

VARIOUS

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Various

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BIRTHPLACE OF LOCKE

At the village of Wrington, in Somersetshire, in a cottage by the churchyard, was born JOHN LOCKE. What a simple, unostentatious record is this of him whom the biographers call “one of the most eminent philosophers and valuable writers of his age and country.” Yet the cottage is not preserved with any special care;—there is nothing about it to denote that within its walls the man of whom every Englishman is proud—first drew breath. The house is now divided into tenements; and, fortuitously, one of its rooms is used as a school for young children. It is grateful to know this, even were it only for associating the appropriation of this apartment with the master-mind of Locke, as developed in his “Thoughts on Education,” and his perspicuous “Essay on the Human Understanding.”

Locke was born August 29, 1632: his father, Mr. J. Locke, who was descended from the Lockes of Charton Court, in Dorsetshire, possessed a moderate landed property at Pensfold and Belluton, where he lived. He was a captain in the Parliamentary army during the civil wars, and his fortune suffered so considerably in those times, that he left a smaller estate to his son than he himself had inherited. It is not our intention to follow the biographers of Locke further than by quoting from the last published Life of the Philosopher¹ a brief example of his filial affection:—

John Locke, says the biographer, was the eldest of two sons, and was educated with great care by his father, of whom he always spoke with the greatest respect and affection. In the early part of his life, his father exacted the utmost respect from his son, but gradually treated him with less and less reserve, and, when grown up, lived with him on terms of the most entire friendship; so much so, that Locke mentioned the fact of his father having expressed his regret for giving way to his anger, and striking him once in his childhood, when he did not deserve it. In a letter to a friend, written in the latter part of his life, Locke thus expresses himself on the conduct of a father towards his son:—“That which I have often blamed as an indiscreet and dangerous practice in many fathers, viz. to be very indulgent to their children whilst they are little, and as they come to ripe years to lay great restraint upon them, and live with greater reserve towards them, which usually produces an ill understanding between father and son, which cannot but be of bad consequences; and I think fathers would generally do better, as their sons grow up, to take them into a nearer familiarity, and live with them with as much freedom and friendship as their age and temper will allow.” The following letter from Locke to his father, which is without a date, but must have been written before 1660, shows the feeling of tenderness and affection which subsisted between them. It was probably found by Locke amongst his father’s papers, and thus came again into his possession:—

“December 20.

“Most dear and ever-loving Father,

“I did not doubt but that the noise of a very dangerous sickness here would reach you, but I am alarmed with a more dangerous disease from Pensford, and were I as secure of your health as (I thank God) I am of my own, I should not think myself in danger; but I cannot be safe so long as I hear of your weakness, and that increase of your malady upon you, which I beg that you would, by the timely application of remedies, endeavour to remove. Dr. Meary has more than once put a stop to

¹ The Life of John Locke, with Extracts from his Correspondence, Journals, and Commonplace Books. By Lord King. New Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. 1830.

its encroachment;—the same skill, the same means, the same God to bless you, is left still. Do not, I beseech you, by that care you ought to have of yourself, by that tenderness I am sure you have of us, neglect your own and our safety too; do not, by a too pressing care for your children, endanger the only comfort they have left. I cannot distrust that Providence which hath conducted us thus far, and if either your disappointments or necessities shall reduce us to narrower conditions than you could wish, content shall enlarge it; therefore, let not these thoughts distress you. There is nothing that I have which can be so well employed as to his use, from whom I first received it; and if your convenience can leave me nothing else, I shall have a head, and hands, and industry still left me, which alone have been able to raise sufficient fortunes. Pray, sir, therefore, make your life as comfortable and lasting as you can; let not any consideration of us cast you into the least despondency. If I have any reflections on, or desires of free and competent subsistence, it is more in reference to another (whom you may guess) to whom I am very much obliged, than for myself: but no thoughts, how important soever, shall make me forget my duty; and a father is more than all other relations; and the greatest satisfaction I can propose to myself in the world, is my hopes that you may yet live to receive the return of some comfort, for all that care and indulgence you have placed in,

“Sir, your most obedient son,

“J.L.”

