Presented by L. H. Irvine

7/2018: Information from Ned Nevill:
author to Thomas Emery
ref. Leicester Chronicle 22 Aug. 1868
also: "...by fellow-townsmen..."

[Signature]

Pam El
"The summons read—the great consult began."—Milton.

"—— when I speak, let no dog bark."—Shakespeare.
CHAPTER 3.

The style of the following pages needs no apology, for our readers will agree with us that the most desirable style is the one which enables us to get over easily and pleasantly the different departments and stages of our journey. So we at once, as the Scotch say, "gang our gait."

Leicester prides itself upon its antique relations, but the links in its ancestral chain are rather rusty and irregular. There is much speculation as to who founded our old town, though we can easily trace the parties who subsequently caused it to founder. King Lear is said to
have lived on the banks of the Soar; if, however, it was then as now, he would be likely to look with a leer on the sluggish stream while performing his ablutions, and would have a sore time of it while inhaling the effluvia arising from mud and putrefaction. The site on which Leicester stands is supposed to have been occupied by the ancient Britons, who undoubtedly were treated to the sight of a Roman aggression more tangible and formidable than any we have experienced in our day. One of the earliest names that we find applied to this place is Rate, probably a corruption of rate-thee, and as such would be somewhat indicative of the rate at which our aboriginal forefathers were rated by their Roman rulers. It may be observed, too, in passing, that whatever may be the degenerate tendencies of our times, the town continues to maintain this ancient fiscal policy; for while the “nobs” are intent upon taxing at —“a bountiful old rate,”

the “ignobs” are as earnest in rating them for their pains in “good round set terms.” Like true philosophers, however, our ancestors learned to bear what they could not avoid, and after fighting like Britons for the whole, they gave quarters to the Romans, and settled down with them in comparative quiet, and even camped with them on hob-o-nob terms. But this concord was, by the accord of others, destined to be turned into discord. A race of rascals called Saxons took it into their heads to turn the aborigines of the Midlands out of house and harbour. Subsequently the Danes had similar views of the rights of man and of property, and thus between Dane and Saxon our ancient townsmen were knocked about from pillar to post. William of Normandy, too, having conquered by wholesale, must needs go into detail. Having hastened the death of his opponents at Hastings, he took a tour to Oxford, to Warwick, and then to Leicester. Here he found something like a match, for, fired with fury, the people struck against the aggressor with determination, and he only succeeded in taking the town after the houses had been all pulled about his ears. At subsequent periods the town was again sacked, but as the instances we have given are samples of the sack, we pass on; for although blood follows on the tail of our progress, the object of our progress is not a tale of blood.

In the year 1291 an Assembly of Barons was held at Leicester; but instituted as this meeting was by these parties, it seems not to have been a barren affair, for it assisted to produce one of those paradoxes in politics—the development of strength from weakness.
Imbecile King John was by this movement pushed to the granting of Magna Charta, and thus not only gave a sign but the substance of constitutional freedom. Leicester has not only been celebrated for its deeds of arms but for its war of words. Parliaments have assembled here at different times, but in the first instance it seems to have been for no higher purpose than to parley with heretics. At another time one of these meetings obtained the cognomen of "Parliament of Bats," because, being denied their "trusty swords," they supplied themselves with staves and bludgeons; but the better reason for such an appellation appears to be on account of a certain blindness with which they were afflicted, in common with an unsightly portion of the creation. The fifth meeting of this body at Leicester is said to have been held in consequence of the excessive heat or insalubrity of the air at Westminster; though it is probable that this was merely an excuse for the members to effect an escape from a place which their own conduct had made too hot to hold them.

About 1363 a man named Walter Winkborn was hung here. After the usual term of suspension he was borne to St. Sepulchre's chapel to be buried; but Winkborn, true to the death, tipped Jack Ketch the wink as he was removed from his elevation. The civil officers were uncivil enough to wish to send him a second time to the gallows; but King Edward III., doubtless thinking that hanging was hanging all the world over, pardoned poor Winkborn for that time; it is questionable, however, if the winking propensities, which he seems to have inherited from birth, enabled him to slip through the noose which the great avenger ultimately tied for him.

Soon after this time one William Swynderby, a hermit, was famed for his religious revirces in and around Leicester. He preached vehemently against women and the lightness of their dress, which disposed them to give him a dressing with a heavier material; for when on one occasion he was levelling his discourse against them, they evinced a determination to level him with stones.

About this period Jack Straw and his companions spread consternation amongst the government and the elderly ladies. Intelligence of their depredations reached Leicester, and the intelligence of the mayor and his brethren was sorely tried in devising plans for protection from this formidable foe. It was agreed that a proclamation "to arms" would tend to keep them out of harm's way; and thus assuredly they need but little rock the schemes of those desperadoes who sought to make a wreck of their property. In obedience to this proclamation twelve hundred armed subjects became subjected to the command of the mayor, and being wide awake, they put in an appearance in the morning by break of day. However their bravery on this occasion was but slightly tested. The Jack Straw they fought was the man of straw they had created; and having set him up themselves, they had but little to do in knocking him down.

