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PORTRAIT OF ERSKINE.

(BY MR. AUSTIN.)

Erſkine, Gibbs, and Garrow, are the three moſt powerful ſpeakers in the courts of law.

The perſon of Erſkine is ſlender; his height not exceeding the common ſize; his complexion ſallow; his hair dark; his face oval and a little emaciated; the lower part of his forehead prominent, yet gradually retreating; his eyebrows full, a little perplexed, ſeated near his eyes, which are hazle, open and conciliatory; his noſe narrow between the eyes, yet perfectly congenial, neither too large nor too ſmall; his mouth gently cloſed, ſeeming ready to await the dictates of his tongue, yet not large enough to give his eloquence its juſt tone; his lips thin, meeting in union, and, when irritated, rather inclined to retreat than project; his chin gently retreating, which, in conjunction with his forehead, beſpeaks the man firm, yet modeſt; poſitive, yet ingenious.

His countenance, when in a ſtate of repoſe, is prepoſſeſſing; but, when he ſpeaks, his geſtures are rhetoric; his looks, perſuaſion; his voice, eloquence: in the glow of animation, commanding; but in the moment of paſſion, when ſelf-convinced, he is pure intelligence: diſdaining every by-road to conviction, he ſtrips the cauſe of all its ſurrounding circumſtances, places it on its own poſition; true to nature, paints it viſibly to the eye, and buries in oblivion every interfering particular. Both judge and jury are proſtrate in chains. It is the contention of principle, no matter whoſe, or what the intereſt, if Heaven were concerned, it is ſtill the contention of principle. Of all cauſes which could ariſe, the preſent ſeems to involve the deepeſt conſequences: there is no diſtinction now between the great and the little, every thing but the point in queſtion is forgotten; Erſkine and his cauſe are ſovereign over all.—Now flows the fountain of juſtice, now are explored the receſſes of iniquity, now are the deep foundations of fraud broken up. His eloquence becomes a torrent which ſweeps away every mound which art or ſubterfuge had raiſed; no longer has the law a ſingle hard feature; no perplexities, no uncertainties, no idle evaſions! Saturnian Jove deſcends, with his equal ſcales; cunning retires in ſhame; oppreſſion lets go its victim; and innocence is ſeated on the throne of equity. At length, Erſkine himſelf, by degrees, is forgotten and forgets himſelf; he riſes to an effort not his own, and ſinks under ſuperior feelings, while the judge and jury, convinced even to enthuſiaſm, are impatient to withhold the verdict.

Erſkine will ſuffer nothing on being examined as a man; his profeſſion has not defaced his original features of greatneſs. When engaged in a weak or unjuſt cauſe, he never ſacrifices his hardihood of honor to the views of his client. He ſays all that ought to be ſaid; yet never commits his own dignity by urging a corrupt principle. You ſee nothing of the attorney, Erſkine is a counſellor; you ſee no partizan of petty advantage, Erſkine is a gentleman.

He is ſerious, or witty, at pleaſure, and, when the occaſion offers, and he is diſpoſed to deſcend, he can like Roſcius, turn off a caſe in pantomine. Among the thouſand actions which are preſented him, ſome appear, on trial to have originated in mirth, and others in impudence; this proteus is ready in a moment to throw off the profeſſional buſkin, and tread the ſock.

