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(FROM THE BOSTON ATLAS.)

PEN AND INK SKETCHES OF POPULAR PERSONS AND PLACES.

BY A COSMOPOLITAN.

Surgery and Science.—Abernethy and Faraday.

A few days since a note, of which the following is a copy, was left for me at the Atlas office.

To the Writer of the Pen & Ink Sketches,

DEAR SIR:—Could you not favor many of your readers by notices of celebrated professional men, or distinguished philosphers, with whom you may have fallen in? Such notices would be generally attractive, as well as particularly interesting to certain classes.

Your ob'dt. serv't, B.

The above request must form my excuse if, indeed, one should be needed, for travelling some measure, as the lawyers would say, "out of the record." And yet, I do not see why eminent physicians, surgeons, chemists, or naturalists, should not be noted down amongst the "Popular persons" whom, in these papers, I have undertaken to describe. Many of them have, in their day, occupied a large share of public attion, and contributed not a little to the comforts and conveniences of mankind.—I shall, therefore, without further parleying, proceed to note down a few reminiscences of those whom I have had the good fortune to see.

And these have not been few; for in London I have been a constant frequenter of the lecture rooms of the various learned societies for years. Until within the last two years, I have never failed to attend the meetings of the British Association; and a medical education, in one of the great metropolitan Hospitals, (Bartholomew's,) afforded me abundant opportunities of seeing and meeting with some of the most eminent professional men of their day. In selecting a few for my sketches, I shall endeavor to allude to those whose names are familiar to American ears.

Amongst my earliest recollections of celebrated medical men, are those of the well known and eccentric Mr. Abernethy. I saw him on two occasions only, and what occurred may, perhaps be not altogether uninteresting in the narration.

The first time I saw, him was when I accompanied a lady and her daughter to Mr. Abernethy's house, which was situated in Londou, on Bedford Place, or Row, I forget exactly which. The young lady exhubited certain symptoms, which made her friends dread that curse of the English climate, consumption; and, although the family medical attendant had pledged his reputation that their alarm was groundless, nothing but the opinion of so eminent a man as Abernethy could allay their fears. As the parties were relatives of mine, I gladly embraced the opportunity of accompanying them to the celebrated surgeon's house.

When we arrived there it was about ten o'clock in the morning; in front of his door and along nearly the whole length of the streets, was a line of carriages, waiting for the patients whom they had dropped at the Doctor's. Following the numerous persons who where entering the front door we passed into the hall, and were shown, by a servant out of livery, into a large room, which was nearly filled with persons, who were suffering either from real or imaginary diseases—the latter, I suspect constituting the majority, for every one who felt a pain beneath the shoulder-blade or an uneasy sensation in the side, or whose skin exhibited the slightest possible shade of yellow, took it into their heads that they were afflicted with liver complaints (for the liver was a very fashionable organ, and its functions very aristocratical in their nature, about that time,) and ran off, post-haste, from all parts of the three kingdoms to Mr. Abernethy, who was supposed to exercise a peculiar and exclusive privilege, with regard to the hepatic portion of the animal economy—a supposition at which no one was more amused than the singular practitioner himself.

Every now and then a door opposite to that by which we had entered, was opened by another servant, who called on the patient whose turn came next, to follow him into the presence. As there were some thirty patients before my friend, on the list, we had a long time to wait, during which period sundry diseased acquaintances were made between unfortunates, and divers stories of melancholy interest related. Most of the patients had made up their minds to visit Mr. Abernethy, as a last resource; and it was really astonishing, after what they confessed to have taken in the quack medicine line, that they ever enjoyed the opportunity of now triying one more chance. I noticed one remarkable circumstance—it was this—whenever one of the patients described a particular symptom, there were at least a dozen who had just the same; and not one, who, if they were not similarly afflicted themselves but had a particular friend who was. Then there were various stories of different doctors who had been consulted, and the professional character of some of them was pretty freely discussed. Mr. B—— was no better than a butcher—not a bit; and if so and so had taken another bottle of Mr. G——'s medicine, it would have been all up with him. Besides these half confidential disclosures there were interesting expositions of domestic medical doctrines, and Buchen appeared to have been pretty generally consulted. Many of the patients, however, looked wretched enough—there were young girls, with hectic flushes on marble cheeks, their large dark eyes & black eyebrows contrasting painfully with their pure and polished foreheads. And then, every minute or two, a white handkerchief would be put up to the mouth, and a half smothered hacking cough would sound, as from that sepulchre of hope—a cavernous lung. It was wretched to look at them—hopeful as they were as consumptives usually are—for their doom was sealed. There was, too, one of the most beautiful looking women I ever saw, in the room and who would have been singled out, in consequence of her attractions, from amongst a crowd in any drawing room in London or, indeed, any where else. Few casual gazers would have noticed that any thing ailed her but one who *observed* as well as saw, might notice the peculiar appearance of the eye, the sharpened and somewhat shrunken cartillage of the nose, the thin blueish under lip, which the upper front teeth were continually grinding, as if in suppressed agony. All these appearances told but too plainly that the most fearful complaint to which a women is subject—cancer—was burying its roots deep in her frame, and intertwining its deadly fibres with the springs of life, which soon they would destroy. But why should I dwell on such themes. Let me hurry on to my more immediate subject.

