

# VARIOUS

NOTES AND QUERIES,  
NUMBER 79, MAY 3,  
1851

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# Various Notes and Queries, Number 79, May 3, 1851 / A Medium of Inter-communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc

## Notes

### ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHAUCER NO. V

#### *The Arke of Artificial Day.*

Before proceeding, to point out the indelible marks by which Chaucer has, as it were, stereotyped the true date of the journey to Canterbury, I shall clear away another stumbling-block, still more insurmountable to Tyrwhitt than his first difficulty of the "halfe cours" in Aries, viz. the seeming inconsistency in statements (1.) and (2.) in the following lines of the prologue to the Man of Lawe's tale:—

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| (1.) | { | "Oure hoste saw wel that the bright sonne,<br>The arke of his artificial day, had ironne<br>The fourthe part and halfe an houre and more,  |
|      |   | * * * *  |
| (2.) | { | And saw wel that the shadow of every tree<br>Was as in length of the same quantitie,<br>That was the body erecte that caused it,<br>And therefore by the shadow he toke his wit<br>That Phebus, which that shone so clere and bright,<br>Degrees was fve and fourty clombe on hight,<br>And for that day, as in that latitude<br>It was ten of the klok, he gan conclude." |

The difficulty will be best explained in Tyrwhitt's own words:—

"Unfortunately, however, this description, though seemingly intended to be so accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the MSS. that it was 'ten of the clock,' nor to fix upon any other hour; as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the 28th, or of any other day of April, in this climate."—*Introductory Discourse*, § xiv.

In a foot-note, Tyrwhitt further enters into a calculation to show that, on the 28th of April, the fourth part of the day and half an hour and more (even with the liberal allowance of a quarter of an hour to the indefinite phrase '*and more*') would have been completed by nine o'clock A.M. at the latest, and therefore at least an hour too soon for coincidence with (2.).

Now one would think that Tyrwhitt, when he found his author relating facts, "*seemingly intended to be so accurate*," would have endeavoured to discover whether there might not be some hidden meaning in them, the explaining of which might make that consistent, which, at first, was apparently the reverse.

Had he investigated with such a spirit, he must have discovered that the expression "arke of the artificial day" *could not*, in this instance, receive its obvious and usual meaning, of the horary duration from sunrise to sunset—

And for this simple reason: That such a meaning would *presuppose a knowledge of the hour*—of the very thing in request—and which was about to be discovered by "our hoste," who "toke his wit" from the sun's altitude for the purpose! But he knew already that the fourth part of the day IN TIME had elapsed, he must necessarily have also known what that time was, without the necessity of calculating it!

Now, Chaucer, whose choice of expression on scientific subjects is often singularly exact, says, "Our hoste *saw* that the sonne," &c.; he must therefore have been referring to some visible situation: because, afterwards, when the time of day has been obtained from calculation, the phrase changes to "*gan conclude*" that it was ten of the clock.

It seems, therefore, certain that, even setting aside the question of consistency between (1.) and (2.), we must, *upon other grounds*, assume that Chaucer had some meaning in the expression "arke of the artificial day," different from what must be admitted to be its obvious and received signification.

To what other ark, then, could he have been alluding, if not to the *horary* diurnal ark?

I think, to the Azimuthal Arch of the Horizon included between the point of sunrise and that of sunset!

The situation of any point in that arch is called its bearing; it is estimated by reference to the points of the compass; it is therefore *visually* ascertainable: and it requires no previous knowledge of the hour in order to determine when the sun has completed the fourth, or any other, portion of it.

Here, then, is *primâ facie* probability established in favour of this interpretation. And if, upon examination, we find that it also clears away the discrepancy between (1.) and (2.), probability becomes certainty.

Assuming, upon evidence which I shall hereafter explain, that the sun's declination, on the day of the journey, was 13° 26' North, or thirteen degrees and half,—the sun's bearing at rising, in the neighbourhood of London, would be E.N.E., at setting W.N.W.; the whole included arch, 224°; and the time at which the sun would complete one-fourth, or have the bearing, S.E. by E., would be about 20 minutes past nine A.M.,—thus leaving 40 minutes to represent Chaucer's "halfe an hour and more!"

A very remarkable approximation—which converts a statement apparently contradictory, into a strong confirmation of the deduction to be obtained from the other physical facts grouped together by Chaucer with such extraordinary skill!

On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that the "hoste's" subsequent admonition to the pilgrims to make the best use of their time, warning them that "the fourthe partie of this day is gon," seems again to favour the idea that it is the day's actual horary duration that is alluded to.

This can be only hypothetically accounted for by observing that in this, as in many other instances, Chaucer seems to delight in a sort of disguised phraseology; as though to veil his true meaning, and designedly to create scientific puzzles to exercise the knowledge and discernment of his readers.

