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Literary.

From 'Random Recollections of the H. of Lords.'

DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

I now come to speak of the most distinguished man of the present day, either in this or any other country. I allude to the Duke of Wellington. It will at once be understood, that in characterising his Grace as the most distinguished man of the present day, I speak of him in his capacity of a general, and not in that of a statesman. In this latter respect, however, I am disposed to assign him a much higher rank than he is generally allowed to fill by those who entertain political principles opposite to his. If on some great occasions he has failed in his calculation of the probable effects of circums ances, and the probable course of events, it is not to be disputed by his most implacable foes that he has been, in cases of unusual difficulty, successful in others. The mere fact of his carrying on the government of the country during the eventful period which intervened between the resignation of Lord Goderich and the dissolution of his own administration, is of itself unanswerable proof,—known as it is by every one that that government was almost entirely under his own individual guidance,—that his mental resources must be very far from those of a common-place character. It must not only be recollected, that the period during which his administration existed was one unusually critical as regarded the posture both of home and foreign politics; but that he had to undertake the helm of government in the face of perhaps the strongest prejudice that ever assailed any minister: a prejudice caused partly by the unpopularity of his avowed high Tory principles, and partly by his memorable declaration, made but a short time before his accession to the Premiership—that he would be mad even to dream of filling that office.

And yet, not only did the noble Duke conduct his government safely through the storms and tempests of the period referred to, but at the very moment he made his ill-judged declaration against all reform, it seemed to be resting more securely than ever. That declaration was not only the most foolish that he ever made—it was infinitely more so than his previous well-known statement, that he regarded county meetings as farces—but it was decidedly the most imprudent that ever proceeded from the lips of a minister of the Crown. It could not fail to prove, in the then existing circumstances of the country, the destruction of his government. It had hardly escaped his lips, when he himself saw that such would be its inevitable consequence.

But that the Duke of Wellington, notwithstanding defects in his character which prevent his being a stateman of the first class, is more than respectable in that capacity, must be abundantly clear to every mind not blinded by prejudice.—His conduct, first in the case of the claims of the Dissenters, and afterwards in the case of the claims of the Roman Catholics, was such as no mind but that of a statesman could ever have suggested. Though mistaking the signs of the times, and ignorant of the state and force of public opinion in other instances, he clearly saw those signs, and correctly estimated the force of that opinion, as regarded the Test and Corporation Acts, and the disabilities under which the Roman Catholics then labored. I need not here remark, that this conviction was not wrought on his mind by the arguments or representations of his colleagues in the Cabinet; for they were to a man, obstinately adverse to concession in either case: it was wholly the result of his own reflections on the matter, and his clear perception of what the exigency of each individual case demanded at his hands. Nor was the fact of his determination to attempt the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and to redress the grievances of the Roman Catholics, under the peculiar and difficult circumstances in which he was placed by his own previous opinions and conduct, and the existing state of sentiment on these topics among his colleagues and friends,—less a proof of his possessing some of the leading attributes of a statesman, than was the fact of his perceiving the then state of public opinion as to the expediency of such measures. That he succeeded in carrying them in the face of obstacles which would not only have appalled ordinary minds, but which seemed altogether insuperable, is a still further evidence of his possession of those attributes. There was hardly, I believe, a man in the country but himself, when he first declared his intention of bringing forward those measures, who, with the House of Lords and the prejudices of George the Fourth in his eye, ever dreamed that the noble Duke would succeed in the objects he had in view.

The Duke of Wellington has generally evinced an intimate knowledge of the resources of his own party, and of the amount of force which would be necessary to carry their point, and defeat their opponents. Hence, as must often have been observed, he has not only on many occasions pursued a more moderate course than those of the more bigoted and less calculating of his Tory friends, but in various cases he had refused to co-operate with them at all. In several instances this refusal to co-operate with his own party against particular measures of a liberal Government, has arisen as much from a conviction of the imprudence of defeating Ministers—had those on his side of the house possessed the power—as from a consciousness of the futility of the attempt. In fact, his whole conduct shows that he is a man of great shrewdness and prudence.