I have followed Erſkine to the Houſe of Commons, forming to my mind the attitude of a man, treading empires under his feet, and holding in his hands the deſtinies of the world. If, in a petty court of law, he could move heaven in behalf of a poor orphan, or an oppreſſed widow, ſurely, in preſence of the Britiſh parliament, when the fate of nations is depending, the front of oppoſition muſt cower beneath his frown, or follow in the wake of his triumphant path. But the moment he enters parliament he diſappears. He is only one among five hundred. An Arab would never kill Erſkine, unleſs he caught him in his gown, band, and wig*; with theſe he ſeems to put off his whole virtue. As a ſtateſmen Erſkine is nothing. I do not ſay he is a great man in a little room; but Erſkine, addreſſing twelve men, in a court of law, and in the Britiſh parliament, addreſſing the ſpeaker in behalf of the nation, is not the ſame man. He commences, indeed, on a broad foundation, but aſcends, like a pyramid, and either produces an abortion, or attains to the point, and terminates where he ſhould have begun. In parliament, he diſcovers nothing of that copious preciſion, that aſcending order, that captivating fluency, that earneſt conviction, which, at the bar, ſtamp him Erſkine. In parliament, he labors with a harrow through the impediments of politics; now it catches hold of Pitt, then it interferes with a ſtraggling limb of Hawkeſbury, now it tears away the ſkirts of Addington, preſently it is to be lifted over the body of a Windham. He concludes, and the impreſſion which he made is already effaced.

* *The English lawyers are dressed only in court in a black gown, band and tie-wig.*

MOREAU.

A late London paper contains an article ſtyled Moreau and Bonaparte compared, which is written in an extremely prejudiced and uncandid ſtyle with reſpect to the latter; but contains the following character of Moreau.

"The writer of this has been Moreau's priſoner and gueſt; has aſſociated with him in guard, at Paris and Groſbois; has been at his military parade, when attended by all his generals, aids-de-camp, and officers; and at his table, when ſurrounded by elegance, beauty, and faſhion; he has ſeen him in his camps on the Rhine and the Danube, at his balls and routs at Straſburg and Paris; and he has always found him the ſame amiable, agreable, modeſt, and unaſſuming man; although, at all times, in all places, and in all companies, a military enthuſiaſt, whether in the ſociety of ladies, or in a circle of officers, at the head of his table, or at the head of his army, leading his ſoldiers to battle, or handing a lady to dance; but ſo lively, amuſing, and intermixed with anecdotes in his converſation, that even French coquets have liſtened to it in preference to the flattery of their gallants.

"It is impoſſible for any perſon of education to be in Moreau's company half an hour without conſidering him a great military character, whoſe thoughts and words are thoſe of an officer of eminent talents, and much experience, and whoſe only paſſion is military glory.

"To an open and pleaſing countenance, he unites ſoft and inſinuating manners; and to the frankneſs of the ſoldier, he joins the becoming eaſe of the courtier, without the licentiouſneſs of the one, or the vices of the other. Frenchmen allow him the liberal good nature of a Turenne, to whom he is compared for his able tactics; and the vigor and patriotiſm of Henry IV. whom he reſembles as a ſkilful warrior. They ſay that in his attacks he is a Guſtaphus Adolphus and a Conde, and in his retreats a Xenopon and a Belleiſle.

"All the reproach made againſt Moreau even by his enemies, is that he continued to ſerve the aſſaſſin of a father whom he dearly loved, and his ingratitude towards his friend Pichegru, whom he could not but greatly eſteem; but it may be ſaid, without fear of contradiction, or charge of partiality, that, with the ſingle exception of Pichegru, Moreau is the firſt, the ableſt, the pureſt, of all the French republican generals, and one to whom France is the moſt indebted, becauſe Melas loſt the battle of Marengo, whereas Moreau gained the battle of Hohenlinden.

"Before Bonaparte left the city of Paris, on his journey to Brabant, he exiled all the generals not in employment at Paris: as Moreau's eſtate is only twelve miles from that city, he comes there ſeveral times in the week, either to viſit his friends, or to frequent the theatres; the Corſican dared not, however, inſult Moreau with ſuch a proceeding; he therefore invited him to an interview at Berthier's houſe. Bonaparte began the converſation by mentioning ſome complaints, although he at the ſame time inſinuated his reſpect for Moreau as a general, and his eſteem for him as a citizen. He told him he might command any place in his diſpoſal, except that of a Conſul. He offered to make him a duke, or hereditary ſovereign of Parma and Plaiſanza, and in return he only demanded his friendſhip. Moreau's anſwer united to the frankneſs of the ſoldier the generoſity of the patriot; he ſaid, 'he was the perſonal enemy of no man, but the irreconcileable foe of all men, either princes or ſans culottes, who tyrannifed over his countrymen; that in ſerving his country he had only done his duty, without any ambition for power or expectation of reward; and ſhould foreigners again attack it, and he were certain that his endeavors ſhould procure his countrymen that freedom for which they fought ſo many and bloody battles, he would again offer his ſervices; but he would never draw his ſword until he was convinced that his military talents would be of other uſe to his fellow citizens than ſolely to leave them the choice of tyrants;' and without waiting for an anſwer, he retired."