*A. E. B.*

Leeds, April 14. 1851.

## FOREIGN ENGLISH—GUIDE TO AMSTERDAM

I doubt not many of your readers will have been as much amused as myself with the choice specimens of Foreign English enshrined in your pages. When at Amsterdam, some years since, I purchased a *Guide* to that city, which I regard as a considerable literary curiosity in the same line. It was published at Amsterdam, by E. Maascamp, in 1829, and contains from beginning to end a series of broken English, professing all the while to be written by an Englishman.

It commences with the following "Advertisement:"

"The city of Amsterdam—remarkable as being one of the chief metropolises of Europe, and as being in many respects the general market of whole the universe; justly celebrated for—its large interior canals, on both of their sides enlivened and sheltered by ranges of large, thick, and beautiful trees, and presenting, on large broad and neatly kept, most regularly pav'd quays, long chains of sumptuous habitations, or rather palaces of the principal and *weathy* merchants; moreover remarkable by its Museum for the objects of the fine arts, &c., its numberless public edifices adapted either to the *cultivation* of arts, or to the exertions of trade, or to *establishments* charitable purposes, or of temples of all manners of divine worship—the city of Amsterdam, we say," &c. It is dated "This 15<sup>th</sup> of Juin, 1829."

In page 14. the author gives us an account of his habits, &c.:—

"I live in Amsterdam since some considerable time I drink no strong liquors, nor do I smoke tobacco and with all this—I have not been *attacked* by those agues and fevers w<sup>h</sup> frequently reign here from the month of Juin to the end of the autumn: and twenty foreigners whom I know, do follow the same system, and are still as healthy as I myself; while I have seen a great many of natives taking their drams and smoking their pipes *ad libitem*, and moreover *chawing* tobacco in a quite disgusting manner, who," &c.

An Amsterdam Sunday, p. 42.:

"On sundays and holydays the shops and warehouses, and, *intra muros*, those of public entertainment are *close*: the devotees go to church, and sanctify the sabbath. Others go to walk outside the towngates: after their walk, they hasten to fine public-play-gardens, where wine, thea, &c. is sold. Neither the mobility remains idle at *these* entertainments. Every one invites his damsel, and joyously they enter play-gardens of a little less brilliancy than the former. There, at the crying sound of an instrument that *rents* the ear, accompanied by the delightful handle-organs and the rustic triangle, their tributes are paid to Terpsichore; every where a similitude of talents: the dancing outdoes not the musician."

Description of the Assize Court:

"The forefront has a noble and sublime aspect, and is particularly characteristical to what it ought to represent. It is built in a division of three fronts in the corinthic order: each of them consists in four raising columns, resting upon a general basement, from the one end of the forefront to the other, and supporting a cornish, equally running all over the face; upon this cornish rests a balustrad, like the other pieces altogether of Bremen-hardstone. The middle front, serving for the chief entrance, is adorned with the provincial arms, sculpted by Mr. Gabriel, &c.... Every where a sublime plan, and exact execution is exhibited here, and the whole

tends as much to the architects, who are the undertakers of it, as they have earned great praises by building anew the burnt Lutheran church."

I will not trespass on your space by any further extracts; but these will suffice to show that my book is *sui generis*, and worth commemoration.

*C. W. B.*

## SEVEN CHILDREN AT A BIRTH THREE TIMES FOLLOWING

Your correspondent N. D.'s papers (Vol. ii., p. 459., and Vol. iii., p. 64) have reminded me of another remarkable instance of fecundity related by the well-known civil engineer Jan Adriaensz. Leeg-Water, in his *Kleyne Chronycke*, printed at Amsterdam in 1654:

"Some years since," says he, p. 31., "I was at *Wormer*, at an inn near the town-hall: the landlady, whose name was *Frankjen*, told me of the Burgomaster of *Hoorn*, who in the spring went over the (*Zuyder*?) sea to buy oxen, and going into a certain house he found seven little children sitting by the fire, each with a porringer in its hand, and eating rice-milk, or pap, with a spoon; on which the Burgomaster said 'Mother, you are very kind to your neighbours, since they leave their children to your care.' 'No,' said the woman, they are all my own children, which I had at one birth; and if you will wait a moment, I will show you more that will surprise you.' She then fetched seven other children *a birth* older: so she had fourteen children at two births. Then the woman said to the Burgomaster, 'I am now *enceinte*, and I think in the same way as before: if you come here next year, call upon me again.' And so, the next year, when the Burgomaster went over the sea, he called upon the woman and the woman had again brought forth seven children at a birth. Thus the woman had at three births twenty-one children."

I subjoin the original of which the above is a literal translation.

