

# VARIOUS

NOTES AND QUERIES,  
NUMBER 58, DECEMBER  
7, 1850

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**Various  
Notes and Queries, Number 58,  
December 7, 1850 / A Medium of Inter-  
communication for Literary Men,  
Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc**

**NOTES**

**FURTHER NOTES ON THE HIPPOPOTAMUS**

The following remarks are supplementary to a note on the hippopotamus in Vol. ii, p. 35. In that note the exhibition of the hippopotamus at the Roman games is not traced lower than the time of the Emperor Commodus. Helagabalus, however, 218-22 A.D., had hippopotami among the various rare animals which he displayed in public as a part of his state. (Lamprid. c. 28) A hippopotamus was likewise in the vast collection of animals which were prepared for the Persian triumph of Gordian III., but were exhibited at the secular games celebrated by the Emperor Philip in the 1000th year of Rome, 248 A.D. (*Capitol. in Gordian. Tert.*, c. 33.) In the seventh eclogue of Calpurnius, a countryman describes the animals which he saw in the Roman amphitheatre, among which is the hippopotamus:

"Non solum nobis silvestria cernere monstra  
Contigit; æquoreos ego cum certantibus ursis  
Spectavi vitulos, et equorum nomine dignum,  
Sed deforme genus, quod in illo nascitur amni  
Qui sata riparum venientibus irrigat undis."

VII. 64—8.

Calpurnius is generally referred to the time of Carus and Numerian, about 283 A.D.; but his date is not determined by any satisfactory proof. (See Dr. Smith's *Dict. of Ancient Biog. and Myth.* in v.)

There is no trace of a live hippopotamus having been brought to Europe between the time specified in the last of these testimonies and the middle of the sixteenth century. When Belon visited Constantinople, he saw there a living hippopotamus, which had been brought from the Nile:

"L'animal que j'ai veu vivant à Constantinople (he says), apporté du Nil,  
convenoit en toutes marques avec ceulx qu'on voit gravez en diverses medales des  
Empereurs."—*Observations*, liv. ii. c. 32. fol. 103. b. ed. 1564.

Belon returned to Paris from the Levant in the year 1550. In his work on fishes, p. 17., he speaks of another Frenchman, lately returned from Constantinople, who had seen the same animal. (See Schneider on *Artedi Synonym. Piscium*, p. 267.) P. Gillius likewise, who visited Constantinople in 1550, saw there the same hippopotamus, as he states in his description of the elephant, Hamburg, 114. (Schneider, *Ib.* p. 316.)

Your correspondent, Mr. G. S. Jackson (Vol. ii., p. 277.) controverts the opinion expressed in my former note, that none of the Greek writers had seen a live hippopotamus. He thinks that

"Herodotus's way of speaking would seem to show that he was describing from his own observation;" and he infers that the animal was found at that time as far north as the Delta, from the fact, mentioned by Herodotus, of its being held sacred in the nome of Papremis. But, in the first place, it does not follow that, because the hippopotamus was held sacred in the Papremitic nome, it was found in the Nile as low as that district. In the next place, there is nothing in the words of Herodotus to indicate that he had seen the object of his description. (ii. 71.) On the other hand, the substance of his description tends strongly to the inference that he had *not* seen the animal. It is difficult to conceive that any eye-witness could have described a hippopotamus as having the hoofs of an ox, with the mane and tail of a horse. His information as to javelins being made of its skin was doubtless correct, and he may perhaps have seen some of these weapons. Cuvier conjectures that the original author of the description in Herodotus had seen only the teeth and some part of the skin of the real hippopotamus; but that the other particulars were taken from a figure or description of the gnu (*Trad. de Pline*, tom. vi. p. 444.) This supposition is improbable, for the gnu is an animal of Southern Africa, and was doubtless unknown to the Egyptians in the time of Herodotus. Moreover, Cuvier is in error as to the statement of Herodotus respecting the animal's size: he says that the animal is equal in size, not to an ass, but to the largest ox. The statement as to the ass is to be found in *Arist. Hist. An.*, ii. 7. Cuvier's note is hastily written; for he says that Diodorus describes the hippopotamus as equalling the strongest bulls,—a statement not to be found in Diodorus. (i. 35.) His judgment, however, is clear, as to the point that none of the ancient naturalists described the hippopotamus from autopsy. The writer of the accurate history of the hippopotamus in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, vol. xii. p. 247., likewise takes the same view. If Achilles Tattius is correct in stating that "the horse of the Nile" was the native Egyptian name of the animal, it is probable that the resemblance to the horse indicated in the description of Herodotus, was supplied by the imagination of some informant.

