

Professional sketches. No. V. Mr. Lawrence.

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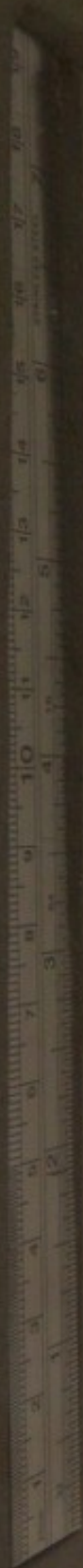
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do what! (Rush.) Ha! first, first
dear Stanley, I see that it is in vain
way or other I must become a martyr
all the pleasant invitation I have in
you on Friday, and learn to your cost

PROFESSIONAL SKI
Mr. LATER

"Expende Amata."

Mr. LAWSON has, in his day, exci-
tation, and, perhaps, out of it, it
filled with great talent, with an ear-
ring, and with a boldness of expression
desires the numbers of which are ren-
dred of any other, from all political
appeared upon the arena of public life
suspicion to others, of admiration to
moved, at least, as being prejudiced
less, unassuming, and peremptory re-
sponses to the public, the apparent sincerity
ness, and the contempt in which he held
on his principles, stamped him as an
ing, during open. "My opinions are
before the College of Surgeons, in re-
sponse," (what these charges were we
are published; they were not brought
we shunned the light, and they shun-
ned. Without this freedom of in-
ferences would be in some and
honoured in their own eyes, and in the
presence, Gentlemen, shall never be
be set down, nor cried down by any
persons. However flattering it may
it involves any sacrifice of independ-
the right to examine freely the subject
expresses fairly the result of my in-
quiry."

The venerable elders appointed to
for in Lincoln's Inn Fields (for thus
names of the surgical profession) were
on language like this. It was not what
its pure dedication to the harmless rec-
titude; and, going inquiringly at each
this man is mad; each learning has
mad, they soon discovered that there
at the same time, a display of labor
his lectures, to which the attention of
same body of information, collected
and copiously enough embellished wit

for when? (*Reads.*) Ha! fatal, fatal Friday—all for Friday! My dear Stanley, I see that it is in vain to contend against Fate. Some way or other I must become a martyr; and so, as yours is really, after all, the pleasantest invitation I have met with, I will e'en go down to you on Friday, and listen to your country sermon.

[*Exeunt, Stanley laughing.*]

PROFESSIONAL SKETCHES, NO. V.

Mr. Lawrence.

"*Expende Annibalem.*"—*Juvenal, Sat. x.*

MR. LAWRENCE has, in his day, excited a greater sensation in his profession, and, perchance, out of it, than many men of his standing. Gifted with great talent, with an enlarged and liberal mode of thinking, and with a boldness of expression and of action, unusual in a profession the members of which are removed, or ought to be, more than those of any other, from all political and polemical disputation,—he appeared upon the arena of public life, an object of fear to some, of suspicion to others, of admiration to all. The novelty of his views—novel, at least, as being promulgated by a man of his calling—the fearless, unshrinking, and peremptory manner in which they were pressed upon the public, the apparent sincerity and disinterestedness of his motives, and the contempt in which he held all direct or indirect opposition to his principles, stamped him at once a man of a bold, uncompromising, daring spirit. "My opinions are published:" these are his words before the College of Surgeons, in reply to the "Charges of Mr. Abernethy," (what these charges were we shall presently see,)—"my opinions are published; they were not brought forward secretly, they have never shunned the light, and they shall never be concealed nor compromised. Without this freedom of inquiry and speech, the duty of your professors would be irksome and humiliating; they would be dishonoured in their own eyes, and in the estimation of the public. These privileges, Gentlemen, shall never be surrendered by me. I will not be set down, nor cried down by any person, in any place, or under any pretexts. However flattering it may be to my vanity to wear this gown, if it involves any sacrifice of independence, the smallest dereliction of the right to examine freely the subjects on which I address you, and to express fearlessly the result of my investigations, I would strip it off instantly!"