THE LONDON DOCKS.

A vaſt crowd of all ranks of people aſſembled on Thurſday morning, to witneſs the commencement of the operation of the ſtupendous undertaking, and for the purpoſe of viewing the magnificent and extenſive piles of building which the company have had erected within leſs than three years. The viſitors walked round and viewed the quays, at the Great Dock the baſin, and the different locks. At preſent the whole compriſes a ſpace of the extent of 60 acres. The ground next Nightingale lane, and the ſide next the Thames, near Hermitage bridge, is purchaſed, and will be built upon as ſpeedily as poſſible.

The quays are of immenſe length, ſaid to be 1260 feet, with a ſhed over the front for covering goods as they may be landed, which is to be coppered over when the whole is completed. There are ten round walking cranes for hoiſting goods out of ſhipping.

The Tobacco quay is three feet higher than the Great quay on the north ſide, for the convenience of that deſcription of veſſels as they ſwim higher on the water than ſhips laden with a more ſolid commodity.

The baſin contains 23 feet deep of water when filled to its regular extent, and will admit of any veſſel drawing 18 feet water.

The Great Dock is 29 feet deep, 20 of which are filled with water. Its ſuperficial contents amount to 24 acres, and is capable of containing 200 ſail of merchantmen at one time.

Beſides the outline already given, there is a paſſage at the weſtern end, with proper locks, for the ſhipping to go out at, when the whole of the Great Dock is fully occupied. This is ſituate between the Tobacco quay on the weſt, and the great range of ware houſes on the north ſide, which form a right angle at this point, where a draw-bridge is thrown over for the convenience of paſſengers.

On the ſpacious quay at the north ſide of the dock, there are five diſtinct piles of buildings, each containing ſix diviſions of ware houſes, which are to be connected with another range when the whole of the plan is completed. Each body of ware houſes has ten cranes on the inſide. The cellars are ten feet high, are completely arched over, with an earthen flooring beat down to equal the firm ſubſtance of brick, which is three feet above the level of the water. There are iron ſtancions from the cellar to the upper ſtory, to prevent the ſettling or ſinking of the floors. From the moſt minute obſervations of thoſe premiſes, it is evident, that moſt able and ingenious architect, J. Rannie, eſquire, who ſuperintended the whole of the building, has moſt ſedulouſly aimed at blending, and has ſucceeded in the accompliſhment of a work, which at once unites ſimplicity and grandeur of appearance, and in which the commodious ſtowage of goods and the ſecurity of them after they have been depoſited, may be looked to with the moſt perfect confidence.

There are two tobacco ware houſes at the eaſtern end of the dock:—the one 250 feet long and 230 wide, the other 762 feet in length, and 160 in width. The roof of theſe buildings forms three diſtinct plain ranges acroſs, which extends without interruption to the full length of each ware houſe, diſplaying the moſt admirable ſimplicity of appearance on the outſide, while on the inſide the whole is ſo firmly united that nothing ſhort of the ſhock of the walls upon which it ſtands can poſſibly endanger them. This range of building is raiſed but one floor above the ground, though the ware houſes on the north ſide are four ſtories high above the cellars. But underneath the tobacco ware houſes are high vaulted cellars of the ſame extent, one part of which is to be appropriated to the purpoſe of depoſiting wine until the proprietor finds it convenient to have it ſent to ſome other place. Beſides the materials of which the arches are compoſed, there is a ſolid paved floor over the arches—ſo that if by any accident the floor above ground was to catch fire, the flames cannot do the ſmalleſt injury to the goods depoſited in the cellars.