In the mosaic of Palestrina (see Barthelemy in *Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript.*, tom. xxx. p. 503.), the hippopotamus appears three times in the lower part of the composition, at the left-hand corner. Two entire figures are represented, and one head of an animal sinking into the river. Men in a boat are throwing darts at them, some of which are sticking in their backs. (See *Ib.* p. 521.) Diodorus (i. 35.) describes the hippopotamus as being harpooned, and caught in a manner similar to the whale. Barthelemy properly rejects the supposition that the mosaic of Palestrina is the one alluded to by Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 64.) as having been constructed by Sylla. He places it in the time of Hadrian, and supposes it to represent a district of Upper Egypt, with which the introduction of the hippopotamus well accords. The true form of the hippopotamus was unknown in Italy in the time of Sylla.

The word ἵπποπόταμος as used by the Latin writers, instead of ἵππος ποτάμιος occurs in Lucian (*Rhet. Præcept.*, c. 6.). The author of the *Cynegetica*, who addresses his poem to the Emperor Caracalla, describes the hippopotamus under the name of ἵππαγρος, "the wild horse," compounded like ὄναγρος (iii. 251-61.). In this passage the old error as to the cloven hoofs and the mane is repeated. It is added that the animal will not endure captivity; but if any one is snared by means of ropes, he refuses to eat or drink. That this latter statement is fabulous, is proved by the hippopotamus taken alive to Constantinople, and by the very tame animal now in the Zoological Garden.

The fable about the hippopotamus destroying its father and violating its mother, cited before from Damascius, is to be found in Plutarch, *De Solert. Anim.*, c. 4. Pausan. (viii. 46. § 4.) mentions a Greek statue, in which the face was made of the teeth of the hippopotamus instead of ivory.

An interesting account of the younger hippopotamus in the Zoological Garden, by Professor Owen, may be seen in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* for June last.

L.

## PARALLEL PASSAGES: COLERIDGE, HOOKER, BUTLER

I do not remember to have seen the following parallels pointed out.

Coleridge. *The Nightingale. A conversation poem*:

"The nightingale—  
'Most musical, most melancholy' bird!  
A melancholy bird! Oh! idle thought!  
In nature there is nothing melancholy.  
But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced  
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,  
. . . . he, and such as he,  
First named these notes a melancholy strain."

Plato *Phædo*, § 77. (p. 85., Steph.):

"Men, because they fear death themselves, slander the swans, and say that they sing from pain lamenting their death, and do not consider that no bird sings when hungry, or cold, or suffering any other pain; no, not even the nightingale, and the swallow, and the hoopoe, which you know are said to sing for grief," &c.

Hooker, *E. P. I. c.5. § 2.*:

"All things therefore coveting as much as may be to be like unto God in being ever, that which cannot hereunto attain personally doth seek to continue itself another way, that is, by offspring and propagation."

Clem. Alex. *Strom.* II. 23. § 138. (p. 181. Sylb.)

Sir J. Davies. *Immortality of the Soul*, sect 7.:

"And though the soul could cast spiritual seed,  
Yet would she not, because she never dies;  
For mortal things desire their like to breed,  
That so they may their kind immortalise."