*J. S.*

Woudenberg, April, 1851.

## RAMASSHED, MEANING OF THE TERM

In the curious volume recently edited by Sir Henry Ellis for the Camden Society, entitled *The Pilgrimage of Syr R. Guylforde, Knyght*, a singular term occurs, which may claim a note of explanation. It is found in the following passage:

"Saterdaye to Suse, Noualassa, and to Lyungborough; and at the sayd Noualassa we toke moyles to stey us vp the mountayne, and toke also marones to kepe vs frome fallynge. And from the hyght of the mounthe down to Lyuyngborough I was ramasshed, whiche is a right strange thinge."—P. 80.

Sir Henry has not bestowed upon us here any of those erudite annotations, which have customarily enhanced the interest of works edited under his care.

Sir Richard Guylforde was on his homeward course from the Holy Places by way of Pavia, where he visited the convent and church which contained the shrine and relics of St. Augustine, as also the tomb of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III., whose monumental inscription (not to be found in Sandford's *Genealogical History*) the worthy knight copied.

On the 13th Feb. 1506, Sir Richard approached the ascent of Mont Cenis by the way of S. Ambrogio and Susa. At the village of Novalese, now in ruins, the party took mules, to aid their ascent, and *marroni*, long-handled mattocks, or pick-axes, to prevent their falling on the dangerous declivities of the snow. The journey was formerly made with frightful expedition by means of a kind of sledge—an expedient termed *la ramasse*—which enabled the traveller, previously to the construction of that extraordinary road, well known to most readers, to effect in a few minutes a perilous descent of upwards of 6000 feet. The *ramasse*, as Cotgrave informs us, was—

"A kind of high sled, or wheelbarrow, whereon travellers are carried downe certaine steep and slippery hills in Piemont."

Its simplest form had probably been a kind of fagot of brushwood,—*ramazza*, or a besom, not much unlike the rapid locomotive of witches, who were called in old times *ramassières*, from their supposed practice of riding on a *ramée*, *ramasse*, or besom. At the present time even, it occasionally occurs that an adventurous traveller crossing the Mont Cenis is tempted to glide down the rapid descent, in preference to the long course of the zigzag road; and remember to have heard at Lauslebourg the tale, doubtless often related, of an eccentric *Milord* who ascended the heights thrice from that place, a journey of some hours, for the gratification of the repeated excitement caused by a descent on the *ramasse* in about as many minutes. The cranium of a horse, as it was stated, was the vehicle often preferred for this curious adventure: and the traveller guided or steadied his course by trailing a long staff, a practice for security well known to the Alpine tourist. This may probably have been the use of the "marones" taken by Sir Richard Guyldeford and his party at Novalese.

The terms, to be "ramasshed," is not, as I believe, wholly disused in France. It was brought to the metropolis with the strange amusement known as the *Montagne Russe*. In the valuable *Complément du Dictionnaire de l'Académie*, compiled under the direction of Louis Barré, we find the following phrase:

"Se faire ramasser, se dit aujourd'hui, dans une acception particulière, pour, Se faire lancer dans un char, du haut des élévations artificielles qui se trouvent dans les jardins publics."

Such a disport had been known previously to the expedition to Moscow, and the favourite divertissement *à la Russe*, so much in vogue amongst the Parisians for a few subsequent years. Roquefort informs us that—

"*Ramasse* étoit le nom d'un jeu que nous avons apporté des Alpes, où il est encore en usage pendant l'hiver, et principalement en temps de neige."  
*Albert Way.*

## **AUTHORS OF THE POETRY OF THE ANTI-JACOBIN**

The following notices of the writers of many of the poetical pieces in the *Anti-Jacobin* may prove interesting to many of your readers. They are derived from the following copies, and each name is authenticated by the initials of the authority upon which each piece is ascribed to particular persons:

- C. Canning's own copy of the poetry.
- B. Lord Burghersh's copy.
- W. Wright the publisher's copy.
- U. Information of W. Upcott, amanuensis.

The copy of the *Anti-Jacobin* to which I refer is the fourth, 1799, 8vo.