There is below this a ſteam engine of great power.

At the mouth of the other baſin there is a ſwivel bridge of caſt iron, conſtructed ſo as to open in the middle. There is alſo a flowing bridge at the entrance of the dock, below Hermitage bridge.

The engineer having previouſly made every neceſſary arrangement, on Thurſday at 11 o'clock in the forenoon the brig Perſeverence, capt. Clark, a Liverpool veſſel belonging to Mr. Davis, which was appointed to have the honor of firſt entering theſe works, was decorated with the colours of every nation that has its ſtandard floating on the ocean. Preciſely at 1 o'clock the outer gate of the baſin was opened, and the veſſel was towed in, the event was announced by the diſcharge of ſeveral pieces of cannon from the wharves and ſhipping near the ſpot. With the motion of the water on the firſt entrance ſhe ſwung ſomething round to the eaſtward, but every thing was ſo judiciouſly managed before hand, that in the courſe of a few minutes ſome men at a capſtan bowſed her about to her proper direction. It took up a ſhort time to bring the water in the baſin to its proper height. The band on board the veſſel in the mean time played "God ſave the King;" and the Eaſt India volunteer's band, which was placed on that part of the quay oppoſite to the ſtack of ware-houſes, No. 3, greeted them with "Rule Britannia." At twenty minutes before two the inner gate was thrown open, and the veſſel was hauled into the Great Dock, and made faſt to one of the mooring chains, by a ſmall tow-line, with which ſhe was warpped up in the moſt ſteady and expeditious manner. The directors of the company, the ſurveyor of the works, the ſecretary, and ſeveral of their friends, were on board the veſſel—and they as well as the numerous ſpectators on ſhore, marked each particular change of her poſition with the moſt heartfelt acclamations. At two o'clock the veſſel was brought up abreaſt of the quay, ſo cloſe that a child might ſtep on board of her with ſafety. In order to ſhew the regularity of the plan, and the facility with which the ſhipping can be removed from one part of the dock to the other, a rope was thrown on ſhore and made faſt to a poſt a-head of the brig, while another ſteadied her at the ſtern and in leſs than five minutes ſhe was brought to her moorings at the head of the works. Every perſon preſent then expreſſed their exultation at the witneſſing the completion of this vaſt national undertaking with three times three; and certainly there never was a work of ſimilar extent and magnitude completed in ſo ſhort a period, a circumſtance which reflects the higheſt honor not only on the gentleman who had the direction, and the engineer who conceived the immenſe deſign and put it into practice, but alſo on every perſon who had any ſort of the management about the works.

After the mooring of the brig, the directors partook of a cold collation with ſome officers belonging to the company, at the clerk's office, near the Great Weſtern Gate.

We did not learn that any of the leading miniſters of ſtate were preſent, but there were ſome of the directors of the firſt commercial companies along with the directors of the London docks.

The day was exceeding unpleaſant for any thing of public ſhew, but the evincing of the general utility of the plan appeared to be more the object of the managers, than any diſplay of public ſpectacle. The whole paſſed off without the ſmalleſt accident or confuſion, and the expedition with which the veſſel was drawn from the Thames acroſs this immenſe body of ſtill water gave the utmoſt ſatisfaction to every well wiſher to the trading intereſts of the nation.

FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA.

A method to preserve fruit trees in blossom from the effects of frost.

The Chevalier de Bærenberg of Prague, we are told, has diſcovered a method of effectually preſerving trees in bloſſom from the fatal effects of thoſe froſts which ſometimes in the ſpring deſtroy the moſt promiſing hopes of a plentiful crop of fruit. This method is extremely ſimple. He ſurrounds the trunks of the trees in bloſſom with a wiſp of ſtraw or hemp. The end of this he ſinks, by means of a ſtone tied to it, in a veſſel of ſpring water, at a little diſtance from the tree. One veſſel will conveniently ſerve two trees; or the cord may be lengthened ſo as to ſurround ſeveral, before its end is plunged into the water.