Perhaps no man of the present day possesses greater moral courage than the Duke of Wellington. It is that peculiar description of moral courage, too, which teaches him to disregard alike the opinions both of friends and foes. Let him be but convinced that a certain measure has become indispensable to the peace or welfare of the country, and to the carrying of that measure he will tend all his energies in utter disregard alike of the smiles and frowns of others. I do not believe that he is either to be smiled into or frowned out of a particular measure, however seductive the smile in the one case, or ominous the frown in the other. He appears as indifferent to popularity as any public man I know of the present day.

Indeed, my impression is, that his moral courage is so extreme as to degenerate into a blemish in his character. It was his utter indifference to popularity that prompted his ill-judged, and to his own Government, fatal declaration of November 1829, against all reform.—And the same disregard of public opinion contributed, there can be no doubt, to his resolution to centre the entire government of the country in his own person during the space which intervened between the ejection of the Melbourne Ministry in November 1834, and the return of Sir Robert Peel from Italy. That was an experiment which no one, not even his own greatest friends, ever undertook to justify. It was an experiment, indeed, which admitted of no justification; but was considered by his own party, as well as by those of opposite politics, to be as unconstitutional as it was bold and daring.

One of the greatest defects in the character of the Duke as a statesman is, his neither anticipating public opinion, nor keeping abreast with it. He generally resists it till it has acquired an overwhelming power. Had he, when in office, only granted a moderate measure of reform, the nation would have been satisfied, at least for a time, and he might still have been Prime Minister of the country. But by his refusal to yield one iota to the public demand, that demand became more extensive in its scope, and louder in its tone, until it could no longer be resisted with safety to the public peace. He refused the little which would be gratefully received as an act of grace, and then finds himself in the end compelled to make a much larger concession, for which he does not even receive the thanks of his countrymen.

His general information is neither varied nor profound; but he very seldom commits blunders in his speeches. He always pays particular a tention to any question of importance before the House, before he ventures to open his mouth on it. And there are few men who can so speedily master the leading details of any question. His mind is acute, and his understanding vigorous; so that, in as far as the mere matter of his speeches is concerned, he generally appears to some advantage. He often strikes out new courses of thought, but seldom pursues them far. It is nothing uncommon to hear him urge a series of ingenious arguments in favor of his view of the subject, without what is called dwelling on them. He is always clear; you can never mistake the position he labors to establish, nor can you ever fail to perceive the immediate bearing of his observation on that position.

Were his diction and manner good, the noble Duke would rank high as a speaker, but both are bad. His style is rough and disjointed—sometimes positively incorrect: it is always, however, nervous and expressive. His manner of speaking is much worse than his diction. He has a bad screeching sort of voice, aggravated by an awkward mode of mouthing the words. His enunciation is so bad, owning in some measure to the loss of several of his teeth, that often, when at the full stretch of his voice, you do not know what particular words he is using. At other times, and this too while his gesture is vehement, he speaks in so low and peculiar a sort of tone, that you lose, perhaps, whole sentences together.

The Duke feels strongly on political questions, and has always great energy in his manner when expressing his sentiments. He generally makes a liberal use of his arms, especially his right one, when on his legs, and moves his body about for the purpose of enabling him to look his own friends, in different parts of the house, in the face. In his more vehement moods, he frequently falls into what, in parliamentary language, is called the habit of expectoration. His whole soul is thrown into his subject. You see at once that he has no ambition to play the orator. He never uses a word more than necessary, nor does he attempt rhetorical flourishes. His speeches are full of feeling and sentiment. You are only surprised when you see the intensity of the former, if in opposition to any measure before their Lordships,—that he does not divide the house on the subject.