Locke, it appears, originally applied himself to the study of physic; and he became essentially serviceable in his medical capacity to Lord Ashley, afterwards the celebrated Earl of Shaftesbury, to whom he was introduced in 1666, and who was led to form so high an opinion of Locke's general powers, that he prevailed upon Locke to take up his residence at his house, and urged him to apply his studies to politics and philosophy. This proved the stepping-stone to his subsequent greatness; and it is gratifying to learn that his career, literary and political, was closed as honourably as it had been commenced. His last publications were in a controversy with the celebrated Bishop Stillingfleet, who had censured some passages in Locke's immortal “Essay.” The prelate yielded to the more powerful reasoning of the philosopher, yet Locke's writing was uniformly distinguished by mildness and urbanity. At this time he held the post of commissioner of trade and plantations. An asthmatic complaint, with which he had long been afflicted, now began to increase, and, with the rectitude which distinguished the whole of his conduct, he resigned: the sovereign, (William) was very unwilling to receive Locke's resignation; but the philosopher, who made his precepts his own rule of life, pressed the point, observing that he could not in conscience hold a situation to which a considerable salary was attached without performing the duties of it. Would that such political philosophy were more common in our days! From this time, Locke lived wholly in retirement, where he applied himself to the study of the Scriptures, till, in 1704, after nearly two years' declining health, he fell asleep. He was buried at Oates, where there is a neat monument erected to his memory, with a modest Latin inscription indited by himself.

THE KNIGHT OF TOGGENBURG

FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER

(For the Mirror.)

“Knight, a sister’s truest love,
This mine heart devotes to thee—
Ask no other love to prove;
Marriage! no, that ne’er can be.
Still unmov’d to all appearing,
Calmly can I see thee fly—
Still break the chain no sorrow fearing,
Save a tear from lover’s eye.”

This he heard without replying,
Silent woes his bosom wrung;
In his arms he clasp’d her sighing—
On his courser’s back he sprung.
Thro’ the Switzer’s rugged land
Vassals, at their lord’s behest,
Sought Judea’s sainted strand—
Each the red-cross on his breast.

Mighty deeds all dangers braving
Wrought the Christian hero’s arm;
Oft his helmet plumes were waving
High above the Paynim *swarm*.²
But tho’ Moslem hosts were quaking
At the Toggenburger’s name,
Still his breast, with anguish breaking,
Felt its sorrow yet the same:

Felt it till a year departed—
Felt it of all hope bereft;
Restless, joyless, broken-hearted,
Then the warring bands he left;—
Bade on Joppa’s sandy shore
Seamen hoist the swelling sail;
Swift the bark to Europe bore
O’er the tide the fav’ring gale.

² Literally translated.

When the pilgrim, sorrow laden,
Sought the gates he lov'd so well;
From the portals of his maiden
*Words of thunder*³ rang his knell:
“She ye seek has ta'en the veil,
To God alone her thoughts are given;
Yestere'en the cloisters pale
Saw the bride betroth'd to heaven.”

From the castle of his sires,
Mad with grief, the hero flew;
War no more his bosom fires,
Arms he spurns, and courser true.
Far from Toggenburg alone
Wends he on his secret way,
To friend and foe alike unknown,
Clad in peasant's mean array.

On a mountain's lonesome glade,
'Neath a hut he sought repose—
Near where 'mid the lime-tree's shade,
The convent pinnacles arose;
There, from morning's dawn first bright'ning
Till the ev'ning stars began,
Secret hopes his anguish light'ning,
Sate the solitary man.