"So closely ye greate and gallant fyghte,  
For seare of whych they take all yngyte,  
And after such a brave displaise,  
We'll freely say they wonne the ynge."
In the month of August, 1485, our ancient townsfolk saw the "crook-back'd tyrant" wind his dubious way through Leicester to Bosworth field. "Glo'ster, the bloody and devouring boar," slept at the Blue Boar the night before the fight. Whether this was an accidental occurrence, or the natural result of the flocking together of birds of a certain feather, we cannot say; but we know that he was seen to look rather blue immediately after. However, after sleeping according to the usages of the swinish fraternity, he went on his way to do battle at Bosworth. He marched his men in great pomp and splendour, but it was not long before the shine was taken out of him. On arriving at the field of action his intellect appears to have acted oddly. On our return, it seems to have lost all idea of his identity, for, on recovering himself, he was heard to exclaim "I'm the very identical man!" or, which is about the same thing, "Richard's himself again!" At another time his arithmetic got into confusion—possibly from too close an acquaintance with mine host and his good things on the previous night—as instead of one he calculated there were "six Richmonds in the field." His scale of values, too, seemed to be of no value to him, for he was seen offering to barter the kingdom, for which he had braved so much, for a horse—a proof that he was no judge in horse-flesh. But from this singular sense of things he was soon brought to his senses; and the owner of the "teeth that could gnaw a crust at two hours old" had to bite his bib at Bosworth. After being treated to some of the ferocity he had shown to others, and his body had been hacked most brutally, it was placed on an old hack and brought to Leicester for burial. It has been reported that an old woman, hearing that Richard had struck his spur against a stone, on passing over the Soar, prophesied that where his spur had struck his head should be broken: but like most prophecies on the spur of the moment, it is not worthy of much credit.

A cursory glance at the early incidents associated with this place is only necessary to assure us, that, although too often soured and dishonoured by foreign aggression, the early inhabitants were not devoid of the "milk of human kindness." Hospitals and endowments for the poor survive the lapse of time, and speak out most eloquently above the clang of arms and the boom of cannon. At the commencement of the sixteenth century one William of Wigston distinguished himself by appropriating to charitable purposes the greater part of his possessions. The wealthy benefactor, however, did not live to see the edifice bearing his name completed; and, unfortunately for justice and humanity, no ghostly theory admitted of his "coming again," at the call of the crying abuses which subsequently marred his benevolent intentions.

Leicester Abbey, too, has been noted as the scene of charitable performances, and for having accommodated travellers of note. It appears to have been a kind of
aristocratic lodging-house, without the surveillance of either police or sanitary officer. It was hospitable to the humble poor, and a hospital to the titled sick and dying. Cardinal Wolsey, being on his way from York to London, under an arrest for treason, found it necessary to arrest his steps and call at the Abbey. This halt, which was expected to be only by way of passing, was brought, however, to a dead halt. Having reached here in the gloomy month of November, he sought shelter alike from a state of storm and "the storms of state." At the hands of the benevolent Abbot, who had relieved many who were aground, he asked "a little earth for charity." After the ready grant of a piece, his "weary bones" were deposited in it—where, good reader, of your charity let us hope they rest in peace. It is needless to add that the present edifice is not now applied to such purposes, but it is probable that, should Cardinal Wiseman purpose a visit for protection from the consequences of his master's bull, temporary accommodation at least would be afforded, provided he would pay some little attention to the garden of Mr. Warner as well as to the "Garden of the Soul."

CHAPTER II.

UR readers will have observed that we travel over the pages of history in a manner not at all in accordance with the locomotive agencies of the times about which we are writing. But if this should militate against the completeness of our historic labours, it will in the end be found complimentary to our readers, and—in one sense—to ourselves; for if we only stop at first class stations, it is presumptive evidence that we have first class passengers in our train; and perhaps our presumption may not be too much tested, if we plume our fancy with a first-rate pair of wings, and thus account for the rapid rate at which we carry our companions in travel over the
ground. At this point we were about to fly over half a century or so, but the sentry we have set to watch the march of events, directs our attention to a smell of fire, which, as we descend to trace its origin, causes us to burn with indignation. At a period in the history of our "ould" town, when the papal religion had for a time again attained the ascendancy, a young man named Thomas More was condemned to the flames in consequence of having inflamed the minds of the superstitious at St. Margaret's Church against him by the denial of some peculiar doctrine. Young More, therefore, was doomed to add more fuel to the fire of bigotry, and to throw a light upon the darkness of these times. At the close of the sixteenth, and at the commencement of the seventeenth centuries, one "Mother Cook" and nine others were burned or hanged in Leicester for witchcraft. "Mother Cook" was cooked at the instigation of Mr. Edward Saunders, who it is to be hoped got well roasted for being such a sawney. In the case of the other unfortunates, whose professional performances had brought on them all the calamities of fire, it was not necessary for their persecutors to put them through any manipulative process to make up a magic number, such as

"Three to thine, and three to mine,
And three again to make up nine!"

For, lo! by one poke of the fire, nine "weird sisters" and nine times nine lives were done to death in the hope that the exclamation—

"Peace! the charm's wound up!"

might with truth be given utterance to. And so it was "wound up," if it was in the persons of these poor creatures, and without any special bill being passed in Parliament for the purpose. After this running fire against witchcraft the practice seems to have fallen into abeyance—whether by the craft of the prosecutors, or that of the witches in dissembling their vocation when their craft was in danger, we will be bewitched if we can say. But it is asserted that this is not the only craft which is doomed to suffer wreck; for the idea is given out in bewitching accents—which seem chiefly to catch the ears of the craftsmen of our times—that the decline of witchcraft is only the forerunner of a similar running down of other crafts, the value of which has been run up to a prodigious pitch. With this of course we have nothing further to do than in giving it as a reflection upon a historical fact, for it is not our purpose to cast reflections upon "dignities."
Local historians give it out that Leicester has frequently been visited by the sovereigns of the country; but their visits must have been of short duration, for the town is more celebrated for socks than sovereigns. Where stockingers abound, and their calling is a bye-word for poverty, it seems not likely that such distinguished visitors ever made a long stay—at least in the pockets of the people. But we may be reckoning the circulating characteristic of the specie, while our "brethren of the quill" are recording the doings of some of the species.

If so, the mistake lies at our door, at which we are willing that it should rap as hard as it likes, providing our fellow-labourers will not rap our knuckles for trying to fasten it on them.

