as elsewhere, was leadership without association. There was a certain aloofness in his spirit, that held him back except from a chosen few. We have had acquaintance with a bachelor who could never endure a feminine companion. It was at least an affection of Landor that upon his walks, except in rare instances, he found a masculine companion his aversion. In the "Imaginary Conversation" between Southey and himself, he makes the Lake poet remark: "I never had the same dislike to company in my walks and rambles as you profess to have, but of which I perceived no sign whatever when I visited you, first at Lantony abbey, and afterwards on the lake Coms. Well do I remember four long conversations in the silent and solitary church of Saint Abondio (surely the coolest spot in Italy), and how often I turned back my head towards the open door, hearing least some pious passer-by, or some more distant one in the wood above, pursuing the pathway which leads toward the tower of Luitprand, should hear the roof echo with your laughter, at the stories you had collected about the brotherhood and sisterhood of the place."

Boythorn, in Dickens's "Bleak House" has characteristics noticeably drawn from Landor, and especially his expression of hearty contempt, his violent irascibility, and his peals of uproarious laughter. Contrast this passage, from Chapter XVIII of "Bleak House" with one or two passages selected from his "Conversations": "Are the Dedlocks down here, Lawrence?" said my guardian as we drove along, and Mr. Boythorn trotted on the green turf by the roadside. "Sir Arrogant Numskull is here," replied Mr. Boythorn. "Ha, ha, ha. Sir Arrogant is here, and I am glad to say, has been laid by the heels here. My Lady, in naming whom he always made a courtly gesture as if to exclude her from any part in the quarrel, is expected, I believe, daily. I am not in the least surprised that she postpones her appearance as long as possible. Whatever can have induced that transcendent woman to marry that effigy and figure-head of a baronet, is one of the most impenetrable mysteries that ever baffled human inquiry. Ha, ha, ha, ha." When I go into our little church on a Sunday, a considerable congregation expects to see me drop, scorched and withered, on the pavement under the Dedlock displeasure. Ha, ha, ha, ha! I have no doubt he is surprised that I don't. For he is, by Heaven! the most self-satisfied, and the shallowest, and the most coxcombical ass."

Then take these sentences, attributed by Landor to himself and Porson: "We have about a million of critics in Great Britain; not a soul of which critics entertains the least doubt of his own infallibility. You, with all your learning, and all your canons of criticism, will never make them waver. . . . There is a spice of the scoundrel in most of our literary men; an itch to flitch and detract in the midst of fair-speaking and festivity. This is the reason why I have never much as-

sociated with them. There is also another. We have nothing in common but the alphabet. . . . They dandle some little poet, and never will let you take him off their knees; him they feed to bursting with curds and whey. Another they warn off the premises, and will give him neither a crust nor a crumb, until they hear that he has succeeded to a large estate in popularity with plenty of dependents; then they sue and supplicate to be admitted among the number."

This, with the addition of a "ha, ha, ha, ha!" now and again, would suit Boythorn excellently; and it is not altogether devoid of truth. After a time, devoted to the study of Italian in London, he retired to Swansea, in South Wales, and afterwards to Tenby, from which places he made occasional excursions to his Warwick home. He was not following his father's plan,—which was a military career, or failing that, the legal profession. The sum of £400 per annum, was guaranteed on the condition of his compliance. But the son had a definite ideal; his pursuit should be literature; law he liked not, and arms suited not his political prejudice; so the father compromised on an annual £150, with permission to follow his choice. Wales became to him poetic ground; he feasted on Nature, and the poets, fastening "with particular enthusiasm upon Milton." Among his friends in the neighborhood of Tenby, was a certain Lord Alymer, from whom came the impulse resulting in his poem of "Gebir." The "Progress of Romance" lent by his lordship to the poet, contained the story which he so nobly developed. Alymer had a daughter, Rose, of such beauty and purity as to fascinate Landor,—that "Rose Alymer, whose name he has made through death imperishable, by linking it with a few lines of perfect music:

Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
Ah, what the form divine;
What every virtue, every grace;
Rose Alymer, all were thine.
Rose Alymer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A light of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Upon the death of his father in 1805, Landor entered into his estate,—a property which he used as prodigally as he did the rich treasures of his mind. In 1808 began his life-long friendship with Southey; which, perhaps, made him the more obnoxious to Lord Byron, as they were known to have many literary and political sympathies in common. Then came that incident which Swinburne exalts: "In 1808, under an impulse not less heroic than that which was afterwards to lead Byron to a glorious death in redemption of Greece and his own good fame, Landor, then aged 33, left England for Spain as a volunteer to serve in the national army against Napoleon at the head of a regiment raised and supported at his own expense. After some three months campaigning came the affair of Cintra and its disasters; his troop, 'in the words of his biographer, 'dispersed or melted away, and he came back to England in as great a hurry as he had left it' but bringing with him the honorable recollection of a brave design unselfishly attempted, and the material in his memory for the sublimest poem published in our language between the last masterpiece of Milton and the first masterpiece of Shelley—one equally worthy to stand unchallenged beside either for poetic perfection as well as moral majesty—the lofty tragedy of "Count Julian," which appeared in 1812, without the name of the author."