At last my friend's turn came, and following the ladies, or being about to follow them, the footman repulsed me, and refused me admittance, much to my mortification, for I had accompanied the ladies merely for the purpose of seeing the great man. A word or two from the elder lady to the effect that she "wished Mr. Abernethy to see *me*" (leave woman alone for managing these things) set all to rights, and I effected the much desired *entree*.

We were ushered into a large room, the walls of which were covered with books from floor to ceiling. In the centre of the apartment was a table, covered with green baize, on which was a writing-desk. It being winter-time there was a very large fire in the room, and standing before it, with his back to the mantel shelf, (over which hung an engraved potrait of John Hunter,) his hands being tucked under his coat-tails, which were drawn forward, and hung in front, over his fore-arms, stood, perfectly at ease, a gentleman whom, from the portraits I had seen, and the descriptions I had heard, I knew could be none other than Abernethy himself. He looked keenly at us, as we entered the apartment, without moving from his comfortable position which he retained until after the servant had placed chairs for us, and had quitted the room.

During this period, brief as it was, I had time to examine him pretty closely—and his eyes, too, were by no means unemployed—for they glanced from one to the other of us, as if to discover which of us it was who had come to consult him.

He was rather under the middle stature, and somewhat inclined to corpulency; yet so slightly, that the idea of *fat* never entered into the minds of any who looked on him. His face was very peculiar, and somewhat pear-shaped—that is, it was narrower than ordinary at the summit of the forehead, which was high, & ploughed transversely with deep furrows. His eyes were small, deep-set grey and very keen, and twinkling. There was evidently a good deal of sarcastic humor in the lines about his mouth. The nose was long and well shaped. A soiled white cravat enveloped his portly double-chin and neck—and his dress, which seemed to have been huddled on, not put on, consisted of a blue dress-coat, cut in antique style and decorated with bright brass buttons—a lemon-colored waistcoat, and snuff colored "continuations;" and a mean looking pair of old red slippers, which only half concealed some whitey-brown stockings, completed his costume.

"Now, then, which of you wants me?" were his first words, which he uttered without removing from his elegant position before the fire.

The elder lady, by a sign, indicated that her daughter was the patient; and was about detailing the symptoms, when he interrupted her with—

"There, hold your tongue, Madam!" then sitting by the young lady, he felt her pulse, asked her a few questions, gave a peculiar shrug with his shoulders, & then said to her mother—

"And pray, Madam, from how far have you brought your daughter to see me?"

"From B——l, sir," was the reply.—Our family physician——"

"Didn't tell you to send her to Mr. Abernethy, I'll swear!" interrupted Abernethy—"a fool if he did! You've thrown away time and money, Madam, by coming here!"

"What! *is* there real danger, sir?" asked the frightened Mother.