In the year 1642, that gracious sovereign Charles the First was a visitor here for four days, on one of which he attended divine service in St. Martin's Church. A throne was erected therein for the king, and the aisles were strewn with flowers, herbs, and rushes. The flowers were doubtless intended as a tasteful accompaniment to the flowers of rhetoric which saluted the ears of royalty. The herbs would tend to

"sweeten the imagination"—of the audience and to purify their perceptions, so that they might clearly discern the correspondence of kingly wrong with "divine right"! And the rushes—ah! what of the rushes?—why they spoke with a solemn significance that the head of the royal visitor was destined to be "bowed like a bull-rush." Such were the honours and such the symbols which greeted Charles the First on his first visit to Leicester.

About three years afterwards Charles came again to this town—not at this time to listen to the canons of the Church, but to command attention to the canons of the State. He encamped in the meadows near Aylestone preparatory to showering his balls like hailstones among the people of Leicester. The day before the siege he marched his army and sat down in St. Mary's field, so that he could have a little tantalizing talk with the enemy. During the day he told his opponents what he could do by word of mouth; but at night, not being able to see them, he had recourse to the sense of feeling, and declared his intentions by the mouth of cannon. Towards morning a breach was made in the town-wall, and a number of its brave defenders—who stuck together like bricks—fell. It is said that many women fought at the breach with great resolution, and almost completed their claim to the breeches on this occasion. At length the garrison was driven from the fortifications through the streets to St. Martin's church, where, instead of a throne,
as on the former visitation, they made a stand. Here, on the very spot where roses, and perhaps rose-water, had before been bestowed liberally on the king, his forces now slew the townsmen in great numbers, and their blood literally flowed in the streets. From this place the inhabitants were driven into the market-place, which was then turned into a slaughter-place, and the king's soldiers, having a large eye to the butchering business, cut and hacked their victims with great avidity. After this brave resistance the people had to succumb for the time to the besieging forces, and the king, not content with victory, must needs crow and strut about the streets, and stick his spurs into the vanquished and fallen. The people, having borne the cut direct, were not prepared for the king's "cut 'em more:" thus his conduct cut them to the heart, and they never forgot it. It is not to be supposed that the people of the town and neighbourhood were content that the "divinely appointed" should practise any more of his devilry here, so they were not long before they said to him:--"We do not choose to fight in this confined place, for we knock the jugs and glasses and furniture about so; if you will turn out into Naseby field we will have it out with you, and pull your nasal organ into the bargain." Accordingly the great and final fight, with which our readers are familiar, took place at Naseby, and although the king's nose was not actually wrung, his head was virtually pulled from off his shoulders.

At this period party and religious feeling ran rampant, and unscrupulous practices were resorted to in ridicule of the royalists and the state church. Some of the Leicester puritans, in expressing their dissent from the establishment, actually led jackasses before the fonts in the churches in derision of the doctrine of baptism. Carried away themselves by a wild enthusiasm, they thought to remove the prejudices of others by the power of donkeys. Nothing short of this kind of intoxication could have led them to hit upon the expedient of applying long ears as an antidote for short prayers; or of rectifying deficiencies in doctrine by assine agency. It must be allowed to have been a stupid proceeding to put forward the rough-hewed, braying orators, with a view of superseding objectionable ceremonies. The promoters of it were probably a species of ancient financial reformers, who, seeing what a bone of contention was presented by the "leaves and fishes"—particularly by the fishes—and the "barbarous splendours" of the church, perhaps thought to improve this state of affairs by the substitution of a regimen composed of a little wild grass and a few bunches of thistles, with external adornments of the shaggy "barebone" order. We are at a loss to discern to what order of official dignity our ancestors ultimately elevated these wild and stubborn gentry, but as they evidently had a fellow-feeling for them, it is not unlikely that after obtaining fellowship at Brazenose, they were engrafted on the "Roundheads."
From one of the names applied to the party, it appears that this new order of the clergy had but a bare prospect before them; for upon most meagre resources they had to fill very onerous offices. It seems likely that the hardships to which they were subjected in their new calling—St. Martin's Church, perhaps, being the principal scene of their labours—first suggested the idea of Martin's act, which provides that no "Neddy" shall be driven and hounded about without the offending party being made responsible for his act. If this should prove to be the true cause of this benevolent measure, we hope to be presented with a ticket of life-membership by the Animals' Friend Society in honour of the discovery; and as we do not like anything half-and-half, we expect from the public a full measure of—Madeira shall we say? Ha! ha!—gratitude!

In the year 1680 a man named Allsop, from Northamptonshire, came to reside near the North-gates. This person was the first to introduce stocking-making into this town. We have no evidence of Allsop's other abilities, and we must confess that, from our earliest acquaintance with the manufacture, we have had some lurking suspicions that he who first brought it here had a degree of softness in his nature; but we are indebted to his name for an intimation that he was entirely composed of a soppy substance. It is possible that some of our readers are too well acquainted with the stocking-frame to desire much more information respecting it. We are all familiar with the tradition concerning its origin. The Rev. W. Lee became enamoured of a certain lady. Finding she was determined on realizing the household exhortation, "Go on with your knitting," and that his suit hung on a slender thread in consequence, he, in a mood of mingled pride and mortification, knitted his eyebrows, and set to work to devise means by which he should more effectually ingratiate himself into the good graces of his lady-love. After many difficulties and disasters—additional proofs that "the course of true love never did run smooth"—he succeeded in inventing a machine by which the object of his affections could knit her material into stockings with greater expedition, and thereby be the better able to attend to the more delicate and tender yarns he was spinning and addressing to her. His invention, likewise, seems to have produced material changes in his professional career, for instead of pursuing the thread of his discourses, and continuing to knit his flock in the bond of brotherhood, he gave up his clerical duties and attended solely to his more mechanical knitting apparatus. His subsequent labours appear not to have been very successful; but perhaps, through devoting himself entirely to the meshes in stocking-weaving, he had the advantage of avoiding those meshes of ecclesiastical law into which some modern functionaries have had the misfortune to fall. The result of his love-suit, too, seems hidden in a tangled skein of tradition and romance, and
we are left with nothing more than the cold realities of frames, stockings, and stockingers. The history and mystery of the trade may be summed up in a few words. It originated in vexation, and still continues as "a plague on both their houses"—manufacturer and workman. There is a peculiarity, however, amongst those engaged in this manufacture, not so clearly traceable in other trades. Whether the parties commence their commercial career at the winding-wheel or in the counting-house, they generally, in the end, take up their abode in extensive premises at the outskirts of the town; so that, notwithstanding a diversity of starting-points, there is a singular correspondence in premises and conclusions.