Plato *Sympos.* §32. (p. 207. D. Steph.):

"Mortal natures seek to attain, suffer as they can, to immortality; but they can attain to it by this generation only; for thus they ever leave a new behind them to supply the place of the old." Compare § 31. "Generation immortalises the mortal, so far as it can be immortalised."—Plato *Leg.* iv. (p. 721. G.), vi. § 17. (p. 773. E.); Ocell. *Lucan.* iv. § 2.

Butler, *Serm. I. on Human Nature* (p. 12. Oxford, 1844):

"Which [external goods], according to a very ancient observation, the most abandoned would choose to obtain by innocent means, if they there as easy, and as effectual to their end."

Dr. Whewell has not, I think, in his edition, pointed out the passage alluded to, Cic. *de Fin.* III., c. 11. § 36.:

"Quis est enim, aut quis unquam fuit aut avaritiâ tam ardentî, aut tam effrenatis cupiditatibus, ut eamdem illam rem, quam adipisci scelere quovis velit, non multis

partibus malit ad sese, etiam omni impunitate proposita, sine facinore, quam illo modo pervenire?"

*J. E. B. Mayor.*

Marlborough College.

## SHAKSPEARE AND THE OLD ENGLISH ACTORS IN GERMANY

My studies on the first appearance of Shakspeare on the German stage, by means of the so-called "English Comedians" who from the end of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century visited Germany and the Netherlands, led me to the following passage of a Dutch author:

"In the Voyages of Vincent le Blanc through England, I met with a description of the representation of a most absurd tragedy, which I recognised to be the *Titus Andronicus* of Shakspeare."

I have examined the *Voyages of Vincent le Blanc* without having been able to discover the passage alluded to; and as the Dutch author says that some time had elapsed between his first reading those *Voyages* and the composition of his treatise, and as he seems to quote only from memory, I am led to believe his having confounded Vincent le Blanc with some other traveller of the same period.

Undoubtedly one of your numerous readers can furnish me with the title of the work in which such a description occurs, or with the name of some other foreign traveller who may have visited England at the period alluded to, and in whose works I may find the description mentioned above.

*Albert Cohn.*

Berlin, Nov. 19. 1850.

## TEN CHILDREN AT A BIRTH

The following circumstance, although perhaps hardly coming within the ordinary scope of the "Notes and Queries," appears to me too curious to allow a slight doubt to prevent the attempt to place it on permanent and accessible record. Chancing, the other day, to overhear an ancient gossip say that there was living in her neighbourhood a woman who was one of *ten* children born at the same time, I laughed at her for her credulity,—as well I might! As, however, she mentioned a name and place where I might satisfy myself, I called the next day at a small greengrocer's shop in this town, the mistress of which, a good-looking, respectable woman, aged seventy, at once assured me that her mother, whose name was Birch, and came from Derby, had been delivered of *ten children*; my informant having been the only one that lived, "*the other nine*," she added, "*being in bottle in the Museum in London!*" On mentioning the matter to a respectable professional gentleman of this place, he said "he had a recollection of the existence of a glass jar, which was alleged to contain some such preparation, in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, as mentioned when he was a pupil in London." Of the question, or the fact, of so marvellous a gestation and survivorship in the history of human nature should strike the editor of "Notes and Queries" as forcibly as his correspondent, the former, should he publish this article, may perhaps be kind enough to accompany it with the result of at least an inquiry, as to whether or not the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons does contain anything like corroborative evidence of so strange, and, if true, surely so unprecedented a phenomenon.

