

“WHEN GRANDFATHER WAS YOUNG.”



AMONG the many details of a more or less personal character to be found in the recently published “Reminiscences” of the Rev. T. Mozley (Longman and Co.) there is much that cannot fail to attract the attention and excite the interest of the general reader. The author’s experiences go so far back as the early part of the present century, and therefore to a

period anterior to the wonderful development of the “resources of civilisation” so characteristic of the Victorian era.

We, who have become so accustomed to the conveniences of modern life, find it often exceedingly difficult to realise that such a comparatively short time has elapsed since many of the most important of them were entirely unknown, and are, on the other hand, almost surprised to find that many of the habits and customs generally associated in our minds with a bygone age were still existent within the memory of persons yet living amongst us. It is, in fact, only by the perusal of such records as those we have now before us that we are enabled to form a correct estimate of English life in the days when our grandfathers were young, or of the innumerable changes that have been brought about since that time.

This is, however, only one point of interest among many. There are others of a social, biographical, topographical, or anecdotal character scattered in profusion throughout the work. We do not propose to touch upon more than a few of these in our present paper, and shall only make a chance selection of topics here and there, as we pass along.

THE PILLORY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Has any reader of English history ever thought of the pillory as a nineteenth-century mode of punishment? We fancy not; and yet Mr. Mozley actually witnessed its use on one occasion, though he fancies it must have been the very last instance of its infliction. This was not far from the year 1820!

“On approaching St. Sepulchre’s,” he writes, “from the west one day, I saw a crowd before Newgate, and in the midst of it something that one had to make out. A large door on a low platform revolved round a perpendicular central axis. On one face of the door you could discern with difficulty a head and a pair of

hands. When the other face of the door came round, there was a body without head or hands. Neither exhibition was at all effective. The crowd looked on quite silent and indifferent. I asked several bystanders who it was. None could answer. I found afterwards that it was a fellow-townsmen who had committed perjury in the Bankruptcy Court.”

Our penal code was at that time very severe, though the necessity of a reform in this matter was daily becoming more and more clearly recognised. Capital punishment was by no means reserved for murderers, but was equally inflicted on those found guilty of such offences as cattle-stealing, arson, forgery, and the like. Public executions were consequently a matter of the most ordinary occurrence, and too often formed the principal feature among holiday amusements. A story is told of a servant-girl at Gainsborough who obtained permission from her employers to walk to Lincoln to see an execution, but who returned in the evening in tearful disappointment. There had been a reprieve!

We often hear complaints in these days of the law’s delays. That could hardly have been the case sixty years ago, unless the following incident was altogether exceptional. On coming in to afternoon school one day, Dr. Russell, then head master of Charterhouse, informed his pupils that during the dinner-hour he had had his pocket picked of a handkerchief, and had got the thief sentenced to seven years’ transportation. It seems that while walking down Fleet Street he had felt a man’s hand at his pocket, and on suddenly turning round and seeing the delinquent, he instantly gave chase to the latter, who was speedily captured, and conveyed to the Old Bailey. The Recorder was at the time engaged in a trial, but on hearing what had taken place, he immediately proceeded to hear the new case, and within twenty minutes of the attempted theft had passed sentence on the offender.

TRAVELLING BY LAND AND WATER.

The means of locomotion were very scanty in the metropolis, and probably were even more so in provincial districts. “There were no cabs, or omnibuses, or river steamers, but only ‘hackney-coaches,’ very slow, very dirty, very expensive, and very dismal altogether. . . . Genteel people avoided them, and for making calls would engage a ‘glass coach,’ not very much better, but cleaner and more neatly appointed. I must mention, however, that it was always necessary to let down the glass before you opened the door, the glass being framed into the carriage as well as the door. Country ladies and gentlemen had to break a glass or two, and pay for it, before they understood the arrangement.”

The stage-coach was, of course, the usual means of transit from one part of the country to another. Mr. Mozley informs us that the journey from Derby to London “took seventeen or eighteen hours, and there was always a night in it. What cold, what wet, what snow did I not suffer!” he exclaims. “What wakeful-

ness, what sleepiness! Towards the close of a wakeful night there was no life in me, not even enough for sleep. I felt as one of Milton's convict souls, wedged in deep-ribbed ice. When the sun had risen an hour or two sleep came, not to refresh, but to torture me.” On one occasion he travelled with a thin, pale, elderly woman, ill-clad in black, who never once during the whole journey descended from her perch on the outside of the coach, or even moved to shake off the snow that had settled on her lap and shoulders. The guard, being spoken to on the subject, said she had come all the way from Edinburgh, and had never moved except to change coaches. She feared that if she once got down she would be unable to get up again. She had taken no food of any kind the whole way.