In more recent times the people of Leicester were again troubled by rumours of war. Fears were entertained lest Prince Charles should reach here with his army during the rebellion of 1745. The old English pluck to which the inhabitants made such pretensions on former occasions, appeared to desert them at the prospective approach of the Pretender. While the rebels were at a distance, warm and warlike partisans of the king paraded their prowess in mock-fights in the castle-yard; but on hearing of the rebels' arrival at Derby, this valour evaporated into a gaseous thinness not at all available in military operations. Instead of "standing their ground if they did not take a penny"—which penny, by the way, they were not likely to take from such ugly customers—above one-half of the inhabitants of the town precipitately retired into the neighbouring villages, and consequently vacated in favour of the Pretender or any one else who thought proper to come and take possession. This conduct on the part of the king's partisans proved that they preferred mock to real fighting; and it is possible that there was a sort of mesmeric "community of taste" between them and that knight of the bottle who was much more disposed to form an acquaintance with sham than with real pain. However, the weakness manifested by some of the townspeople was not in this instance of much practical consequence. Parties on the look-out having exercised their imaginations as to the whereabouts of the rebels, with a versatility quite perplexing to the inhabitants—first reporting they were at Loughborough, then at Rothley, and again still nearer Leicester—a scout more reliable than the rest brought such tidings of the backward movements of the enemy, that the Leicesterians scouted the idea of an attack from such rebellious rascals. This demonstration of loyalty of course smacked more of bluster than bravery; but as the retreating army approached
Scotland, our brethren north of the Tweed braced up at once their nerves and tweeds, and smacked their lips at the prospect of giving the rebels a licking. In a short but sharp encounter at Culloden, where hits and counter hits were exchanged pretty freely, they soon put the Pretender through his paces, and, after receiving a few decisive slaps on the face, which made his cheek ache, he went scampering “over the hills and far away,” like a scamp as he was, and finally escaped in a smack to France.

A rather remarkable love-incident occurred in this town, about the time of which we are writing. A certain person committed the very pardonable fault of falling in love with a young lady of Leicester. Thinking an escape from such a difficult and delicate situation could only be accomplished by the fair object of his affection, he at once applied for her hand, not however a loan, by way of lifting him out of a difficulty, but with a view to a permanent permanence and possession. To this proposal the young damsel urged strong objections, and in one of her replies to his repeated importunities, she rather pettishly declared that she “could not think of parting with one of her members in that way, but if such a mutilation must take place, she could only be induced to comply when she had witnessed her lover—as a demonstration of the stability of his affection—at the weathercock of St. Martin’s spire!” On what principle of fairness the dear cause of a love-sickness should couple with it the demand of a prospective case of mortality we are at a loss to discover; neither can we see why a party involved in a love-chase should have been expected to perform a steeple-chase. However, at the risk of limb and life, he attempted to comply with this crotchet of her’s by climbing to the weathercock by the crotchets of the spire. Of course, on arriving at this point, one would expect he had carried his point.

Every booby who attains the top of a greased pole at the country fair carries off his beaver, and why not this gallant and sentimental gymnast as fairly win his “bonnet”? But, no! the adored one demanded a sight of her devotee at the weathercock, and, behold! when there, she positively refused to look at him! Thus was he at once muleted of his prize, and transformed into a veritable illustration of “love’s labour lost.” It is probable that at the commencement of his arduous undertaking, our lovesmitten hero—remembering that the edifice was dedicated to St. Martin—would breathe the somewhat classical aspiration—“ubi beatit, Martini!” but at the conclusion we suspect he would be more likely to adopt the vulgar rendering,—“it’s all my eye and Betty Martin.” There is one feature, however, in this feat which we will look at if the lady would not. Although our hero failed to bring his love to a climax, he attained the height of folly; and if we cannot congratulate our readers upon the happy termination of this adventure, we have at least the satisfaction of being brought by it to the end of—our chapter.
ARTIES who are in the habit of "holding forth" to the public assume to themselves a degree of authority if they can show that they "talk by the book." Of course in the foregoing pages we have been talking to our readers, to some extent, by the books of preceding historians; but we mean no disparagement as we now throw those on one side, and claim a continuance of credit while we give the garrulous insinuations of our ancient friend, the "oldest inhabitant," and while we speak actual experience from the balcony fronting the store-house of our own memory.

In the early part of the present century there were manifestations of hostility against the progress of machinery in some of the midland districts. An ideal existence known as Ned Lud—another edition of "the man in the moon"—committed much violence upon mechanical property in the neighbourhood. It seemed to be a prevailing opinion among the followers of this fictitious personage that improvements in employers' frames would tend to injure the corporeal frames of the workmen. Neither the law, however, nor the public mind seemed framed to admit of such outrages; and, as a consequence, the Luddites were made to drop their proceedings, while six of their number were led in a body to the drop in Infirmary-square.