The venerable elders appointed to guard the portals of the great edifice in Lincoln's-Inn Fields (for thus has Mr. Lawrence designated the seniors of the surgical profession) were amazed and utterly confounded at language like this. It was not what they had been accustomed to hear in a place dedicated to the harmless recreations of a few quiet old gentlemen; and, gazing inquiringly at each other, they exclaimed, "Surely, this man is mad; much learning has turned his brain." But if he were mad, they soon discovered that there was "method in his madness," and, at the same time, a display of labour, research, and knowledge; for his lectures, to which the assertion quoted above refers, contain an immense body of information, collected and arranged with great dexterity, and copiously enough embellished with all the boldness of their author's

opinions. At that time, Lawrence could scarcely have passed his thirtieth year; and well might such avowals have startled the sages, who sat listening to this surgical Solon.

His "Reply" to the "Charges of Mr. Abernethy" is a specimen of true eloquence, cutting sarcasm, and stinging humour, and must have been keenly felt by his accusers. As this dispute was a subject of intense interest to the profession, and as no account of it is extant in any unperishable publication, we shall enter more fully upon it here than we otherwise should have done. Mr. Lawrence, then, was accused by Mr. Abernethy, in the professor's chair of the College of Surgeons, of "the unworthy design of propagating opinions detrimental to society, and of endeavouring to enforce them for the purpose of loosening those restraints on which the welfare of mankind depends." He was charged, in short, with advocating *Materialism*, and of endeavouring to prove that man is merely a machine. There was no lack of acrimony and violence on the part of his accuser, who, after designating him and his party "modern sceptics," thus concludes his charge:—"If what I said in the introductory lectures has irritated the party of sceptics, what I now say may anger them still more. But I fear them not; they can only shoot at me with the shafts of ridicule, or spit at me the venom of their malice, both of which modes of assault I actually laugh at; for the experiment has been tried, and I know that, though these things may tickle, they can never annoy me. To express my opinions on this subject a little technically, I may say such means have no effect upon sound or naturally defended surfaces: some point must be exposed, or morbidly susceptible, ere they can occasion either pain or irritation. If, however, the sceptics had even the power to injure me, still I should not fear them, because I place between us the undisguised truth, which they can neither conquer nor confront. For Truth possesses a power which poets have represented by symbols. Like the ægis of Minerva, or the spear of Ithuriel, it has the power, not only of protecting and maintaining what is right, but of revealing, abashing, and appalling what is wrong."

The gauntlet being thus thrown, and the efforts of the sceptics being set at defiance, it was reserved for Mr. Lawrence, as the reputed leader of the sect, to combat the accuser; and he did so with such boldness and ability, as to have made, we suspect, rather more than a *ticklish* impression upon his assailants. Mr. Lawrence's reply was a masterly production. In addition to the high and fearless spirit which prevails throughout, it contains some observations which would have conferred credit on the talents of a more matured judgment. "To fair argument and free discussion," said the youthful respondent, "I shall never object, even if they should completely destroy my own opinions; for my object is truth, not victory. But when argument is abandoned, and its place supplied by an inquiry into motives, designs, and tendencies, the case is altered. If vanquished in fair discussion, I should have yielded quietly; but it cannot have been expected that I would lie still and be trampled on, lecture after lecture; cut and mangled with every weapon, fair and foul; assailed with appeals to the passions and prejudices—to the fears of the timid, the alarms of the ignorant and the bigoted; and this, too, when nothing is easier than to destroy the ill-constructed fabric, to crumble its very fragments to dust, and to scatter them before the wind."