On the cloister fixed his eye,
Thro' the hours' weary round,
To his maiden's lattice nigh,
Till he heard that lattice sound—
Till that dearest form was seen—
Till she on her lover smil'd—
And the turret-grates between
Look'd devout and *angel-mild*.*

There he sate thro' many a day,
Thro' many a year's revolving round—
Alike to hope and grief a prey,
Till he heard the lattice sound.
Years were fleeting; when one morning
Saw a corse the cloister nigh—
To the long-watch'd turret turning
Still its cold and glassy eye.

H.

³ *Donnerworte.*

* *Engelmild.*

CORFE CASTLE—EDWARD II

(To the Editor.)

I should be glad to be informed by your correspondent, *James Silvester, Sen.*, on what authority he grounds his assertion (contained in No. 484.) that it was in the fortress of *Corfe Castle* that the unfortunate Edward II. was so inhumanly murdered. I have always, considered it an undisputed fact that the scene of this atrocity was at Berkeley Castle, in Gloucestershire. Hume states, that while in the custody of Lord Berkeley, the murderers, Mautravers and Gournay, “taking advantage of Berkeley’s sickness, *in whose custody he then was, came to Berkeley Castle*, threw him on a bed,” &c. &c. giving the particulars of the cruel deed. An abridged history, the only other authority I have at hand to refer to, says, “After these transactions, he was treated with the greatest indignities, and at last inhumanly murdered *in Berkeley Castle*, and his body buried in a private manner in the Abbey Church, at Gloucester.” The lines of Gray, in his celebrated poem of “*The Bard*,” are familiar to most school-boys, where he alludes to the cries of the suffering monarch

“Through *Berkeley’s roofs* that ring Shrieks of an agonized king!”

Yet as your correspondent, *J.S.* seems of the intelligent kind, he may be in possession of some authority to which he can refer, and thereby prove it is not merely an assertion inadvertently given, to increase the interest of his *Visit to Corfe Castle*. Knowing your wish that the pages of your entertaining *Mirror* should reflect the truth, the insertion of this will oblige your Constant Reader,

W.

LINES WRITTEN IN A CHURCHYARD

(For the Mirror.)

Why am I here?—Thou hast not need of me,
Home of the rotting and the rotten dead—
For thou art cumber'd to satiety,
And wilt be cumber'd—ay, when I am fled!
Why stand I here, the living among tombs?
Answer, all ye who own a grassy bed,
Answer your dooms.

Thou, massy stone! over whose heart art thou?
The lord who govern'd yonder giant place,
And ruled a thousand vassals at his bow.
Alack! how narrow and how small a space
Of what was human vanity and show
Serves for the maggot, when 'tis his to chase
The greatest and the latest of his race.

One of Earth's dear ones, of a noble birth,
Slumbers e'en *here*; of such supernal charms,
That but to smile was to awaken mirth,
And for that smile set loving fools in arms.
The grave ill balances such living worth,
For here the worm his richest pasture farms,
Unconscious of his harms.

Yon grassy sod, that scarcely seems a grave,
Deck'd with the daisy, and each lowly flower,
Time leaves no stone, recording of the knave,
Whether of humble, or of lordly power:
Fame says he was a bard—Fame did not save
His name beyond the living of his hour—
A luckless dower.

'Tis strange to see how equally we die,
Though equal honour be unknown to light,
The lord, the lady of distinction high,
And he, the bard, who sang their noble might,
Sink into death *alike* and *peacefully*;
Though some may want the marble's honour'd site,
Yet earth holds all that earthliness did slight.

P.T.

ANCIENT BOROUGH OF WENDOVER

(For the Mirror.)

This borough sent members to parliament in the 28th of Edward I. and again in the 1st and 2nd of Edward II.; after which the privilege was discontinued for above three hundred years. “The intermission, (says Britton,) was attended by the very remarkable circumstance of all recollection of the right of the borough having been lost, till about the period of the 21st of James I. when Mr. Hakeville, of Lincoln’s Inn, discovered by a search among the ancient parliament writs in the Tower, that the boroughs of Amersham, Wendover, and Great Marlow, had all sent members in former times, and petitions were then preferred in the names of those places, that their ancient liberty or franchise might be restored. When the King⁵ was informed of these petitions, he directed his solicitor, Sir Robert Heath, to oppose them with all might, declaring, that he was troubled with too great a number of burgesses already,” The sovereign’s opposition proved ineffectual, and the Commons decided in favour of the restoration of the privilege. Some particulars of this singular case may be found in Willis’s *Notitia Parliamentaria*.