"Fiddle-de-dee, Madam! *There*, Ma'am, (handing her a slip of paper on which was written the name of his publisher) go and buy my book and read page 84. I'll tell you how I came to write the book—there sit down—don't be frightened—we'll get the red edges on your daughter's tongue, and make it less like a lancet in shape and she'll do well enough. A great hulky Yorkshire farmer came here to consult me, and told me such a long story that it made me sick. Finding he only did what other people did—tire my patience—I thought I'd say, once for all, what I had to say on paper; and so I put it in a book and it saves me a good deal of trouble.—People come to me with their long stories, and then they wonder that I am rude to them. They abuse their systems, and then expect me to set them to rights all at once. Good morning, Madam." So bidding us farewell, he handed a prescription, which he had written while talking, put the three guineas, tendered as his fee, into his waistcoat pocket, and rang a small bell, which summoned a servant, who showed us out through a different door from that by which we made our ingress.

We had not gone half a dozen steps from the door, when the young lady remembered that she had left her parasol on the table. She was hastening back for it and had just reached the door, when it suddenly opened, and Mr. Abernethy appeared, holding it in his hand:

"Hallo," he called out, in a voice that half frightened the poor girl into hysterics, here's your what d'ye call it. What the devil d'ye leave your d—d traps here for? I don't want 'em." And he rudely thrust it into her hand.

Well, thought I, people may well think that you are rude to them; at all events, I never saw any one so bearish before.

The second occasion on which I saw him was during the Medical session in London, when he delivered his lectures in the Theatre of Bartholomew's Hospital. Owing to the great reputation of Mr. Abernethy, and in consequence, in some degree, of his eccentricity, as a man and a lecturer, his class was by far the most crowded in London. Hundreds of young men, who did not care a straw for the information he imparted, regularly went to his lectures, for the sake of the fun. In addition to these, many extra-professional gentlemen, and men about town, regularly attended his course, so that Abernethy's day was always looked for with great anxiety. He was very popular with the pupils, and they paid him every respect; indeed he was one who would not be trifled with, and did not hesitate, if a pupil misconducted himself, to soundly rate him from the lecturing table.

He generally lectured at two o'clock in the day—and, at the time I am referring to, I had considerable difficulty in procuring a seat, so early as one. I was fortunate enough to get a position in front of the gallery—fortunate only in one respect—for, as the crowds on the tiers of seats behind and abo e me increased, I was so pressed upon, by the students, that my chest was compressed to half its diameter, against the iron rail which surrounded the gallery front. They who know anything of Medical Students, may easily imagine the occurrences which transpired before the commencement of the proceedings. They were, by no means of the most orderly character. Orange peel flew about in all directions. Pieces of lint, chewed into pellets, were projected through hollowed arm bones, and single vertebræ were flung at opposite neighbors. Caricatures of lecturers were drawn, and handed about. One very unpopular, and not particularly profound, examiner at Apothecaries Hall, (a Mr. Wheeler,) was personated by a student, who, in a mock examination, proposed questions to a fellow-student opposite, who personated an unhappy candidate for the Diploma—and some such ratechetical instruction as the following would be the order of the day:—

"I say, Mr. Squills, where is the North Pole of the Liver?"

"You'll find it, by digging through the Diaphragm, Wheeler."

"Why are apoplexy and palsy like spring flowers?"

"Because they are the first of the *neuroses*, (new roses.)"

"Here, you Tom Tourniquet, why is the Extract of Belladonna like a good lecture?"

"Can't tell; it has something to do with the Iris, I know. Give it up."

"Because, spooney, it enlarges the capacity of the pupil."

"What's the dose of French Brandy? Can any body tell *that*?",

(From a hundred tongues.) "A noggin in the morning, two tumblers after dinner, and as much as you can get tick for at bedtime."

"What's the best thing for a sweat?"

"Antim. Tart. Pulv. Ipecac Comp., egg-flip, and getting Steggal to grind us."

"And what if that should fail?"

"Get Wheeler to pluck you at the Hall."

But, all at once, the hubbub ceased for the dissecting-room porter entered, placed some jars, containing anatomical preparations, on the table, and, close at his heels, entered Mr. Abernethy himself. Every hat and cap was instantly doffed, a round of applause was given, and then only the voice of the lecturer broke the silence.

Even an abstract of his lecture would be of course, quite unintelligible to the non-professional readers of these columns. I shall therefore, content myself with giving an account of his manner, as a lecturer and teacher.