Again. "And here I take the opportunity of protesting, in the strongest terms, in behalf of the interests of science, and of that free discussion which is essential to its successful cultivation, against the attempt to stifle an impartial inquiry by an outcry of pernicious tendency; and against perverting science and literature, which naturally tend to bring mankind acquainted with each other, to the anti-social purposes of inflaming and prolonging national prejudice and animosity. Letters have been called the tongue of the world; and Science may be regarded in the same light. They supply common objects of interest, in which the selfish, unsocial feelings are not called into action, and thus they promote new friendships among nations. Through them distant people become capable of conversing; and, losing by degrees the awkwardness of strangers, and the moroseness of suspicion, they learn to know and understand each other. Science, the partizan of no country, but the beneficent patroness of all, has liberally opened a temple where all may meet. She never inquires about the country or sect of those who seek admission; she never allots a higher or a lower place from exaggerated national claims, or unfounded national antipathies.* Her influence on the mind, like that of the sun on the chilled earth, has long been preparing it for higher cultivation and farther improvement. The philosopher of one country should not see an enemy in the philosopher of another; he should take his seat in the Temple of Science, and ask not who sits beside him. The savage notion of a natural enemy should be banished from this sanctuary, where all, from whatever quarter, should be regarded as of one great family; and, being engaged in pursuits calculated to increase the general sum of happiness, should never exercise intolerance towards each other, nor assume that right of arraigning the motives and designs of others, which belongs only to the Being who can penetrate the recesses of the human heart:—an assumption which is so well reprobated by our great poet:—

"Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe."

There are two points to be considered as connected with this dispute. Firstly: Was Mr. Lawrence guilty of the offence with which he was charged? Secondly: Was he sincere in the opinions which he advocated? We can only judge of the tree by its fruit; nor can we completely comprehend a man's motives except through the medium of his actions. Now, we have no right to assume any knowledge of Mr. Lawrence's motives in this matter; neither *do* we know any thing of his history, beyond that which he himself has forced upon us, and upon the public generally, through the medium of the press. To say that we do not know him personally would be wrong; because Lawrence being a public character—public, that is, as the deputed reformer of alleged abuses—is well known to the majority of his professional brethren; but this we will say, that Mr. Lawrence has not only never seen us, but is most probably unconscious of our existence. We think it neces-

* The reader should be acquainted that Mr. Lawrence was suspected of participating in the opinions and doctrines of the French Materialists; while Mr. Abernethy was a vehement advocate of the principles of his countryman John Hunter.

sary to make this declaration, that our remarks may be properly and fairly appreciated. To return, then, to our subject.

Was Mr. Lawrence guilty of propagating the doctrine of *materialism*? Our readers know—at least many of them must know—that the publication of Lawrence's Lectures was pirated; and that, upon applying to the Court of Chancery for an injunction to restrain the robber from pursuing his iniquitous design, the late Lord Chancellor, with that sensitive regard for the public, for which he was so notorious, refused the injunction, because the book was said to be of an immoral tendency, thereby permitting any rogue and vagabond to circulate it as widely, and as briskly as possible! Setting up too his own opinions (confessedly, in all things but law dogmas, the most narrow and bigoted in the land,) as tests of what was or was not pernicious in science as well as morals. This, then, was *prima facie* evidence of the author's guilt; but it is rather too late in the day for the public to pass an immitigable sentence of condemnation on a decision from such a quarter as this, or to pin their faith on a "judgment" of Lord Eldon, when by chance he did happen to be delivered of one. Let us see, then, of what character and intensity Mr. Lawrence's crime was, as it stands recorded in his published Lectures; let us see what opinions these were, that Mr. Lawrence so boastingly gloried in, and that were never to be "concealed nor compromised."

After his introduction, after inveighing most energetically against prejudice and errors, and after descanting with great power and ability upon "reason and free inquiry," as the "effectual antidotes of error," he proceeds to examine "*physiologically*, as he particularly expresses it, the constitution of the human mind. This, he says, is material, perfectly, decidedly, tangibly material; it declines with the natural declination of the other organs of the body, becomes decrepit in old age, and "finally extinguished by death." "What," he asks, "do we infer from this succession of phenomena? The existence and action of a principle entirely distinct from the body? or a close analogy to the history of all other organs and functions?"

"The number and kind of the intellectual phenomena in different animals," he continues, "correspond closely to the degree of the developement of the brain. The mind of the Negro and the Hottentot, of the Calmuck and the Carib, is inferior to that of the European; and their organization is also less perfect. The large cranium and high forehead of the Orang-otang lift him above his brother monkeys; but the developement of his cerebral hemispheres, and his mental manifestations, are both equally below those of the Negro. The gradation of organization and of mind passes through the monkey, dog, elephant, horse, to other quadrupeds; thence to birds, reptiles, and fishes, and so on to the lowest links of the animal chain."