Notwithstanding his having attained the advanced age of sixty-seven, he is full of spirits, and apparently in excellent health. The conformation of his face, by portraits, or otherwise, so familiar to every one, that it is unnecessary to describe it. I may simply mention that his hair is of a grayish colour and that his complexion is pale and wan. His eye is quick and piercing, and his whole countenance is highly indicative of energy and determination.—In height he is rather above the middle size. His form, for one of his years, is slender, and remarkably erect. In his clothes he appears to evince a partiality to a blue coat, and light vest and trousers. They are seldom well made, but hang rather loosely on him.

From Russell's "Palestine or the Holy Land."

THE DEAD SEA.

The mountains of Judea form the range on which the observer stands as he looks down on the Lake Asphaltites [or Dead Sea.] Less lofty and more unequal than the eastern chain, it differs from the other in its nature also; exhibiting heaps of chalk and sand, whose form, it is said, bears some resemblance to piles of arms, waving standards, or the tents of a camp pitched on the border of a plain. The Arabian side, on the contrary, presents nothing but black precipitous rocks, which throw their lengthened shadow over the waters of the Dead Sea. The smallest bird of heaven would not find among these crags a single blade of grass for its sustainance; every thing announces the country of a reprobate people, and well fitted to perpetuate the punishment denounced against Ammon and Moab.

The valley confined by these two chains of mountains displays a soil resembling the bottom of a sea which has long retired from its bed, a beach covered with salt, dry mud, and moving sands, furrowed, as it were, by the waves. Here and there stunted shrubs vegetate with difficulty upon this inanimate tract; their leaves are covered with salt, and their bark has a smoky smell and teste. Instead of villages you perceive the ruins of a few towers. In the middle of this valley flows a discoloured river, which reluctantly throws itself into the pestilential lake by which it is ingulfed. Its course amid the sands can be distinguished only by the willows and the reed that border it; among which the Arab lies in ambush to attack the traveller and to murder the pilgrim.

M. Chateaubriand remarks, that when you travel in Judea the heart is at first filled with profound melancholy. But when, passing from solitude to solitude, boundless space opens before you, this feeling wears off by degrees, and you experience a secret awe, which, so far from depressing the soul, imparts life and elevates the genius. Extraordinary appearances everywhere proclaim a land teeming with miracles. The burning sun, the towering eagle, the barren figtree, all the poetry, all the pictures of Scripture are here. Every name commemorates a mystery,—every grotto announces a prediction,—every hill reechoes the accents of a prophet. God himself has spoken in these regions, dried up rivers, rent the rocks, and opened the grave. "The desert still appears mute with terror; and you would imagine that it had never presumed to interrupt the silence since it heard the awful voice of the Eternal.

The celebrated lake which occupies the site of Sodom and Gomorrah is called in the Scripture the Dead Sea. Among the Greeks and Latins it is known by the name of Asphaltites; the Arabs denominate it Bahar Loth, or Sea of Lot. M. de Chateaubriand does not agree with those who conclude it to be crater of a volcano; for, having seen Vesuvius, Solfartara, the Peak of the Azores, and the extinguished volcanoes of Auvergne, he remarked in all of them the same characters; that is to say, mountains excavated in the form of a tunnel, lava, and ashes, which exhibited incontestable proof of the agency of fire. The Salt Sea, on the contrary, is a lake of great length, curved like a bow, placed between two ranges of mountains, which have no mutual coherence of form, no similarity of composition. They do not meet at the two extremities of the lake; but while the one continues to bound the valley of Jordan, and to run northward as far as Tiberias, the other stretches away to the south till it looses itself in the sands of Yemen. There are, it is true, hot springs, quantities of bitumen, sulphur, and asphaltos; but these of themselves are not sufficient to attest the previous existence of a volcano. With respect, indeed, to the ingulfed cities, if we adopt the idea of Michaelis and of Busching, physics may be admitted to explain the catastrophe without offence to religion. According to their views, Sodom was built upon a mine of bitumen,—a fact which is ascertained by the testimony of Moses and Josephus, who speak of wells of naphtha in the Valley of Siddim. Lightning kindled the combustible mass, and the guilty cities sank in the subterraneous conflagration.—Malte Brun ingeniously suggests that Sodom and Gomorrah themselves may have been built of bituminous stones, and thus have been set in flames by the fire from heaven.