The celebrated John Hampden represented this borough in five parliaments.

P. T. W.

⁵ James the First.

MANNERS & CUSTOMS OF ALL NATIONS

HIPPODROME GAMES

(For the Mirror.)

The Olympian *Hippodrome*, or horse-course, was a space of ground of six hundred paces long, surrounded with a wall, near the city of Elis, and on the banks of the river Alpheus. It was uneven, and in some degree irregular, on account of the situation;—in one part was a hill of moderate height; and the circuit was adorned with temples, altars, and other embellishments. There was a very famous *hippodrome* at Constantinople, which was begun by Alexander Severus, and finished by Constantine. This circus, called by the Turks *atmeican*, is four hundred paces long, and above one hundred paces wide. At the entrance of the hippodrome there is a pyramidal obelisk of granite, in one piece, about fifty feet high, terminating in a point, and charged with hieroglyphics. The Greek and Latin inscriptions on its base show that it was erected by Theodosius. The machines that were employed to raise it are represented upon it in basso-relievo. We have some vestiges in England of the *hippodromus*, in which the ancient inhabitants of this country performed their races. The most remarkable is that near Stonehenge, which is a long tract of ground, about three hundred and fifty feet, or two hundred Druid cubits wide, and more than a mile and three quarters, or six thousand Druid cubits in length, enclosed quite round with a bank of earth, extending directly east and west. The goal and career are at the east end. The goal is a high bank of earth, raised with a slope inwards, on which the judges are supposed to have sat. The metæ are two tumuli, or small barrows, at the west end of the course. These *hippodromes* were called, in the language of the country, *rhedagua*; the racer, *rhedagwr*; and the carriage, *rheda*—from the British word *rhedeg*, to run.

One of these *hippodromes*, about half a mile to the southward of Leicester, retains evident traces of the old name, *rhedagua* in the corrupted one of Rawdikes. “There is another of these,” says Dr. Stukely, “near Dorchester; and another on the banks of the river Lowther, near Penrith, in Cumberland; and another in the valley just without the town of Royston.”

WALTER E.C.

Pratt-street, Lambeth.

THE SKETCH-BOOK

THE BEGGAR WOMAN OF LOCARNO

At the foot of the Alps, near Locarno, was an old castle, belonging to a marquess, the ruins of which are still visible to the traveller, as he comes from St. Gothard—a castle with lofty and roomy apartments, high towers, and narrow windows. In one of these rooms, an old sick woman was deposited upon some straw, which had been shaken down for her by the housekeeper of the marquess, who had found her begging before the gate. The marquess, who was accustomed to go into this room on his return from hunting, to lay aside his gun, ordered the poor wretch to get up immediately out of her corner, and begone.

The creature arose, but slipping with her crutch upon the smooth floor, she fell, and injured her back so much, that it was with great difficulty she got up, and, moving across the room as she had been desired, groaning and crying sadly, sank down behind the chimney. Several years afterwards, when the circumstances of the marquess had been much reduced by war and the failure of his crops, a Florentine gentleman visited the castle, with the intention of purchasing it, in consequence of the beauty of the situation. The marquess, who was very anxious to have the bargain concluded, gave his wife directions to lodge the stranger in the same upper room in which the old woman had died, it having, in the meantime, been very handsomely fitted up; but, to their consternation, in the middle of the night, the stranger entered their room, pale and agitated, protesting loudly that the chamber was haunted by some invisible being; for that he had heard something rise up in the corner, as if it had been lying among straw, move over the chamber with slow and tottering steps, and sink down, groaning and crying, near the chimney.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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