Travelling by water was sometimes adopted, but, so far as comfort was concerned, not always successfully. Two ladies wishing to journey from Bridlington to London, came in a collier, at the invitation of its owner, a relative. The winds proved adverse, and they were tossed about a whole fortnight, during which time they touched scarcely any solid food, and only a few cups of coffee. Steamboats were not as yet much in vogue, and even where they were better known, were looked upon with much disfavour by the sailors, who thought them “a very profane intrusion on the realms of old Neptune.”

It seems to have been the custom, however, for all families who could afford it to travel post in those days. Young ladies never thought of travelling alone in a public conveyance, and, indeed, compared to what they achieve in this direction now, can scarcely be said to have travelled at all. Judging from our author's experiences, this was not an altogether unmitigated evil. “Happening to return home a few days later than usual one Christmas, I found myself the only passenger. Outside and inside the coach was piled and crammed with fish and oysters. I was inside, and had hardly room to squeeze in. The guard was full of apologies, but appealed to his own hard case. There were a hundred and thirty packages to be dropped all along the road, and he had no little difficulty in finding them. I had to help him. My situation improved gradually, but upon my arrival at Derby a certain ‘ancient fish-like smell’ betrayed my company on the road.”

Coach accidents were not so common or so disastrous in their results as those of the railway have since become. Still, they were not altogether unknown. “Returning to town one beautiful frosty moonlight night in January, 1821,” says Mr. Mozley, “not far from Queen Eleanor's Cross, near Northampton, we met another coach. Our coachman did not detect in time that the other coachman was asleep, and trusted to his taking his proper side of the road. The result was a collision, the wheels becoming locked, the harness giving way, and the horses scampering off over the fields. Both coachmen were thrown to the ground, and one was much hurt.”

Speaking of accidents, Mr. Mozley tells us of a novel expedient adopted on one occasion by a party of

travellers for escaping the ordinary consequences of a railway collision, and which appears to have proved very successful. The story is told of the Rev. Henry Caswall. “He was once in a bad railway accident in the United States. The train was making up for lost time in a long winding decline. His fellow-passengers knew the state of the case. They took out their watches, and they betted on the prospect of making up the time. By-and-by the pace, which they could measure, left no doubt that at such a curve they could hardly escape going over. ‘The driver's a plucky fellow,’ they said, ‘for he's in the post of danger.’ Thereupon they prepared for the worst, and it may be as well to describe how they did it. They all formed themselves into balls, as hedgehogs and spiders do when they are frightened, by gathering themselves, legs, head, and arms, into the smallest compass and compactest form. The train went over, and they rolled and bumped about, getting plenty of contusions, but no broken bones. Caswall did the same with the like success.”

THE TRENT TIDE.

Most students of English geography have heard of the Severn “bore,” but we fancy that few of them are aware that there exists a formidable rival to this remarkable phenomenon in what has been enthusiastically described as “one of the wonders of nature.” We refer to what is locally known as “the eagle,” or Trent tide. Mr. Mozley thus alludes to it:—“Under frequently recurring circumstances we could be sure to see ‘the eagle’ rush up the river, a wall of waters seven or eight feet high, and capable of carrying a ship from its moorings, or floating one that had just before been reposing in the mud. My father once saw a ship caught by ‘the eagle’ and carried away with such force that the mooring-chain broke, and a portion of it flew as high as the mast-head. As this formidable power came up the river with the speed of an ordinary railway train, it was the duty of everybody who caught sight of its approach to give the alarm by crying out ‘War’ eagle!” At all high tides this sudden inrush of water is felt for several miles above the bridge at Gainsborough. It was at this town that the Danish king Sweyn effected a landing on English soil, and made his first settlement. Here also was born his son Canute, who lived in the palace which had been erected on the site afterwards occupied by the “Old Hall,” the grounds of which stretched down to the river. Tradition asserts that it was here that Canute took occasion to rebuke the flattery of his courtiers. “There would,” as our author suggests, “be some point in challenging ‘the eagle,’ for it has a strong personality, and the name itself is said to imply a sort of deification, being that of a Scandinavian divinity.”

ADDISON'S COUNTRY.