This is plain enough, because this is physically demonstrable. It is upon this principle, in fact, that phrenology is founded. Phrenologists, too, have been accused of very terrible perpetrations—of materialism, of infidelity, of fatalism, and Heaven knows what beside; and unjust, indeed, has such accusation been, let their notions be well or ill founded. What does the phrenologist attempt to prove? That the mind is material, wholly and perfectly material? No such thing; he merely points out physical indications of moral effects. This is the "head and

front of his offending," the sum total of his enormities; We all know very well that the more widely the brain is developed, the more intellect is its possessor blessed with. Let any one look at the noble and towering foreheads of Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, Byron, *cum multis aliis*, and then doubt this fact: let him, moreover, scrutinize the skulls of his own intimate acquaintance, and he will surely find that those who have high and expansive foreheads, are more talented than those who have mean and contracted ones.

This, then, is Mr. Lawrence's "case." As to the soundness of his doctrines, we shall enter into no discussion about them in the way of refutation, because the subject is not at all adapted to our pages; and if it were, it would occupy a much larger space than we could afford to give it. One thing, however, we must observe, and that is, the extreme indecorum and folly of introducing such a theme in such a place and upon such an occasion. We can readily believe that many of Mr. Lawrence's *juvenile* auditors (for students are admitted to these collegiate lectures) felt highly delighted at the bold and fearless discussion of so interesting and important a question. Mr. Lawrence was himself, as we have already intimated, a young man, and he advocated his doctrine with all the energy and fire of youth, vowing, as we have shown, that his opinions should "never be concealed nor compromised." It is true that he treated the matter "physiologically;" at least, he declared that he did so. But he knows, as well as every one else, that the question was not a physiological one, and never could be so discussed. We must acquit him, notwithstanding all this, of any improper motives in thus standing forth as the advocate of materialism. Mr. Lawrence was a talented man, and he knew it. He felt the workings of his spirit strong within him; and were the energies of this spirit to be wasted upon a dry detail of bones, arteries, and muscles? Mr. Lawrence was, moreover, young, *very* young, for the distinguished office which he held; and who does not know that youth is fiery, impetuous, and imprudent? It was not to be supposed that a man of his talent and fearless energy would hide his light, although it certainly was *not* "light from heaven," under a bushel.

Mr. Lawrence's hot and zealous friends, more especially the converts to this creed, may deny the culpability of his conduct in this affair. But not only have we this gentleman's own confession that he had behaved very foolishly, in introducing the subject within "the portals of the great edifice in Lincoln's-Inn Fields," but also that which very closely resembles a complete abjuration of the doctrine itself; and this, too, after the bold assertion that his opinions should "never be concealed nor compromised!"

In the year 1822, at the annual election of Surgeon to Bridewell and Bethlem hospitals, the Governors, having taken umbrage at Mr. Lawrence's conduct, as connected with the subject above-mentioned, were strongly inclined to discard him from an office which he had filled for some time before. An attempt was accordingly made to render him ineligible; but Mr. Waithman, in what the newspapers called "a most able speech," told the Governors that they ought to be ashamed of such a narrow and bigoted spirit; and the motion was lost by 52 to 26. There being no other candidate of any note, Mr. Lawrence was re-elected, as a matter of course. There was a little bit of manœuvring

by-play connected with this affair, which is not known to every one. Previously to the election, Mr. Lawrence, well aware of the strong prejudice which existed against him, and naturally anxious to retain a situation, which, although honorary, was not without its benefits, wrote a letter to Sir Richard Carr Glynn, the President, which exhibits a great "falling off" from the high and fearless tone of his "Reply."

"Experience and reflection," quoth the candidate, "have only tended to convince me more strongly that the publication of certain passages in these writings (the lectures, namely,) was highly improper; to increase my regret at having sent them forth to the world; to make me satisfied with the measure of withdrawing them from public circulation, and, consequently, to resolve me, not only never to reprint them, but, also, never to publish any thing more on similar subjects." We need not quote any more. The recantation was kindly received, and Mr. Lawrence was duly elected.