N. D.

[We are enabled by the courtesy of Professor Owen to state that there exists no corroboration of this remarkable statement in the Museum of the College of Surgeons. The largest number at a birth, of which any authentic record appears, is five, and the Museum contains, in case No. 3681, five children, of about five months, all females, which were born at the same time. Three were still-born, two were born alive, and survived their birth but a short time. The mother, Margaret Waddington, aged twenty-one, was a poor woman of the township of Lower Darling, near Blackburn in Lancashire. This remarkable birth took place on the 24th April, 1786, and was the subject of a communication to the Royal Society, which contained also the result of an investigation into similar cases which could be well authenticated, and which may be seen in a note in the admirable Catalogue of the College Museum, vol. v. pp. 177-185. As the remarkable birth described by our correspondent N. D. took place five years previously to these inquiries, and is not mentioned, it is scarcely possible to doubt that his informant must be labouring under some great mistake. If such a birth took place, it is probable that the parish register will contain some record of the fact. Our correspondent will, perhaps, take the trouble to make some further investigations, so as to trace the source of the error, for error there must be, in the statement of his informant.]

## GEORGE HERBERT AND BEMERTON CHURCH

It is gratifying to see that some of your correspondents are taking, an interest in the "worthy, lowly, and lovely" (as Isaac Walton called him) Mr. George Herbert (Vol. ii., pp. 103. 414.). It may tend to increase that interest, if I send you a note I made a few years ago, when I visited Bemerton, and had the pleasure of officiating within the walls of that celebrated little church. The rector kindly showed me the whole Parsonage House; the parts rebuilt by Herbert were traceable; but the inscription set up by him on that occasion is not there, nor had it been found, viz.:

"TO MY SUCCESSOR.

"If thou chance for to find,  
A new house to thy mind,  
And built without thy cost;  
Be good to the poor,  
As God gives the store,  
And then my labour's not lost."

It may truly be said to stand near the chapel (as his biographer calls it), being distant only the width of the road, thirty-four feet, which in Herbert's time was forty feet, as the building shows. On the south is a grass-plot sloping down to the river, whence is a beautiful view of Sarum Cathedral in the distance. A very aged fig-tree grows against the end of the house, and a medlar in the garden, both, traditionally, planted by Herbert.

The whole length and breadth of the church is forty-five feet by eighteen. The south and west windows are of the date called Decorated, say 1300. They are two-light windows, and worthy of imitation. The east window is modern. The walls have much new brickwork and brick buttresses, after the manner recommended in certain *Hints to Churchwardens*, Lond. 1825. A little square western turret contains an ancient bell of the fourteenth century (diameter, twenty-four inches), the daily sound of which used to charm the ploughmen from their work, that they "might offer their devotions to God with him."

"Note, it was a saying of his 'That his time spent in prayer and cathedral music elevated his soul, and was his heaven upon earth.'"—Walton.

The doorway is Jacobean, as is the chest or parish coffer, and also the pulpit canopy; the old sittings had long been removed. The font is circular, of early English date, lined with lead, seventeen inches diameter, by ten inches deep. The walls were (1841) very dilapidated.

It cannot but be a surprise to every admirer of George Herbert and to all visitors to this highly favoured spot, to find no monument whatever to the memory of that bright example of an English parish priest. This fact need surely only to be made known to insure ample funds for rebuilding the little church, and "beautifying" it in all things as Herbert would desire (he once did it "at his own cost"), retaining, if I may be allowed to suggest, the decorated windows, with the font and bell, which, from my *Notes and Recollections*, seem to be all that remains of what he must have so often looked upon and cherished.

From the register I was permitted to extract this entry:

"Mr. George Herbert, Esq., Parson, of Ffoughlston and Bemerton, was buried  
3 day of March, 1632."

The *locus in quo* is by this still left doubtful. May I, in conclusion, add a quotation from Isaac Walton:

"He lived and died like a saint, unspotted from the world, full of alms deeds, full of humility, and all the examples of a virtuous life. 'I wish (if God shall be so pleased) that I may be so happy as to die like him.'"

*H. T. Ellacombe.*

Clyst St. George, Nov. 25. 1850.