The year 1835 is rendered memorable in Leicester through a severe parliamentary contest between Sir Charles Abney Hastings and Mr. Otway Cave as conservatives; and Mr. William Evans and Mr. (now Lord) Denman on the radical interest. The self-elected corporation—who seemed to have a special commission to expend the borough or any other funds in a manner according to their "own sweet wills"—made themselves conspicuous and notorious at this time. Looking upon themselves as the fathers of the constituency, and desirous of obeying the injunction to "increase and multiply," they gave existence, on the eve of the election, to eight hundred honorary freemen, who of course were expected, like good children, to do their parents' bidding. Sir Charles Hastings was brought forward as the pet of this respectable body just as Mr. Evans was closing a very promising canvass. Mr. Cave, too, was already in the field, but his real intentions in the onset might as well have been buried in a cave for.
all—as the sequel proved—the electors knew about them. Sir Charles Hastings being supported by the corporation, and Mr. Evans carrying with him the radical interest, Mr. Cave—whose suit with the constituency was not in such a fair way as with the Indies—was induced to coquet with the corporation, and not being true-born, became an adopted heir to patronage and place in the contest. Sides being thus decisively taken on the part of the Tories, it was found desirable to start Mr. Denman by the side of Mr. Evans. This taking up of a position, however, by Mr. Denman, was more real than real, for throughout the election he never appeared by his candidate’s side; so that as far as actual co-operation in the struggle was concerned, Mr. Evans might be said to be literally beside himself. During the time of polling, the United Kingdom was ransacked, and even France penetrated, to find parties who could give a lift in this desperate conflict. Fearful boys were made to wear the airs of men, and after a poll was demanded, some brought up mere sticks and saplings. Electors, who for years had been dead as door-nails, were restored to the polling booth, and although in paying the debt of nature they had forfeited their poll, yet they were made to head a column of veritable voters. Whilst the ghost of an “independent elector of the Borough of Leicester” was forthcoming, success was looked upon as certain. At the close of the tenth day’s poll, however, Mr. Evans gave up the contest, and at this point party heat was so strong that it caused the pot of popular indignation to boil over. Political excitement, which throughout the election amounted to a stir, got steamed into a riot. The hustings were first attacked and partially destroyed. Then the old Exchange—in which the corporation were domiciled—became an object of popular fury. The staves of the special constables were seized, broken, and elevated to a higher position than their owners ever aspired to. Missiles of various descriptions were thrown at the windows of the Exchange, and at the persons on and about the building. The authorities—seeing the act was likely to become somewhat tragic—came out and read the riot act; but it was in almost deaf, blind, and lame, as well as dumb show. At length certain conservatives of the public peace, after taking various strong measures for their personal defence and support, began to hurl large stones* from the summit of the Exchange upon the assailants below. At this a gentle hero of the awl, just opposite, with an eye to a kerb rather than a lapstone, and a stitch in the side instead of the sole, caught

“* While engaged the other day in the work of pulling down this not very handsome or convenient building (the Exchange), some of the workmen discovered a quantity of stones and pebbles that had been carefully put away; and, from their size and mode of stowage, the conclusion was arrived at that they must have been laid in as ammunition for the defence of this ugly edifice during the ever-memorable siege of 1836.”—Leicestershire Mercury, Nov. 29, 1856.

We have it from the lips of one of the defenders of the Exchange at the time in question, that a large quantity of stones and pebbles, brought in a cart from some quarry or pit in the neighbourhood, were conveyed in sacks into the building under the cover of night, and deposited within the roof.
up his coal-pick, and crying "Gee!" to the people, and "come up!" to the pavement, devoted his homely instrument to the provision of pepper for the poor Exchange. An attempt was made to get out the Yeomanry, but owing to the prevalence of an endemical affection at that particular period, or some other inscrutable cause, only a few of the gallant band made their appearance, and these looked as though they would have been more at home on a sick-bed than in the field of glory. However, on the proverbial principle that every little helps, a single file of some ten Militia men were brought to the scene of mortal action. This brave line was composed of fifers and drum-boys, with spare lank-looking stockingers, each shouldering his firelock—contrasting oddly with the copulent Adjutant at their head. The fury of the fight continuing, a detachment of Life Guards, which had been lying at Mountsorrel in readiness, came with a canter into the Market-place. At the sight of the flashing swords of the Guardsmen the people flew in all directions. Numbers of men and youths were taken prisoners, and the authorities, having the rebels under their thumbs, placed the Militia under arms all night in the Market-place. Much damage was done to the Exchange and the pavement, as well as to the heads and limbs of some engaged in the affray. But, taking the election as a whole, the greatest injury was sustained by the body corporate; for in addition to the physical disfigurements it received, it seemed after this time to lose caste and reputation, until, stripped of its civic adornments, it has no further function among the verities of our times than to "point a moral or adorn our tale."

In the year 1830 Mr. Evans and Sir Charles A. Hastings were returned for the borough. Just previous to this Mr. Warburton's "Anatomy Act" had been passed, which provided that the bodies of deceased paupers, infirmary inmates, and others, should be appropriated to scientific purposes. This was intended to prevent clandestine disinterments for dissection—a practice then prevalent—and Sir Charles had to encounter grave opposition through having supported this measure. Grim and grisly appearances were paraded before his eyes, and his ears were assailed with the opprobrious sobriquet of the "Anatomy

* At the next assizes, Mr. Denman (then Q.C.) pleaded and obtained the acquittal of the rioters; and they drew his carriage out of town to mark their gratitude for his eloquent and manly pleading.
of his opponents, the “bold peasantry” assembled, the very stones were moved by his powerful eloquence. From this time, too, the speaker received an alliterative alimentary appellation, through having issued a certain prolixity note. But as the literal and popular interpretation was disowned, and the creature comforts referred to were not forthcoming for such general distribution, it seems most likely that the error originated in the excited gustativeness of some pudding-headed partizan who had “an eye to the roast,” rather than in the representative’s breach of good faith.