According to Strabo, there were thirteen towns swallowed up in the Lake Asphaltites; Stephen of Byzantium reckons eight; the book of Genesis, while it names five as situated in the Vale of Siddon relates the destruction of two only; four are mentioned in Deuteronomy, and five are noticed by the author of Ecclesiasticus. Several travellers, and among others Troilo and D'Arvieux, assures us, that they observed fragments of walls and palaces in the Dead Sea. Maundrell himself was not so fortunate, owing, he supposes, to the height of the water; but he relates that the Father Guardian and Procurator of Jerusalem, both men of sense and probity, declared that they had once actually seen one of these ruins; that it was so near the shore, and the lake so shallow, that they, together with some Frenchmen, went to it, and found there several pillars and other fragments of building. The ancients speak more positively on this subject. Josephus, who employs a poetical expression, says, that he perceived on the shores of the Dead Sea the shades of the overwhelmed cities. Strabo gives a circumference of sixty stadia to the ruins of Sodom, which are also mentioned by Tacitus.

It is surprising that no pains have been taken by recent travellers to throw light upon this interesting point, or even to learn whether the periodical rise and fall of the lake affords any means for determining the accuracy of the ancient historians and geographers. Sould the Turks ever give permission, and should it be found practicable, to convey a vessel from Jaffa to this inland sea, some curious discoveries would certainly be made. It is not amazing that, notwithstanding the enterprize of modern science, the ancients were better acquainted with the properties, and even the dimensions of the Lake Asphaltities, than the most learned nations of Europe in our own times? It is described by Aristotle, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Tacitus, Solinus, Josephus, Galen, and Diocorides. The Abbot of Santa Saba is the only person for many centuries who has made the tour of the Dead Sea. From his account we learn, through the medium of Father Nau, that at its extremity it is separated, as it were, into two parts, and that there is a way by which you may walk across it, being only mid-leg deep, at least in summer; that there the land rises, and bounds another small lake of a circular or rather an oval figure, surrounded with plains and hills of salt; and that the neighboring country is people by innumerable Arabs.

It is known that seven considerable streams fall into this basin, and hence it was long supposed that it must discharge its superfluous stores by subterranean channels into the Mediterranean or the Red Sea. This opinion is now everywhere relinquished, in consequence of the learned remarks on the effect of evaporation in a hot climate, published by Dr. Halley many years ago; the justness of which were admitted by Dr. Shaw, though he calculated that the Jordan alone threw in the lake every day more than six million tons of water. It is deserving of notice, that the Arabian philosophers, if we may believe Mariti, had anticipated Halley in his conclusions in regard to the absorbent power of a dry atmosphere.

The marvelous proprieties usually assigned to the Dead Sea by the earlier travellers have vanished upon a more rigid investigation. It is now known that bodies sink or float upon it, in proportion to their specific gravity; and that, although the water is so dense as to be favorable to swimmers, no security is found against the common accident of drowning. Josephus indeed asserts that Vespasian, in order to ascertain the fact now mentioned, commanded a number of his slaves to be bound hand and foot and thrown into the deepest part of the lake; and that, so far from any of them sinking, they all maintained their place on the surface until it pleased the emperor to have them taken out. But this anecdote, although perfectly consistent with truth, does not justify all the inferences which have been drawn from it. "Being willing to make an experiment," says Maundrell, "I went into it, and found that it bore up my body in swimming with an uncommon force; but as for that relation of some authors, that men wading into it were buoyed up to the top as soon as they got as deep as the middle, I found it, upon trial, not true."