| Page. | VOL. I.                         |                        |      |
|-------|---------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| 31.   | Introd. to Poetry               | Canning.               |      |
| 35.   | Inscript. for Door of Cell, &c. | Canning,<br>Frere,     | } c. |
| 71.   | Sapphics: Knifegrinder          | Frere,<br>Canning,     | } c. |
| 103.  | Invasio                         | Hely Addington, W.     |      |
| 136.  | La Sainte Guillolem             | Canning,<br>Frere,     | } c. |
|       |                                 | Hammond, B.            |      |
| 169.  | Soldier's Friend                | Canning,<br>Frere,     | } c. |
|       |                                 | Ellis, B.              |      |
|       | Sonnet to Liberty               | Lord Carlisle, B.      |      |
| 201.  | Dactyls                         | Canning, B.            |      |
|       |                                 | Gifford, W.            |      |
|       | Ipsa mali Hortatrix, &c.        | Marq. Wellesley, U.    |      |
|       |                                 | Frere, B.              |      |
| 236.  | Parent of countless Crimes, &c. | Marq. Wellesley, U.    |      |
|       |                                 | Frere, B.              |      |
| 263.  | The Choice                      | Geo. Ellis, B.         |      |
| 265.  | Duke and taxing Man             | Bar. Macdonald, C., B. |      |
| 267.  | Epigram                         | Frere, B.              |      |
| 301.  | Ode to Anarchy                  | Lord Morpeth, B.       |      |
| 303.  | You have heard of Reubel        | Frere, B.              |      |
| 371.  | Bard of the borrow'd Lyre       | Canning, C.            |      |
|       |                                 | Hammond, B.            |      |
| 380.  | Ode to Lord Moira               | Geo. Ellis, C., B.     |      |
| 422.  | Bit of an Ode to Mr. Fox        | Geo. Ellis, C.         |      |
|       |                                 | Frere, B.              |      |

Wright, the publisher of the *Anti-Jacobin*, lived at 169. Piccadilly, and his shop was the general morning resort of the friends of the ministry, as Debrell's was of the oppositionists. About the time when the *Anti-Jacobin* was contemplated, Owen, who had been the publisher of Burke's pamphlets, failed. The editors of the *Anti-Jacobin* took his house, paying the rent, taxes, &c., and gave it up to Wright, reserving to themselves the first floor, to which a communication was opened through Wright's house. Being thus enabled to pass to their own rooms through Wright's shop, where their frequent visits did not excite any remarks, they contrived to escape particular observation.

Their meetings were most regular on Sundays, but they not unfrequently met on other days of the week, and in their rooms were chiefly written the poetical portions of the work. What was written was generally left open upon the table, and as others of the party dropped in, hints or suggestions were made; sometimes whole passages were contributed by some of the parties present, and afterwards altered by others, so that it is almost impossible to ascertain the names of the authors. Where, in the above notes, a piece is ascribed to different authors, the conflicting statements may arise from incorrect information, but sometimes they arise from the whole authorship being assigned to one person, when in fact both may have contributed. If we look at the references, vol. ii. pp. 420. 532. 623., we shall see Mr. Canning naming several authors, whereas Lord Burghersh assigns all to one author. Mr. Canning's authority is here more to be relied upon. "New Morality" Mr. Canning assigns generally to the four contributors; Mr. Wright has given some interesting particulars by appropriating to each his peculiar portion.

Gifford was the working editor, and wrote most of the refutations and corrections of the "Lies," "Mistakes," and "Misrepresentations."

The papers on finance were chiefly by Pitt: the first column was frequently for what he might send; but his contributions were uncertain, and generally very late, so that the space reserved for him was sometimes filled up by other matter. He only once met the editors at Wright's.

Upcott, who was at the time assistant in Wright's shop, was employed as amanuensis, to copy out for the printer the various contributions, that the authors' handwriting might not be detected.

*Edw. Hawkins.*

*The Anti-Jacobin* (Vol. iii., p. 334.).—In a copy of the *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, now in my possession, occurs this note in the autograph of Mr. James Boswell:—

"These lines [*Lines written by Traveller at Czarco-zelo*] were written by William PITT—as I learnt from his nephew on the 28th of May 1808, at a dinner held in honour of his memory."

The surname is in large capital letters; the *year* is indistinctly written. This is the note which is indicated in the auction-catalogue of the library of Mr. Boswell, No. 2229.

*Bolton Corney.*

## Minor Notes

*Egg and Arrow Ornament.*—Mr. Ruskin, in his *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. p. 305., says—

"The Greek egg and arrow cornice is a nonsense cornice, very noble in its lines, but utterly absurd in its meaning. Arrows have had nothing to do with eggs (at least since Leda's time), neither are the so-called arrows like arrows, nor the eggs like eggs, nor the honeysuckles like honeysuckles: they are all conventionalized into a monotonous successiveness of nothing—pleasant to the eye, useless to the thought."

The ornament of which Mr. R. thus speaks is indifferently called egg and tongue, egg and dart, as well as egg and arrow. It seems to me that the *egg* is a complete misnomer, although common to all the designations; and I fancy that the idea of what is so called was originally derived from the full-length shield, and therefore that the ornament should be named the *shield and dart*, an association more reasonable than is suggested by any of the ordinary appellations. Can any of your correspondents offer any confirmation of this?

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