It is neceſſary that the veſſel be placed in an open ſituation, and by no means ſhaded by the branches of the neighbouring trees, that the froſt may produce all its effects on the water, by means of the cord communicating with it. This precaution is particularly neceſſary for thoſe trees the flowers of which appear nearly at the ſame time as their leaves: which trees are peculiarly expoſed to the ravages of the froſt.

The proofs of its efficacy, which he had an opportunity of obſerving in the ſpring of 1787, were remarkably ſtriking. Seven apricot eſpaliers in his garden began to bloſſom in the month of March. Fearing that they would ſuffer from the late froſts, he ſurrounded them with cords as above directed. In effect, pretty ſharp froſts took place ſix or eight nights: the apricot trees in the neighbouring gardens were all frozen, and none of them produced any fruit, whilſt each of the Chevalier's produced fruit in abundance, which came to the greateſt perfection.

From Deane's Husbandry.

TRANSPLANTING TREES.

In tranſplanting trees, the largeſt roots muſt of neceſſity be ſhortened, and the ſmall fibrous roots ſhould moſtly be cut off. Therefore to balance the loſs of nouriſhment by the roots, when the head is large, a proportionable part of the limbs ſhould be taken away. The trees may be tranſplanted in ſpring or autumn. I have generally had the beſt ſucceſs in the ſpring, and rather prefer that ſeaſon. I do it at the time when the buds are juſt beginning to open into leaves. The holes ſhould be made ſo broad as to allow the roots to have their natural ſituation. And if dead earth be thrown out, rich earth from the ſurface ſhould ſupply the place. If the earth be not rich, a little old dung may be mixed with it. But dung unmixed may be hurtful. Trees are ſometimes killed by having dung heaps lying near to their roots, which ſhews that they ought to be dunged ſparingly, and with caution.

ARTIFICIAL MAHOGANY.

The following is a proceſs for rendering any ſpecies of wood, of a cloſe grain, ſo nearly to reſemble mahogany in the texture, denſity, and poliſh, that the moſt accurate judges are incapable of diſtinguiſhing between this happy imitation, and the native produce:—

"The firſt operation, as now practiſed in France, is to plane the ſurface, ſo as to render it perfectly ſmooth, the wood is then to be rubbed with a ſolution of nitrous acid, which prepares it for the materials, ſubſequently to be applied. Afterwards one ounce and a half of dragon's blood diſſolved in a pint of ſpirits of wine, and one third of that quantity of carbonate of ſoda, are to be mixed together, and filtered, and the liquid in this thin ſtate is to be rubbed, or rather laid upon the wood, with a ſoft bruſh. This proceſs is repeated with very little alteration, and in a ſhort interval, afterwards, the wood poſſeſſes the external appearance we have deſcribed.—When this application has been properly made, the ſurface will reſemble an artificial mirror, but if the poliſh become leſs brilliant, by the uſe of a little drawn linſeed oil, the wood will be reſtored to its former brilliancy."

Philadelphia, April 17.

Yeſterday arrived, brig Eliza, captain Ellis, from Malaga, which he left the 3d of March, where one of the French frigates, who aſſiſted at the taking a part of the Engliſh convoy from Malta, arrived the latter end of Feb. ſhe bro't in a number of the Britiſh priſoners and ſoon after ſent them to Gibraltar in a Cartel. Capt. Ellis ſays the French fleet had ſailed from Toulon, and it was *reported* they had paſſed the Straights and were joined by a number of Spaniſh ſhips. While at Malaga, which is only 60 miles from Gibraltar, he frequently heard of the aſſembling of the Spaniſh troops in the neighbourhood of Gibraltar: but heard of no attack or of their having commenced the ſiege. He paſſed Gibraltar in the night, ſo that he could not ſee whether there was a fleet there or not; but all was quiet as far as his obſervation went. It was reported at Malaga that the Engliſh fleet that had for ſome time blockaded Cadiz was withdrawn.