At the election immediately after the passing of the Reform Bill, Mr. Paget retired, and the county being divided into north and south, four members were returned for it. Messrs. Evans and Ellis again presented themselves for the borough, Mr. Boughton Leigh also appearing, on behalf of the conservatives. The field, however, was left to the previous members after a somewhat pugnacious display on the part of Mr. Leigh, who, in belligerent attitude, declared himself from the hustings a candidate for fistic as well as parliamentary honors. In 1835, the two borough members were displaced by two conservatives — Messrs. Goulburn and Gladstone; but in 1837 the liberals again rallied, and being elated with a sort of Eastern hopefulness through certain matin Chroniclements in their favour, until they became enthusiastic as any lover who had found a “duck” worth his affections—they carried the cause to a climax, and their candidates into office.
In 1839, after a contest with Mr. Hay Frewen, Mr. Wynn Ellis was elected—Mr. Duckworth having played a game of chance and turned up a court card. The year 1841 brought with it a general election. Messrs. Easthope and Ellis were the first to cry “play,” and although their opponents might be said to be politically stumped, it was soon evident that there was to be an attack upon their wickets. At this time an attempt was made to carry six points by the union of two extreme ones; but however artistically the adze might be wielded, or wisely the saw applied, another modern instance was afforded that no amount of Coopering could, from such cross-grained, medley materials, produce a good “chimney,” and it was found best in the end for “every tub to stand on its own bottom.” At the nomination the conservatives started Messrs. Horsey-de-Horscy and Forrester; but Horsey-de-Horscy—not wishing to be put hors-de-combat—never appeared at the hustings, and Forrester only just “sounded his horn”—which, by the way, was anything but “cheerful”—when cracking his whip, with greater expertise than he had cracked his politics, he made

“Haste to the woods away!”

In the southern division of the county Colonel Cheney and the Hon. T. Gisborne were brought forward in opposition to Sir Henry Halford and Mr. Packe. Throughout the bustle of the election the liberals displayed great energy and perseverance, but at the close they cut so sorry a figure that it would have been vain to attempt to conceal the grievous disappointment they experienced.

At the next election Sir Joshua Walmsley and Mr. Richard Gardner were returned for the borough—Mr. Parker, the conservative candidate, being unsuccessful. The tenure of office conferred by this election proved to be but of short duration. At one of those electioneering

parties, considered so essential as an introduction to the polling booth, the agents were said to take upon themselves the suspension of the duties usually pertaining to sugar, and to sweeten the morning’s decoction by a golden preparation not included in the category of the tea table. Whether the circumstance of the peculiar sediment—which at other times might have been called “grounds”—finding its way beside the slop-basin, gave grounds for suspicion, or that it was merely an old wife’s tale, is not for us say, but it is a matter of

that the election fell to the ground soon after.

The unseated members not being eligible for re-election, two “good and faithful burgesses” of Leicester were proposed—the conservatives putting forward Mr. Henry Paget as the only available party likely to serve them. Mr. Paget, however, preferring the happiness of the family circle in which it was his fortune to move, to the turbulence of party strife, and the festive cup to the jars of the “Honourable House,” Messrs. Ellis and Harris were returned; and it was allowed on all hands that the town had never before been so well represented—at least in personal appearance.
CHAPTER IV.

IND reader—for such we hope to be allowed to call you, if you have so far favoured us with your attention, and partaken of the cheer we have in our liberality offered you—carried away from one epoch to another in our electioneering history by the stirring events enumerated in the preceding chapter, we have been rendered completely oblivious to the general but equally noticeable circumstances of those times. By your leave, then, we will retrace our steps, and bring up arrears of matters which, through the turnmills of elections, and the eccentricities of candidates, have been kept in abeyance.

During the agitation for the Reform Bill, Leicester was the scene of monster meetings and immense processions. The progress of the measure was watched with intense anxiety, and each stage through Parliament called forth fresh demonstrations of delight. Music and flags were often in request, and rather than place their enthusiasm under a ban, the people were more frequently disposed to display it under a banner. "Reform" was on every tongue, and, determined upon success, its advocates carried it in the teeth of opposition. The great cry during this agitation was for "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill,"

—a demand, which—as far as related to the latter clause—was most scrupulously complied with.

Amongst the first fruits of parliamentary reform, those who had assisted to put corruption to flight abroad, were not likely to allow it to nestle under their noses at home. We have seen in what relation the people of Leicester stood to their local governors, and we have noticed an act of filial ingratitude on the part of some rebellious radicals against parental authority. Pledged to conserve through all time the rules and forms
of the body, it was no great stretch of imagination on
the part of the old corporators to suppose that there
should be a perpetuation of persons as well as principles.
Thus, from a closeness in theory, it was reasonable to expect
a degree of close-fistedness in practice. And capital hands
indeed were they at the practice. But for certain
monetary considerations and external appearances, the
ancient body might have been a corporation of cordwainers
—so intent were they upon the closing business. At
length, however, the end of opposition waxed warm.
Their seats, on which they had performed such handiwork
—from certain sympathetic connections perhaps—became
crazy beneath them. The auctioneer proclaimed their
avocation "going"—the conditions of sale being
out of charity funds and town estates. The ensigns
and regalia, with all the culinary utensils which had
been employed by the defunct body in the good work
of regaling themselves, were subjected to the desecra-
tion of the hammer. "Bring out the pots and pans,
with the cutlery and crockery," said one of the fore-
most amongst the spoliators, "and let the public see by
our earnestness that there's to be 'no reserve' in this
business." And thus were the corporation "household
gods" most ignominiously "knocked down." All
reminiscences of the defeated Spanish Armada, and of the
opening of the time-hallowed Town Hall, might go
to the wall, and the Mayor's feast to the dogs. Ancient
corporate hospitality, although redolent of sucking pig, was
unceremoniously voted a bore. The feast of venison—
which, if not a "feast of reason," had at least contributed
to a "flow of soul"—became quite unintentionally the
subject of the annual assurance, "We'll drown it in the
bo-o-owl," and it went down to rise no more. As an act
of self-defence against this teetotal cheese-paring policy,
the victims sought to provide for their own tables what
was denied them at the public board; but the same
brazen-facedness which seized their copper made them
"potter" out the tin; so that for the future they were
more likely to liquid-ate their convivial engagements by
a pipe o' the eye, than by their former and more congenial method—a pipe of wine.