Among the many topographical touches with which these “Reminiscences” abound, those relating to Gainsborough and Derby are perhaps the most interesting, inasmuch as they are more intimately connected with the author's early life. We select one, however, having reference to an entirely different locality—

namely, Salisbury Plain. After comparing this "to the Atlantic Ocean suddenly fixed in mid-storm, only that there were no crests of foam," the writer proceeds: "The Plain has its share of compensations. Addison, born and bred in the midst, knew and felt them. No one could have written his translation of the 23rd Psalm unless he had passed many a hot, sultry day in the midst of thirsty downs, dusty lanes, and water meadows. About twelve o'clock clouds of dust, the tinkling of bells, and barking of dogs, and the hoarse voices of the poor shepherds, announced columns of sheep rushing down for three or four hours' pasture on the fresh luscious grass, after which they were driven back to pure air and dry quarters. . . . Beacon Hill, like most hills in the south of England, presented a very gradual slope to the east, and a very precipitous front to the west. You could drive up one side and roll down the other. The precipice overhung a dark, dismal valley, which our remote ancestors or predecessors made a national burying-ground. It contains some scores of king barrows, priest barrows, and other barrows, from huge rings to gentle heavings. I traversed it at all hours, and, never seeing a soul far or near, felt its weirdness. I am sure this was the Valley of the Shadow of Death in Addison's mind. A little way from the precipice and the barrows there is a large piece of broken ground, showing the vestiges of a more luxuriant vegetation than is found in the neighbourhood. Once in three or four years it breaks out into springs, which flow long enough to create an oasis. This must be the 'barren wilderness,' which the poet tells us is sometimes made to smile, and in which he sees the marks of a gracious and wonder-working God."

The whole of the chapters bearing on this portion of the country are intensely interesting, and we feel compelled to give one more extract from them having reference to the Roman occupation. "The history of

Salisbury Plain is written, or left, on its surface, in mounds, coins, rings, brooches, and other bits of bronze. Modern agriculture is fast effacing or carrying away these interesting records. I found a good many bronze coins, chiefly those of Carausius and Allectus—if I remember right, two pretenders to the purple, who rose rapidly to power, and were as rapidly disposed of. My antiquarian friends told me that bushels of these had been found. The pretenders had but little of the precious metals, so they coined bronzes to pass current at a nominal value far above their intrinsic worth. As long as the alternative lay between taking this money, or parting with commodities for no money at all, these coins were taken. When the pretenders, one after another, were slain, not only did the coins lose their fictitious value, but their possession was construed into a proof of treasonable compliance with the enemy, and the possessors put to death accordingly. So they were quickly thrown away."

We must conclude this short notice with an amusing anecdote given in connection with an out-of-the-way district in the Fens. It seems there was some one "in the neighbourhood who had a miniature forest, with wild animals, a lake, an island, a commodious planter's log-house approached by a bridge, and Indian curiosities. He invited the most fastidious dresser in the neighbourhood to come and see his settlement in the 'back-woods.' The bridge was a drawbridge ingeniously constructed, and he dropped his friend into the dirty pool below. 'Well, it's very sad, but I think I can find change for you. Happily,' he added veraciously, 'there's nobody here to see you in a strange guise.' So he dressed his friend in the gardener's third-best suit, with the addition of moccasins and an Indian mantle. 'Come to the fire and warm yourself,' he said, leading his friend into the principal room, where he found himself the centre of a large and admiring circle!"

MRS. JOHN ALLEN, OF RIDGE VIEW.*

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. BY CATHERINE OWEN.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

"Ridge View, Linwood, N.Y., U.S.

"Sept. 1st, 18—.



MY DEAR BROTHER,—Our dear Kate's letter has filled me with distress. Surely she must exaggerate the danger! Need I tell you, dear Fred, that the first impulse of my heart was to come to you? All the twenty years that have passed have not weaned my heart from you and my old home; but, my brother, my duty lies here—my dear husband needs my care. Try and understand why I do not fly, without thinking me cold and selfish. My heart turns to you—longs for you—and yet I cannot come.

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Explanation, as to all my reasons, would be too long to give, but my will has nothing to do with them—believe that!

"Kate's portrait is just as I pictured her to myself. Ah me! how my childless heart yearns for her!

"I think, my brother, if you could be in my mountain home, and enjoy the pine-scented air, you might take in new life; but alas! alas!"

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The letter of which the above is a part was received in an old English manor-house in Norfolk. The one who received it was on his death-bed. A tall, slender girl stood near him.

"Kate," he said, "it is as I have often suspected. There is something wrong with Mary, which she hides from me. That man is not kind—tyrannises over her, or something. Vaguely I have feared it—not