From what I have already written, the reader may imagine his personal appearance. It was much the same on the latter as on the former occasion. He commenced his lecture in a clear toned voice, which had something of the Scotch accent by a recapitulation of the heads of the last lecture, and then plunged at once into the subject of the day. During a great portion of the time, his hands were thrust into his breaches pockets, and he appeared to be on quite free and easy terms with his audience. Occasionally he would make some droll remark, which accompanied by a twinkle of his keen, expressive eye, would convulse his hearers with laughter. The *manner* of his telling quaint stories, too, was quite as mirth-moving as the matter—and half the good things he said would be spoiled entirely if uttered by any other person. Of course, he has had a thousand and one stories foisted upon his reputation which were not his, but he *did* often make the oddest and rudest remarks possible, and many of them quite unfit for "ears polite."

When I heard him, he was lecturing on diseases of the stomach—and he indulged in some very severe remarks on the abuses which this organ was subjected to by various classes of persons—such as epicures and gourmands. I do not know, whether it was his remark or a quotation, but I perfectly well remember his saying, in the course of his lecture, when treating of the digestive functions—"Many think gentlemen, that the stomach resembles some of our culinary articles in which the food is simmered down; others fancy it an oven, in which whatever we put into it is cooked by animal heat.—There are those who imagine it to be a tub, in which the food is macerated; but they are all wrong. It is neither a stew-pan—for an oven—nor a mash tub—but a stomach, gentlemen—a stomach!"

Speaking of the diseases of the stomach, he referred to the sympathetic disturbance of the functions of the optic nerves, and described how in a case where his own gastric apparatus had got somewhat out of order, his sight was curiously affected.—"One day," said he, "I was going up the borough road, when, happening to look into a bookseller's shop window, I discovered that, in addition to the little black spots, and rings, and ribbon-like filaments, which floated before my eyes, the halves of many long words were only visible.—For instance, one of my books lay in the window, open at the title-page—and on my honor, gentlemen, I could see the A-ber-*knee* very well, but I could'nt make out the *thigh* at all" All these sallies were, of course, received with roars of laughter, during which Abernethy would shrug his shoulders, and occupy himself with his snuff box.

I shall not attempt to inflict on the readers any of the many current anecdotes of this eccentric man. I know of a few which may not have been generally circulated, but they would tell better in a merry party than on paper. Some of them redound much to his credit, for Abernethy, beneath a rough exterior had a warm and benevolent heart. Many a poor hard working student has he not only admitted without a fee to his lectures, but assisted in the most delicate and substantial way. He died of a disease which prior to his dissolution he had most accurately described, and in many respects left not his equal behind him.

I will conclude this paper with a brief notice of one of the most brilliant ornaments of modern science. I allude to Mr., or I believe I should say, SIR MICHAEL FARADAY. A few years since the British Association, a migratory scientific body, to which I have had frequent occasions of referring, in the course of these Sketches, held their great meeting in the town of Liverpool, and it was then I first saw Mr. Farady, who occupied the post of Chairman of the Chemical Section.

We are always, at least I am, apt to associate high mental acquirements with a somewhat dignified and staid deportment of person. Gravity would almost seem to be the handmaid of greatness but they are not always combined; and certainly, so far as Mr. Faraday is concerned, it seems to keep at a very respectable distance.

In illustration of this I may mention the following anecdote respecting this distinguished man which was related to me at Princeton, New Jersey, by one who, in the field of chemical and electrical science, is equally distinguished, and who deservedly enjoys an European as well as an American reputation.

An American gentleman, not long since, visited England on a tour of pleasure, and being, especially anxious to see Faraday, whose brilliant lectures at the Royal Institution had made his name known wherever science had diffused a single ray of its light, procured a letter of introduction to the distinguished *savan*, who happened to be like himself a member of the Swedenborgian Society. Arrived in London, he had occasion before he delivered his letter, to meet on some business or other, the deacons, elders, managers, or whatever they may be styled, of the Swedenborgian Church there. These officers were two of them grave looking personages, as would beseem their position; but the third was youthful looking, volatile, and lively, to a degree which is by no means common in the grave managers of a religious community. The nature of the business did not render it necessary that the stranger should be made acquainted with the names of the gentlemen alluded to, and he did not know, until the evening of the day, that he had been in company with Mr. Faraday; of course, when he became cognizant of the fact, he imagined that one of the grave looking gentlemen must have been the celebrated philosopher. The next day he proceeded to Mr. Faraday's house with his letter, and to his utter astonishment discovered that the young looking, lively gentleman was the great man.