From this time the spirit of progress and improvement seemed to take up its abode in Leicester. Revolutions in local affairs began to appear as possible as in states and empires. Corruption and exclusiveness had met with a signal defeat, and a different estimate of the character and objects of local institutions and government pervaded the public mind. In the councils of the town a utilitarian standard was erected. Ancient forms and barbarous practices were made subservient to growing intelligence, public decency, and an improved moral tone. A freer corporate atmosphere gave vitality to popular aspirations, and the enterprising and commercial tendencies of the times were soon made manifest through this medium. Unsightly edifices, pent-up places, and clumsy, insecure methods of communication began to obtrude themselves into notice. Abuses, absurdities, and impurities, around which was gathered the halo of ages, seemed to present a changing and decaying aspect. "Air! air! I want more air!" cried the bustling and breathless citizen of these later times. "Let's have room for one's strength—give me elbow-room!" was the vociferous demand of the expanding man of business. And then were nuisances inspected, and ancient prejudices attacked. Streets were made to stretch themselves in obedience to the swelling stream of population—now too often made the resort of a stream of swells. The burly watchman, who, from time immemorial, had executed utter prostration upon the merest invader of his official dignity, became in his turn a victim to change and innovation. Even as we have seen how the lemon was peeled in the composition of the corporation punch, so was he stripped alike of his great coat and his great authority, and had the mortification of being supplanted by a Peeler. The West Bridge became an object of municipal legislation, and though, in anticipation of expenses, some of their sighings and forebodings expressed a desire to retain its miserable dimensions, yet the efforts of the improvement party soon transformed it into a bridge of size. It might readily be conceived too, that as streets were not widened and pavements restored by parties who would allow them to be crowded by objects of fear, or be occupied in the following of pursuits of an offensive and injurious nature, so on the other hand, our Smithfield in miniature, like its prototype in later times, had to give way to the march of improvement. The sale of cattle in the public thoroughfares was no doubt thought to be thoroughly fair by the trader, but it began to appear fearfully foul to the public. Even filth might be allowed to be very well in its place, but that place was not thought to be exactly in the most frequented and populous streets. Whatever else might be chargeable to them, some parties were determined that such matter should not be laid at their door. Accordingly the beastly practices which, in olden times, had passed unobserved and been thought of no moment, were removed to a
respectful distance from the neighbouring noses. True, the authorities in meddling in these matters of markets and fairs, fairly took the bull by the horns, but it was thought better that they should do so than allow such an unruly brute to take upon itself the conveyance of women and children, and to play at pitch and toss with all it came near. The horns of a dilemma were also presented to them, in reference to trade and vested interests, but these did not frustrate their plans, for although some of the horns which “cheer” might fall into disuse, it was thought there would still be horns in “Plenty.”

The claims of public health and convenience had even before received attention in other ways. If bull-baiting had passed from amongst us, and Shrovetide Whipping-Toms were doomed, there were evils of stagnation, of physical Inertness, and mental rust, scarcely less to be avoided. A cheerful wife and a chimney corner were amazingly pleasant in their way, but even these it was found did not make up the sum of essentials to man’s happiness. Thus baths and recreation grounds became recognized agencies for active, healthy exercise, and libraries and reading-rooms for improvement and relaxation. The connoisseur of the cock-pit was invited to the realms of cricket, and the dog-fancier to the fete and promenade. The admirer of the “manly art” was referred to the sister sciences, and the student of the betting-book to the pages of the public library. Uncultured urchins, whose chief delight was to dabble in dirt, were encouraged to dip into a more wholesome element; and the plebeian, as well as the aristocrat, without either petulance or contemptuousness, was admonished to “go to Bath!”

Modern Leicester may be defined by its new Market Hall, its Victoria Parade, and its Rutland Statue; the Museum of Curiosities—which of course will include our own curious history, and the Cemetery—where we bury alike our dead and some of our sectarian differences; the Mechanics’ Institute and the General News Room; the Theatre and the Athenæum; the New Post Office and the New Hall—which is growing old despite its name; the Temperance Hall, and its natural ally the Water Works; the monster Factory and immense Warehouses; the Railway, with its steam appliances—not jawing-tackle and matronly machinery, and the Freemen’s Common—with its multitudinous summer-houses of uncommon architecture;—these are the prominent features which in theatrical language “make up” the fresh face of our ancient town.

And, alas! that the Fates should conspire to mar these fair externals, to describe dark lines in our social state, and to point to internal drawbacks and disorders;—reminding us of commercial depressions, trade troubles, and poverty—of the “shrunken stockinger,” graduating from “unskillful” framework-knitting to the more delicate occupation of “diamond cutting”—telling us of Poor Law riots, man-in-the-moon violence, and of the memorable but bloodless battle of Mowmacre Hill! But over these we fain would throw a veil.
In returning to municipal matters, it is not to be supposed that the newly-constituted corporation conducted all its deliberations as smoothly as we have endeavoured to recite them; or that the improvements referred to dropped down from the clouds as freely and pleasantly as a shower on an April day. No. Determined as the majority were on progress, there was yet a great point of difference as to whether they should first provide a fine front or proceed at once to a complete renovation of the town. Against the greater work was argued a want of capital, and, unfortunately, political capital for this purpose was quite unavailable, or the council would have experienced no difficulty in raising any amount of that amongst themselves. The propriety of the Races was a contested subject for some time; and while many made a grand stand in favour of the annual gathering, a running opposition was kept up against it by others. The Water Works, too, led to a considerable amount of spouting, the stream of public opinion being much divided: though the sanitary improvement party ultimately succeeded to a great extent in washing the dust out of the eyes of their opponents.