That a man should recant opinions, which "experience and reflection" have proved to be untenable, is not only no crime, but actually meritorious; because it evinces that candour and a regard for truth are inherent qualities of his disposition. Indeed, at the very beginning of this discussion, Mr. Lawrence avowed that his object was "truth, and not victory." We would willingly believe that Mr. Lawrence felt fully aware of his errors, and that "experience and reflection" really did convince him that his behaviour was very, very wrong. But then, again, the election! Had his retraction appeared unconnected with this event, we should have received its sincerity with much more gladness.

We have the highest respect for Mr. Lawrence's professional talents. There are few men whom we would more readily intrust with a difficult surgical case, or a delicate and important operation. As an "operator," indeed, he stands very high. Not even Sir Astley himself, famed as he is for handling the knife, is his superior. As a lecturer, he is clear, eloquent (as we have seen), and impressive. As a practitioner, he is acute, sensible, and attentive; and has the art, like Mr. Brodie, although not to such an extent, of quickly comprehending all the leading features of a case, and of energetically acting upon them. Pity it is that, with these qualifications, Mr. Lawrence should be addicted to a passion for popularity. In the great question of redress from the alleged abuses of the managers of the College of Surgeons, Mr. Lawrence was fixed upon by the oppressed as their champion and deliverer. Meetings were convened, resolutions were proposed, measures were concocted, and, to a certain extent, executed: and Mr. Lawrence, supported by the Editor of "The Lancet," was the champion of the aggrieved.

But this was not all. In the affair, Mr. Lawrence behaved most strangely. After casting no small vituperation upon the "venerable elders" of the profession, he accepted a seat in the College Council, and united himself to those very "elders" whom he had hitherto stigmatized as oppressors!

Surely, surely this is not consistent or reasonable. We must again express our regret that a man so highly gifted as Mr. Lawrence undoubtedly is, should "play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven."

May we hope, now that "experience and reflection" have carried conviction to his heart, and now that Time has begun to "thin his flowing hair," that his energies may, for the future, be directed only to the bestowing of benefits upon mankind? Mr. Lawrence has the means, more than any other man we know, of conferring innumerable advantages upon his fellow-creatures; and it would be infinitely more gratifying to his *real* friends to find him in future solely occupied in thus directing his talents.

BURCKHARDT'S TRAVELS.*

It is but fair to warn all glancing readers from entering into these premises in pursuit of light reading and mere amusement. There is neither fine writing nor merry conceits—neither scenery nor poetry—no fanciful speculations nor sparkling refinements—neither wit nor satire—no matters of current gossip or scandal, scarcely the mention of any living individual, of whom the world has ever heard, save Mahomet Ali, the Pacha of Egypt—no fashionable science even of any thing on the earth, or under it, or over it—no thing of plants and animals, sticks and stones;—but, nevertheless, the book is full of a quiet yet pregnant interest, for it tells abundantly of a country with the characteristics and traditions of which we have all been familiar from our childhood—of a country which none visit for pleasure, and few for business, and of which, of course, the opportunities for learning any thing must be scarce—of a country which is the seat and centre of a besotting superstition, rivaling in extent, and almost in duration, the religion of Christendom—of a country, which none but the votaries of that superstition are permitted to enter for the worship of relics and localities, and into which the author was enabled to penetrate solely by being so thoroughly imbued with the associations and sentiments of the natives, as to pass unnoticed and undetected; and all this in a plain and palpable style, which carries a conviction with it that nothing but the possession of copious knowledge, and the desire to communicate honestly and distinctly, could possibly sustain.

Yet the real value of the book consists almost exclusively in the complete and particularizing view it gives us of Mecca and Medina—the chief cities of the sacred soil—embracing the whole succession of ceremonies connected with the visits to the temples, the numerous objects of adoration or respect, and the performance of the pilgrimage—of all which very little was before known from any authority to which implicit credit could be attached. For, as to the details of the topography of these towns, and the employments of the inhabitants, as minute as a London Directory, or the tour of a watering-place—these are far beyond the *wants* of any class of readers, and seem calculated only to prove that the writer had visited every corner and cranny in obedience to the exactions of his taskmasters. With the dress and manners the author assumed the character and religious profession of an Egyptian gentleman of decayed fortunes, visiting Mecca as an Hadji, or pilgrim, and under this disguise, which he was well qualified to sustain, uninterruptedly surveyed the forbidden scene. How far such disguise and dissimulation may seem justifiable, even for much higher objects than the advantages of which Burckhardt was in pursuit, it is at least superfluous to inquire, for few are likely to incur the same labour of qualification; and as to any seduction in the example, that is so entirely uninviting, that any severity of reprehension, or any effort employed in tracing the consequences of such perversion, would be mere Quixotism—for where is the danger of example, when none will imitate? Nevertheless there is something revolting in a *course* of dissimulation,

