

with the title of governor-general. He had married the daughter of the Russian governor, and she accompanied him in all his travels, but what was her ultimate fate I do not remember having heard. After returning to the Isle of France, where the governor still kept up his hostility and opposed him by every means in his power, he set sail with about three hundred men for Madagascar. He landed at Antongil Bay, where he was well received by the chiefs, but he at first was subject to a good deal of opposition from the natives generally. He did his best to conciliate them, but as he had often to employ force, and to keep up a strict military rule at the same time, it must have been difficult to persuade them that his intentions were pacific and philanthropic. He seems to have met with heroic courage all the innumerable difficulties by which he was beset. He lost many of his officers and men by sickness, as the position where he attempted to found his first settlement, from being surrounded by marshes, was very unhealthy. Among others, his only boy lost his life by fever. He was left without the necessary supplies he expected from the Isle of France, the governor purposely neglecting to send them. The natives also were incited by emissaries of the governor to oppose him, while of the officers sent to him, some were incapable, and others came with the express purpose of betraying him. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, by the middle of 1775 the settlers had built a fort in a more healthy situation, which was called Fort Louis, had constructed all the necessary buildings for the town of Louisbourg, and had formed a road twenty-one miles in length, and twenty-four feet in breadth. The Count had also done something towards civilising the people, and among other important measures had persuaded the women to give up their practice of infanticide, which had been terribly prevalent. They, however, refused to ratify the engagement without the presence of the Count's wife, who was residing at the Isle of France. She was accordingly sent for, and on her arrival, the women of the different provinces, assembling before her, bound themselves by an oath never to sacrifice any of their children. They agreed that any who should break this oath should be made slaves, while they were to send all deformed children to an institution which had been founded by the Count in the settlement for that purpose. He had by this time formed alliances with many of the surrounding chiefs, who ever afterwards remained faithful to him. In other parts of the island combinations were formed against him. He accordingly mustered his forces, and marching against his enemies, who had brought forty thousand men into the field, put them to flight. Those who fell into his hands he treated with so much leniency and kindness, that he ultimately attached them to his cause. A curious superstition of the natives was the cause of his being at length raised to the dignity of the principal chief of the island. It appears that the hereditary successor to the title was missing, when some of the natives took it into their heads that the Count Benyowsky was the lost heir. The idea gained ground, at the very time that the affairs of the Count were in a very precarious condition. His own health was failing, the more faithful among his European officers were dead, his enemies in the Mauritius had succeeded in prejudicing the minds of the members of the French Government against him, and two if not more vessels bringing out supplies had been lost. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that he should have accepted the proffered dignity, which shortly led to his being recognised as the principal chief and supreme ruler of the whole island.

Commissioners had been sent out from France

to investigate the affairs of the settlement. While they were there he took the opportunity of giving up the command of the settlement to another officer, and entirely dissolved his connection with it and with France, though he at the same time, with the other chiefs, expressed his desire to live on friendly terms with the inhabitants, and to support the settlement to the best of his ability. He employed some time after this in consolidating his power and in improving the condition of the people. He also drew up a constitution which for those days was of the most liberal character. Having done all he could to civilise the people, he resolved to go to Europe to establish mercantile relations with different countries for the improvement of the commerce of his adopted country.

In France, though he had some friends who welcomed him cordially, he was coldly received by those in power, though his course was supported by the celebrated Dr. Franklin, who was at that time in Paris. At length quitting the country, he went to England; but though he offered to place the country under the protection of the English Government, no encouragement was afforded him. All his hopes in Europe having failed, he set sail for the United States, in a vessel he chartered with a cargo of goods suited to the markets of Madagascar. After remaining for some time in the United States and obtaining another ship and cargo, he reached Antongil Bay in July, 1785. He was here cordially welcomed by the chiefs, but instead of going into the interior and assuming the reins of government, he remained on the coast, for the purpose of establishing trading-posts where his goods might be disposed of. He had captured one port from the French, and was engaged in repairing a fort built by them, when a body of troops landing from a French frigate attacked him. He retired with some few Europeans and natives into the fort, where he attempted to defend himself. The French advanced, he was shot through the body, and being ignominiously dragged out, directly afterwards expired. Poor Count Benyowsky! I could not help feeling sorrow when I heard of his sad fate.

The climate of the low lands near the seashore was, from what we heard, very unhealthy, but in the hill country of the interior it is as healthy as any part of the world. We heard a good deal of the English and French pirates, who had formed, a century before, some flourishing settlements on the northern coasts. The name of a bay we visited (Antongil) was derived from one of the most celebrated, Anthony Gill. Several other places also obtained their names from members of the fraternity of freebooters. While the pirates continued their depredations on the ocean, they in general behaved well to the natives, but when being hotly pressed by the men-of-war of the people they had been accustomed to rob, they entered upon the most nefarious of all traffics, that of slaves, and to obtain them instigated the people of one tribe to make war on those of another. This traffic has ever since been carried on, greatly contributing to retard the progress of civilisation.

VILLAGE CLUBS AND READING-ROOMS.