The water of this sea has been frequently analyzed both in France and England. The specific gravity of it, according to Malte Brun, is 1,211, that of fresh water being 1,000. It is perfectly transparent. The application of tests, or reagents, prove that it contains the muriatic and sulphuric acids. There is no alumina in it, nor does it appear that it is satured with marine salt or muriate of soda. It holds in solution the following substances, and in the proportions here stated:

Muriate of lime,	3.920
Magnesia,	10.246
Soda,	10,360
Sulphate of lime.	054

We need not add that such a liquid must be equally salt and bitter. As might be expected, too, it is found to deposite its salts in copious incrustations, and to prove a ready agent in all processes of petrifaction. Clothes, boots, and hats, if dipped in the lake, or accidentally wetted with its water, are found when dried, to be covered with a thick coating of these minerals. Hence, we cannot be surprised to hear that the Lake Asphaltites does not present any variety of fish. Mariti asserts that it produces none, and even that those which are carried into it by the rapidity of the Jordan perish almost immediately by being immerged in its acrid waves. A few shell-snails constitute the sole tenants of its dreary shores, unmixed either with the helix or the muscle.

It was formerly believed that the approach to Asphaltites was fatal to birds, and that, like another lake of antiquity, it had the power of drawing them down from the wing into its poisonous waters. This dream, propagated by certain visionary travellers, is now completely discredited. Flocks of swallows may be seen skimming along its surface with the utmost impunity, while the absence of all other species is easily explained by a glance at the naked hills and barren plains, which supply no vegetable food.

The historian Josephus, who measured the Dead Sea, found that in length it extended about five hundred and eighty stadia, and in breadth one hundred and fifty,—according to our standard, somewhat more than seventy miles by nineteen. A recent traveller, to whose unpublished journal we have repeatedly alluded, remarks that the lake, when he visited it, was sunk or hollow, and that the banks had been recently under water, being still very miry and difficult to pass. The shores were covered with dry wood, some of it good timber, which they say is brought by the Jordan from the country of the Druses. "The water is pungently salt, like oxymuriate of soda. It is incredibly buoyant. G—— bathed in it, and when he lay still on his back or belly, he floated with one-fourth of his whole body above the water. He described the sensation as extraordinary, and more like lying on a feather-bed than floating on water. On the other hand, he found the greatest resistance in attempting to move through it: it smarted his eyes excessively. I put a piece of stick in; it required a good deal of pressure to make it sink, and when I let go it bounded out again like a blown bladder. The water was clear, and of a yellowish tinge, which might be from the colour of the stones at bottom, or from the hazy atmosphere. There were green shrubs down in the water's edge in one place, and nothing to give an idea of any thing blasting in the neighbourhood of the sea; the desert character of the soil extending far beyond the possibility of being affected by its influence."

The bitumen supplied by this singular basin affords the means of a comfortable livelihood to a considerable number of Arabs who frequent its shores. The Pasha of Damascus, who finds it a valuable article of commerce, purchases at a small price the fruit of their labours, or supplies them with food, clothing, and a few ornaments in return for it. In anchient times it found a ready market in Egypt, where it was used in large quantities for embalming the dead: it was also occasionally employed as a substitute for stone, and appeared in the walls of houses and even of temples.

Associated with the Dead Sea, every reader has heard of the apples of Sodom, a species of fruit which, extremely beautiful to the eye, is bitter to the taste, and full of dust. Tacitus, in the fifth book of his history, alludes to this singular fact, but, as usual, in language so brief and ambiguous, that no light can be derived from his description, *atra et inania velut in cinerem vanescunt*. Some travellers, unable to discover this singular production, have considered it merely as a figure of speech, depicting the deceitful nature of all vicious enjoyments.—Hasselquist regards it as the production of a small plant called *Solanum melongena*, a species of nightshade, which is to be found abundantly in the neighborhood of Jericho. He admits that the apples are sometimes full of dust; but this, he maintains, appears only when the fruit is attacked by a certain insect, which converts the whole of the inside into a kind of powder, leaving the rind wholly entire, and in possession of its beautiful colour.