Some such an erroneous impression was obliterated from my mind when I saw Mr. Faraday in the Chemical Chair. He had a dark complexioned countenance, lighted up by a pair of the most lively, restless black eyes I ever saw in the head of man or woman either. His hair, too, was jet black, curly, and parted in the very centre of his forehead, not giving him, as hair disposed in that manner sometimes does, a sleek, sheepish appearance, but a smart, jaunty, natty air. In person, he was slender, and of about the average height. It is a common mode of expression, to say that a man who is restless "is upon wires;" in Faraday's case, the allusion would be quite appropriate, for he was never still half a minute together, and there was such a continual lively smile, not a smirk on his lips that it really was pleasant to look at him. He had the familiar nod and the cheerful wink for every one, and seemed to feel a real anxiety to make every one about him comfortable; and with all his splendid attainments, there was so much humility apparent, that his genius blazed ten times the brighter for his seeming unconsciousness of it.

His style of lecturing is very brilliant, and I have heard those who had listened to that most poetical and fascinating of scientific lecturers, the late Sir Humphrey Davy, say, that in point of felicitous illustration, Faraday is scarcely to be considered his inferior. His voice is musical, and well modulated, and I can scarcely imagine a higher mental treat than that offered by hearing Faraday lecture at the Royal Institution of Great Britain. There behind the great lecturing table, with his coat sleeves turned back at the wrists—his eyes flashing with enthusiasm, as he discourses in his favorite topic, to perhaps as brilliant an audience, whether personally or mentally considered, as any in the world, he stands one of the wonders of his own wonderful age discoursing eloquently on the marvels which his own mind & hand have in part revealed. There, the cynosure of all eyes, stands the son of a poor Irish blacksmith who was apprenticed to a bookseller, at the early age of nine years, and who actually worked at his trade until he was twenty-two. He first "sounded his dim and perilous way" over the ocean of knowledge, with few and unimportant aids. Of an old bottle he made his first electrical machine, and with such like humble aids he went on, until his genius attracted notice. Since then his career has been a brilliant one, and the only clouds which have dimmed the sunshine of its success, have been those formed by the dust of the earth, which has been raised by the too impetuous sweeping on of his chariot wheels. Happily these days of darkness have been but few, and a partial cessation of severe toil has been effectual in dispelling the mental clouds. May they never return, to cast a gloom not only on the pathway of one who worthily follows in the steps of LA PLACE, DALTON, DAVY, WOLLASTON, and PRIESTLEY, or to cause apprehension in the hearts of those who justly regard his star as one of the brightest in the scientific galaxy.

On a future occasion, I shall have the pleasure of describing other celebrated *Savans*, foreign as well as English. The two I have selected for the above remarks are somewhat complimented, for they have taken the places of a pair of favorite Authoresses, whom I intended to have presented to the readers of the Atlas to-day—MARY RUSSELL MITFORD, and LÆTITIA ELIZABETH LANDON. They shall not, however, be kept long waiting.

Pigeon Expresses are kept up at a great cost between London & Paris. A late journal states that there are several perfect establishments kept up by parties interested in the quick transmission of intelligence, at the ports of Dover and Calais, and at regular distances on the roads of the two countries, whence the birds are exchanged in regular order, as they return with their little billet. The interruption occasioned by the hours of night is made by a man on horseback; who again at daylight, on arriving at a pigeon-station, transfers his despatch to the keeper, who has his bird in readiness. The distance by day is accomplished in less than eight hours. It has been found that hawks have proved themselves dangerous enemies even to these quick-flighted birds; and a premium of half a crown is paid for every hawk's head produced. The pay of a keeper is £50 a year; and when this is added to the cost of food and the expense of sending the pigeons on from station to station to be ready for their flight home it will appear that the service is attended with considerable outlay. The duty of training young birds, and the management of the old ones, in feeding them at proper times, and in keeping them in the dark till they are grown up, is very responsible, and almost unceasing. A good bird is not supposed to last more than two years.—*Phila. Gazette.*

Why is a locomotive engine like a cross tempered girl? Because it maks the sparks fly.

FOREIGN NEWS.