* Travels in Arabia; comprehending an account of those territories in Hedjaz, which the Mahomedans regard as sacred. By the late John Lewis Burckhardt. In 1 vol. 4to.

though for unselfish, and even for scientific purposes; for while we admire the fortitude of the individual, and his powers of endurance, we cannot but be somewhat shocked at the capacity it exhibits for roguery, and must naturally shrink from coming too closely in contact with such an adept. The capacity only—for in all other respects, in all the relations of domestic and social life, his integrity was unimpeachable; but all delicate sense of rectitude, straight-forwardness, and naturalness of feeling must, by such a course, inevitably become warped, and it will be well for such a man, if he be not exposed to extraordinary temptations. He *must* be more accustomed to look to the end than the means—to think the doing ill for good, and nothing is so delusive, a venial matter;—if, in one instance, he find a sanction for obliquity, he will be the less disinclined to seek it, or rather he will be more prepared to discover it in another. Here is the danger, generally, of enthusiasm—at least of giving way to a master passion:—it absorbs or obscures all other considerations—it removes difficulties by not looking at them, and blunts moral perceptions by acting in defiance of them.

Of Burckhardt's story every body, to some extent, knows perhaps something; if not, in few words, he was the son of a Swiss gentleman, who was involved in difficulties by his resistance to the French revolution. The young man was sent for his education to Leipsic, in 1800, then sixteen years of age, and where, and at Gottingen, he remained five years, and then returned to his friends. Diplomacy, or the army, appears to have been his first object; but his detestation, generated by the oppression suffered by his family, of all French connexions and French principles, precluded him from all chance of finding employment on the Continent,—for there all were subject to France, or in alliance with it. In 1806 he finally came to England with letters of introduction from and to persons of the highest respectability, and among others from Blumenbach to Sir Joseph Banks. Mingling with the friends of this latter gentleman, he soon became acquainted with the views of the African Association; and this at a period when Horneman was despaired of, and Nicholls was known to be dead, and new candidates for the perilous office were in requisition. With no definitive purposes of his own, and no prospect opening before him, this opportunity for activity caught his imagination, and he offered his services, which were readily listened to—for he was a young man of good natural, and considerable acquired talents, and possessed of a constitution apparently of great vigour—his *birth* too, for that is particularly singled out among his qualifications, recommended him with the aristocracy of the institution. Early in 1808 his offers were finally accepted; and the interval, till his departure, something less than a twelve-month, was spent at Cambridge in the study of "Arabic, and those branches of science which were most necessary for the situation in which he was going to be placed." This is the account of Colonel Leake, his biographer we may call him, and affords a ludicrous specimen of the whimsical conceptions, entertained by persons wholly ignorant of them, of the English Universities. The very atmosphere, they evidently suppose, must be saturated with learning in *all* its branches, which must of course be inhaled by the alumni of the place, if they will but keep their mouths open;—though the truth is, Oxford and Cambridge offer no particular advantages, and for a man in Burckhardt's circumstances, who had already gone through a University course in Germany, and one far more general and effective than any thing of the kind in our own, the chances and means of acquiring all preparatory knowledge would have been ten times greater in London. At Cambridge, however, he could and did allow his beard to grow, (was a grace passed for this?) and assume the Oriental dress, and attend (thus equipped?) lectures in chemistry, astronomy, mineralogy, medicine, and surgery, and in the intervals of his studies exercise himself by long journeys on foot, bare-headed, in the heat of the sun, sleeping upon the ground, and living upon vegetables and water.

Destined, as Burckhardt was, to penetrate into the interior of Africa,





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