M. Seetzen, again, holds the novel opinion, that this mysterious apple contains a sort of cotton resembling silk; and, having no pulp or flesh in the inside, might naturally enough, when sought for as food, be denounced by the hungry Bedouin as pleasing to the eye and deceitful to the palate. Chateaubriand has fixed on a shrub different from any of the others. It grows two or three leagues from the mouth of the Jordan, and is of a thorny appearance, with small tapering leaves. Its fruit is exactly like that of the Egyptian lemon, both in size and colour. Before it is ripe it is filled with a corrosive and saline juice; when dried, it yielks a blackish seed that may be compared to ashes, and which in taste resembles bitter pepper. There can be little doubt that this is the true apple of Sodom, which flatters the sight while it mocks the appetite.

SCOTTISH HUSBANDMEN OF THE LAST CENTURY.

The patriarchal simplicity of manners which about the middle of last century so especially characterised the Scottish husbandmen of the Lowlands, was calculated, in a high degree, to foster deep affections, and a sober but manly earnestness both of principles and deportment; and it may be fairly stated as one of the happy privileges of the Scottish church, that so large a number of its ministers have sprung from this virtuous and valuable order of men. The following brief description of the mode of life and household discipline of a Scottish farmer of former days, is a sketch by an eye-witness, from early recollections of scenes long gone by:—

"When old simplicity was yet in prime;
For now among our glens the faithful fail,
Forgetful of their sires in olden time;
That grey-haired race is gone, of look sublime,
Calm in demeanor, courteous, and sincere,
Yet stern when duty called them, as their clime,
When it flings off the autumnal foliage sere,
And shakes the shuddering woods with solemn voice severe."

The habitation of a Scottish husbandman in the southern countries, sixty or seventy years ago, were generally a plain, substantial stone building, holding a middle rank between the residences of the inferior gentry and the humble cottages of the laboring peasantry. The farm-house, with the small windows of its second story often projecting through the thatched roof, occupied for the most part, the one side of a quadrangle, in which the young cattle were folded; the other three sides being enclosed and sheltered by the barns, stables, and other farm offices. A kitchen-garden stocked with the common potherbs then in use, and sometimes with a few fruit-trees, extended on one side, sheltered perhaps by a hedge of boortree or elder, and often skirted by a few aged forest trees; while the low, thatched dwellings of the hinds and cotters stood at a little distance, each with its small cabbage-garden or *kail-yard*, behind, and its stack of peat, or turf fuel in front.

An upland farm, of the common average size, extending to three, four or five hundred acres, partly arable and partly pastoral, usually employed three or four ploughs; and the master's household, exclusive of his own family, consisted of six or seven unmarried servants, male and female. The married servants—namely, a head shepherd, and a *hind* or two (as the married ploughmen were termed)—occupied cottages apart; as likewise did the *cotters*, who were rather a sort of farm-retainers than servants, being bound only to give the master, in lieu of rent, their services in hay-time and harvest, and at other stated periods. The whole, however, especially in remote situations, formed a sort of little independent community in themselves, deriving their subsistence almost exclusively from the produce of the farm. The master's household alone usually amounted to fifteen or twenty souls; and the whole population of the farm, or *onstead*, to double or treble that number,—a number considerably greater, perhaps, than will now be commonly found on a farm of the same extent,—but maintained with much frugality, and always industriously occupied, though not oppressed with labor.

Little of the jealous distinction of ranks which now subsists between the farming class and their hired servants, was then known. The connexion between master and servant had less of a commercial, and more of a patriarchal character. Every household formed but one society. The masters (at that time generally a sober, virtuous, and religious class) extended a parental care over their servants, and the servants felt a filial affection for their masters. They sat together, they ate together, they often wrought together; and after the labors of the day were finished, they assembled together around the blazing fire in the "farmer's ha'," conversing over the occurrences of the day, the floating rumors of the country, or "auld warld stories;" and not unfrequently religious subjects were introduced, or the memory of godly men, and brave ones too, who, in evil times, had battled or suffered for the right, was affectionately commemorated. This familiar intercourse was equally decorous as it was kindly,—for decent order and due subordination were strictly maintained. It was the great concern of masters and mistresses, when new servants were required, to obtain such as were of sober and religious habits: If one of a