For comparison with other similar institutions, we give the following statement from the Rev. Dr. Tristram, of Greatham, Stockton-on-Tees:—

"Several of the working men in my parish seeing the evils inseparably connected with public-house clubs, of which there are three in this village, resolved to

form themselves into a sick club, the fundamental rule of which should be that the meeting should not be held at a public-house. The movement was spontaneous on their part, and originated several years before I entered upon the charge of the parish. The only extraneous assistance they receive is the use of the boys' school-room for their meetings, the kind co-operation of the schoolmaster as their accountant, and the proceeds of an annual lecture given by myself or some other friend. The subscription is 1s. 3d. per month for the sick fund, 3d. for the medical officer, and 1s. for each funeral of a member, or 6d. for the funeral of a member's child. The benefits are—an allowance of 7s. per week in sickness, medical attendance for cash subscribing members, £4 for the funeral of a member, £3 for that of his wife, and 30s. for the funeral of a member's child. The club is more than self-supporting, and a larger sum has been funded than has been received from all the donations and lectures since the commencement.

"Our Parochial Institute and Working Men's Club is not six years old, but is self-supporting. It consists of a reading-room and library, with conveniences for letter-writing (a most useful accommodation for a working man), a smoking and conversation room, well supplied with draught and chess boards, dominoes, etc., and a quoit-ground behind. With a population of seven hundred we suffer from the diversified attraction of seven public-houses, more than sufficient to demoralise the place. It was our object to make the institute a successful counter attraction, and though it has not reclaimed many of the confirmed sots (though even here it has been by no means without results), yet it has withdrawn from the public-house many young men who were beginning to resort to them, and has become decidedly a popular institution. After working hours both rooms, especially on washing nights, are crowded, and every newspaper and draught-board occupied.

"We raised nearly £20 for furniture and outfit, and do not scruple to solicit contributions for our library, consisting already of about 300 volumes, many of them costly works; but for our current expenditure—rent, lights, papers, etc.—we rely entirely upon the members' subscriptions. The subscription is 1s. 6d. per quarter, and we have three daily and six weekly papers. The average number of members is fifty. Last year our ordinary receipts were £14 4s. 4d.

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
Rent and Taxes	5	13	6
Attendance	2	12	0
Coals and firing	2	5	8
Oil	2	8	4
Newspapers (less sales)	3	17	1
	<hr/>		
	£16	16	7

"Our extraordinary receipts were £16 1s. 6d., arising from profits of lectures, donations, and the surplus from the dinner tickets; and of this £12 was available for the purchase of books for the library, after defraying the deficit on the subscription account.

"Our annual new year's supper has proved a most valuable cement in binding together the members. Each pays 1s. 6d., and, as many farmers and other friends contribute a piece of beef, a hare, a gallon of beer, or some such substantial assistance to the feast, there is a large cash balance to carry to the credit of our funds. The institute is managed by an elected

committee, but the property is vested in the vicar and churchwardens."

The Greatham Club is a fair representative of a well-managed institution on a small scale. In many rural districts an immense benefit would be conferred on the working classes by the establishment of similar clubs, independent of the influence of publicans and other interested persons.

CHARACTERISTIC LETTERS.

COMMUNICATED BY THE AUTHOR OF "MEN I HAVE KNOWN."
JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART.

I AM much gratified by having it in my power to leave a brief tribute to the memory of John Gibson Lockhart. As far as I am aware, from the reading of contemporary publications of fifty years, even to the present day, few characters have ever been less understood or more misrepresented. But mine is a simple statement: neither an apology nor a defence, and the leading facts in the story of his life will best serve my purpose.

After a liberal education in the Glasgow and Oxford schools, he was called to the Bar in Edinburgh at the age of twenty-two, in the year 1816. He had distinguished himself by his talents, and Blackwood's Magazine, started in the following year, offered a fair field for their exercise. The pursuit of law was then a blank, and scarcely anything else at any future time. At once he plunged into the literary and political arena with a will. His pen was sharp, his ridicule biting, his opinions energetic, and party spirit raged fiercely throughout the country. He, like Sir Walter Scott, was a high Tory; and no wonder that writers on the other side accused him of many misdemeanours, of want of generosity, and of unsparing criticism. But were his adversaries mealy-mouthed? Were the "Edinburgh Review," the "Monthly Magazine," and other organs of his Whig opponents, gentle lambs to bleat and be barked to death by a cur like this, or by articles in the "Quarterly," or elsewhere? No. *Audi alteram partem*; it was the temper of the times. Both sides fought in earnest, with swords as sharp as they could make them, and Lockhart was neither more nor less than an exceedingly clever and skilful volunteer in the ranks in which he served. If I durst venture an observation, I would say that the style of criticism at the period referred to was less envenomed than it had previously been, and less dictatorially and domineeringly offensive than it is generally at the present day. But be that as it may, the censors of Lockhart are ready to allow that, however objectionable they considered him as a critic, he was "most loved by those who knew him best." In short, he was disliked and abused by those whom he politically disliked and abused; and he was warmly regarded and esteemed by those intimate with him, and who best knew the man himself.

On the most confidential footing with him for twenty years, during which both were anxiously devoted to the active business of literature, I can bear the truest testimony to his ardent feeling on behalf of our literary brotherhood, and the interest he was ever ready to take in their cause. Many a time and oft has he called on me to subserve his exertions, and if all the world could have proved him the sternest of critics, I must still have sought refuge in the conviction that a kinder hearted man did not exist.

The following letter from another hand brings the first and last occupation of Lockhart in London into