ARRIVAL OF THE CALEDONIA.

15 *days later from Europe.*

The steamship Caledonia arrived at Boston on Wednesday morning, at 6 o'clock. She left Liverpool on the 19th ult. and we are in possession of advices to her day of sailing.

The accounts from the country speak rather unfavorably of the crops, and more particularly the wheat crop, but buyers of wheat and flour have had a slight advantage in prices, the inference from which is that the crops are not so bad as it was supposed they would be by the last arrival.

The amount of specie in the Bank of England is no less than $16,-060,000, an unusually large quantity. On this account the Bank refuses to purchase the Chinese instalments of $2,000,000 in silver, and it will be publicly sold.

The weather appeared more favorable for a good harvest.

Mr. McLane has delivered his credentials to the Queen, and Mr. Everett his letters of recall. The American Ambassador was anxious to enter upon the object of his mission instanter, but as lord Aberdeen had arranged to accompany the Queen to Germany, the commencement of negotiations was postponed.

The crop of corn on hand from last year's crop is much greater than was supposed a month ago.

Her majesty, it will be seen, has had a glorious reception on the continent. A London paper, in the Palmerstonian interest, says—"The visit of the Queen to the Rhine has given rise to a world of jealousies and mistrusts, has made courts anxious and diplomatists busy."

The probability of a war between the United States and Mexico had caused a decline of nearly 2 per cent in Mexican bonds.

The stocks of British goods on hand generally are stated to be slight.

Parliament was prorogued on the 10th of August by the Queen in person. During its session, it sanctioned the construction of 2000 miles of new railways in England and Scotland, and 560 miles in Ireland. The capital authorised to be raised in shares for this purpose amounts to £31,680,000, exclusive of £6,800,000 required for the Irish line, making in all £38,480,000.

Sir Robert Peel gave assurance that he contemplated a change in the principle of the existing corn laws.

THE NEW AMERICAN MINISTER.—In our last publication, says Wilmer & Smith's European Times, we noticed the arrival of his Excellency the Hon. Louis M'Lane, in London. Since he reached the British Metropolis, Mr. M'Lane, not having been able to command a suitable residence, has been staying at Thomas' Hotel, where he still remains. On the 5th instant, he was presented to the Foreign Minister, the Earl of Aberdeen; and on the 8th he attended at Buckingham Palace, where he delivered his credentials to her Majesty, and was most graciously and even kindly, received. Mr. M'Lane was present in his place in the House of Lords, amonst the *corps diplomatique*, on the occasion of the prorogation of Parliament by the Queen. The retiring Minister, Mr. Everett, has been extremely popular since he first arrived, and he leaves with the regret and the esteem of all the parties who have had occasion to come in personal contact with him. The new Minister has this great advantage over most of his predecessors—that has filled the same high office at the British court before, and is personally and familiarly known to all the leading members not only of the Government, but of the opposition. Indeed, since his appearance in London, he has been waited upon and received the congratulations of many distinguished members of the Aristocracy, who knew him in a similar capacity some twelve or fourteen years ago. This kindly feeling towards the new Minister has found expression in complimentary notices of his arrival in most of the daily and weekly papers. The representative of the American Government enters, therefore, upon the discharge of his onerous duties under circumstances, in a personal point of view, the most favorable that can be conceived.—That he will acquit himself to the satisfaction of his countrymen we fervently hope and believe. He has a difficult game to play—clear heads and wily diplomatists to contend with. The stakes are worth the exertion of all the intellect the ablest statesmen can put forth; and if the new Minister can bring the Oregon affair to a satisfactory conclusion—if he can satisfy the great nation he represents, and the Ministers with whom he has to drive the bargain—he will deserve, and will questionless receive, the highest meed of approbation and honor which a free people can bestow, or a high and honorable ambition aspire to.

THE WEATHER AND THE CROPS.—The European Times of the 19th ult., says:—The weather yesterday was alternately wet and fair—occasionally a tolerably clear sky and some warmth, followed by a brief and sudden showers.—The temperature continues low for the season, and appearances remain perhaps not *quite* so unfavorable as at the sailing of the last packet, but sufficiently so to sustain the anxiety, if not the alarm, which the prospect of a deficient, wheat crop naturally creates.

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