## MINOR NOTES

*Lord Mayor's Show in 1701.*—Among the varieties which at different times have graced the procession of the City on Lord Mayor's day, be pleased to take the following from the *Post-boy*, Oct. 30. to Nov. 1. 1701:

"The Maiden Queen who rid on the Lord Mayor's day in the pageant, in imitation of the Patroness of the Mercer's Company, had a fine suit of cloaths given her, valued at ninety guineas, a present of fifty guineas, four guineas for a smock, and a guinea for a pair of gloves."

Y. S.

*Sir Thomas Phillipps's Manuscripts.*—Many inquiries are made in your useful publication after books and authors, which may easily be answered by the querist referring to the Catalogue of Sir Thomas Phillipps's Manuscripts in the British Museum, the Society of Antiquaries, the *Athenæum*, or the Bodleian Library.

T.

*Translation from Owen, &c.*—I do not remember seeing in a subsequent number of "Notes And Queries" any version of Owen's epigram, quoted by Dr. Maitland in No. 17. I had hoped Rufus would have tried his hand upon it; but as he has not, I send you a translation by an old friend of the Doctor's, which has at least the merit of being a close one, and catching, perhaps, not a little of the spirit of the original.

### "Owen de Libro suo

"Oxoniæ salsus (juvenis tum) more vetusto  
Wintoniæque (puer tum) piperatus eram.  
Si quid inest nostro piperisve salisve libello,  
Oxoniense sal est, Wintoniense piper."

### "Owen on his Book

"When fresh at Oxon I a salting got;  
At Winton I'd been pepper'd piping hot;  
If aught herein you find that's sharp and nice,  
'Tis Oxon's seasoning, and Winton's spice."

I subjoin also an epitaph<sup>1</sup> from the chapel of Our Ladye in Gloucester Cathedral, translated by the same hand.

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<sup>1</sup> On Elizabeth Williams, youngest daughter of Miles (Smith), and wife of John Williams, Esq., died in child-bed at the age of seventeen. The above Miles Smith, was Bishop of Gloster during the latter part of Henry VIII. and part of Elizabeth's reign.

## "Elizabetha loquitur

"Conjugis effigiem sculpsisti in marmore conjux  
Sic me immortalem te statuisse putas;  
Sed Christus fuerat viventi spesque fidesque  
Sic me mortalem non sinit esse Deus."  
"Say, didst thou think within this sculptured stone  
Thy faithful partner should immortal be?  
Fix'd was her faith and hope on Christ alone,  
And thus God gave her immortality."

*F. T. J. B.*

Deanery of Gloucester.

*Epigram on the late Bull.*—Pray preserve the following admirable epigram, written, it is said, by one of the most accomplished scholars of the university of Oxford:—

"Cum Sapiente Pius nostras juravit in aras:  
Impius heu Sapiens, desipiensque Pius."

Thus translated:

"The wise man and the Pius have laid us under bann;  
Oh Pious man unwise! oh impious Wise-man!"

*S. M. H.*

*Bailie Nicol Jarvie* (Vol. ii., p. 421.).—When we spoke recently of Charles Mackay, the inimitable Bailie Nicol Jarvie of one of the Terryfications (though not by Terry) of Scott's *Rob Roy* having made a formal affidavit that he was a real "Edinburgh Gutter Bluid," we suspect some of our readers themselves suspected a joke. The affidavit itself has, however, been printed in the *Athenæum*, accompanied by an amusing commentary, in which the document is justly pronounced "a very curious one." Here it is:

"At Edinburgh, the Fourteenth day of November, One thousand eight hundred and fifty years.

"In presence of John Stoddart, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the City of Edinburgh, appeared Charles Mackay, lately Theatre Royal, residing at number eleven Drummond Street, Edinburgh; who being solemnly sworn and examined depones, that he is a native of Edinburgh, having been born in one of the houses on the north side of the High Street of said city, in the month of October one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven. That the deponent left Edinburgh for Glasgow when only about nine years of age, where he sojourned for five years; thence he became a wanderer in many lands, and finally settled once more in Edinburgh a few months before February eighteen hundred and nineteen years, when the drama of *Rob Roy*

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