Whatever be alleged against Landor, he can hardly be accused of meanness. He was no stealthy assassin with the stiletto; but a generous foe, face to face, with his broad sword. Sharp and boisterous as he was with speech and pen, he was rarely prompted to an unkind or under-hand action. When Napoleon whom he detested, was, after his defeat, escaping in disguise, Landor recognized him entering Tours. He was hated as a tyrant by the people of that city, and the poet might easily have betrayed him; but, with a price on his head, the fallen autocrat rode undisturbed away. It is recorded that after he was out of their reach, the poet called on the prefect and observed that he was the "Master of a secret too valuable to communicate"; and that the prefect, laying his hand on Landor's responded that "it could not be sater anywhere."

When a Woman Should Say No.

She should refuse him when she knows his habits to be intemperate, for there can be no unhappier fate than marriage with a drunkard. She should refuse him when there is any hereditary disease in the family, such as consumption or insanity, which would in all probability shorten itself and cause infinite misery in after years. She should refuse him when she sees he is in the habit of associating with bad companions, who may lead him into a gambling, drinking and card-playing life. She should refuse him when she knows him to be that despicable thing—a male flirt; she should reflect that as he has treated other girls so he may treat herself, and no woman cares to lay herself open to such treatment. She should refuse him when she feels she has no love to give him, and not marry, as many girls do, for a home; no marriage can be truly happy without love to sweeten the bonds. She should refuse him when he is proposing to her for her money or from pique. A girl can generally distinguish real love from feigned, and even if she cares for him should not accept him until convinced his motives are disinterested. She should not refuse him when she really cares for him and knows him to be a steady, faithful man who will make her happy and not cause her heartbreaks, which, perhaps, one of her more brilliant lovers might have done.

English Paper.

Silk stockings were first worn by Henry II. of France, 1547. Queen Elizabeth was also presented with a pair in 1560, after which she never wore cloth ones. Henry VIII. was also known to give preference to ordinary cloth hose, except when there were sent him a chance pair from Spain, which early abounded in silk. Much notice was taken of a pair of silk stockings sent to Edward VI. by his merchant, Sir Thomas Gresham. The first pair of knitted worsted stockings were made in Mantua, and copied by a London apprentice named William Rider, which he presented to the Earl of Pembroke in 1564.

About 1,100 men are employed by the Bank of England, and their salaries amount to about £300,000 a year.

HIS PRESENCE OF MIND.

The Men Who Know How to Prevent More Serious Damage to the Premises.

They were young married folk and were making us a Sunday afternoon call. We were young married folk, too, and as we four were all but strangers in the city, we did considerable visiting among ourselves, says a writer in the St. Louis Republic. We had pretty well exhausted all general topics, this afternoon, and were stretching stray suggestions into conversation. We were boarding, so we had no domestic affairs of our own, and we had exchanged opinions of our respective landladies so often that neither's grievances were of interest to the other. A long silence was broken by the young husband—the other one. He began with a smile, which developed into a grin, and finally became a chuckle. He had evidently thought of something, and we all brightened with expectation.

"Well, what is it?" I asked, and then he told his story. His wife tried at the beginning, to stop him, but he would not have it.

"Down at our place we have two rooms," he said. "In one of them is a stationary wash stand. About a week ago my wife imagined that she smelled sewer gas, and upon investigation concluded that it came up the pipe leading from the washstand. We tried all sorts of ways of remedying the evil but nothing succeeded until I procured a lot of small corks, and fitted them tightly into the outlets of the basin. You know, there are a number of small holes near the top of the basin to aid the main duct, if necessary, in carrying out the water. Of course these had to be filled, I had quite a time getting the right size corks, but I persevered, and was successful. This was in the morning, and when I had completed the task I went down town."

"What followed I know only from hearsay. That has it that there were gathered around the table at noon five women; there were no men in the house. During the meal it was noticed that a drop of water fell on the table. This called attention to the ceiling, which was darkened by moisture. There was an immediate rush for the next floor above. I have never been able to learn just what happened when those women found the water running full force, and the chairs and the tables all but floating. However, from circumstantial evidence, I judge that they went directly for those corks. I had put a cork in the bottom, also, as we fancied that the old rubber stopper was loose. Well, those were so swollen with the water that it was impossible to pull them out or drive them through. A great deal of feminine fuss and hysterical, unavailing work may be imagined here, which finally resolved itself into a message to the next house for help—masculine help preferred. The son of the house responded."

"Yes," I suggested, as he paused. "what did he do?"

The young married man looked at his wife with a quizzical smile. She glanced nervously at him, grew red, hesitated, and then, as our attention was entirely directed to her, she saw that some reply was expected.

"Well," she said, "the first thing he did was to turn off the water."

Cutting an Elephant's Nails.

Three times a year, at least, an elephant must have his hoofs trimmed into good shape; once in the spring, once when travelling with the circus in the summer, and once more when the huge beast has returned to winter quarters. The sole of the elephant's foot becomes gradually covered during the year with a substance resembling horn, much like his three great toe nails. This, if allowed to grow too dense, is apt to crack and make the beast lame.

Accordingly, one of the keepers stations the elephant in the ring, and bids him balance himself on three legs while he stretches out the other behind him, resting it on a block of wood or a box. With a carpenter's drawing knife the hoof is then attacked and shaved quickly down. Sometimes pieces of the bony substance five or six inches long, and nearly as thick, are cut off without the elephant feeling any pain whatever, or the knife taking too much from the sole.

Frequently pieces of glass, nails, splinters and the like are found embedded in the growth, and these it is very important to have extracted, lest they should work their way upward and fester the foot.

When the first rough going over is completed, the keeper, with a smaller knife, trims each nail into shape (its cleanliness and new color quite improving the animal's appearance), covers any small wounds with tar, and dismisses the patient.

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