Of the state of parties in Leicester we have not much to record—merely observing that, as, in reference to our present province, it may be said politics are not politic, we shall have nothing to do with the quibble and the sham, and so rather than further moot the matter, we will on this occasion be mute upon it.

Through the influence of a well-founded Philosophic Institution and the establishment of a Fine Arts Society, Literature and its sister Grace live here in flourishing estate. The papers read annually by the former Institution during the winter season display a state of high intellectuality among its supporters. Several working-class productions have also contributed to the fair representation of Leicester in literature; and which have not failed in obtaining a good share of support—from the shelves of the publisher. The works of art, too, exhibited by the latter society are highly creditable to all parties concerned, and will, we doubt not, when time shall have operated upon their surfaces, softened their asperities, and baked their tints to the orthodox hue, be pronounced “fine specimens of the masters.”

In the popular taste we are happy to say there is some improvement, especially since it has been exercised in the appropriation and disposal of a liberal supply of food. We wish we could say as much of the habits of the people, which, although on the mend, do not as yet present a satisfactory appearance. And even from our observations in the fashionable circles—at the balls and assemblies of our nobles and gentle, we cannot report much progress in this particular. The new costume has not yet created a sensation here. Indeed, we are remarkably backward in

Bloomerism. The attic regions of our ladies' dresses have vanished before the scissors of Fashion, who has
nevertheless entailed a frightful share of tight-lace distortion; but the long skirts, the street sweepers, have it at present all their own way—which, by the way, is not a very narrow one.

And now, gentle reader, a word on more immediate and personal matters. We are about to draw our labours to a close. We have to some extent passed Leicester and Leicester people in review before you. We are now at the last stage of our journey. The stile we introduced at the outset we trust has been of service. We hope all parties have bounded over the boundaries as easily and pleasantly as could be desired. Arrived at the last one, we must now take our leave. Be not dismayed, fair reader,—if we have the honour of addressing,—we are not about to levy an unreasonable contribution for handing you over. Great as is our regard for you, we only salute you in kindness and sincerity. We only ask for an assurance that we have not taken you “all round the field to pick up a rotten stick.” It may not be a long nor a strong one, but we trust it has been sufficient to knock some of the dust out of the jacket of antiquity, and to birch a few of the boys of these latter days. Still whatever may be the estimate formed of our services, it will give us infinite satisfaction to leave all parties in a—

**APPENDIX III.**

**ANTIQUITIES.**

The antiquities of Leicester form a prolific theme for research and speculation. The Jewry Wall, in its isolated and detached position, its dilapidated state and blackened aspect, with its arches and recesses on either side, stands as great a puzzle-pile as ever made antiquary scratch his head or beat his brow for very perplexity. Of course, as uncertainty and mystery are the principal grounds on which to base inquiry into the origin and purpose of the structure of which the present remains are a fragment, parties must be left to adopt their own theories. It may have formed a portion of a temple dedicated to Janus—a place of human immolation—of animal sacrifice, or, as its name would indicate, of Jewish institution; and if we must pronounce an opinion, we confess that we incline to the Israelitish hypothesis, from the capacity of this relic to jaw us out of the object of our inquiry.
The Roman Milliare is another treasure which, through considerable hazard, has withstood the ravages of time. Accidentally exhumed about eighty years ago on the side of the turnpike road, near Thurmaston, and having graduated in interest from the design for a garden roller to an exhibition in Belgrave-gate, it is now placed in the Town Museum for protection from injury and for the inspection of the learned and the curious. The following is an expanded interpretation and free translation of the letters on the stone when first found:—"During the Emperorship of the Divine, August, Most Great and Noble Caesar Hadrian, Son of the Divine, August, Most Great and Noble Trajan, Conqueror of Parthia, in the Fourth Year of his Tribunitian Power; thrice Consul, To Leicester, Two Miles."—a laudatory flourish about imperial authority, with a finishing touch of travel and road admeasurement, quite in keeping with the pompous exclamation of the ballad-seller—

"O, say not woman's heart is bought for the low charge of one halfpenny!"

The Tessellated Pavements, which at various times and places have been discovered, are important mementos of Roman art connected with the history of our town; affording ample evidence that although an invading people, they abounded in excellent designs, for they even paved their ways with good intentions.

The Raw or Row Dykes, St. Nicholas', St. Mary's, and St. Martin's Churches, the Castle, the Town Wall, and the site of the Abbey cannot fail to excite the interest of the student and the antiquary. Many specimens of Roman Pottery have been exhumed to tell their tale; being cracked, however, they could not tell it very consecutively. Coins of various kinds have also been found, but although many parties join in the search, we fear there are few found of current value.

F remarkable individuals who have contributed to render Leicester famous in the annals of history, we might enumerate many eminent for learning, eloquence, and philanthropy. Of these, however, their own works are sufficient memorials. But for a similar reason, we might also have noticed a distinguished executant of exquisite specimens of needlework, who lived among us—a "good hand at her needle," who, by taking "a stitch in time saved nine"—thousand pounds at least. Our purpose now, however, is with other still more remarkable characters.
In point of greatness, Daniel Lambert stands foremost amongst our local celebrities. Kicking the beam at fifty-two stone, and measuring three yards, four inches, round the body, and one yard, one inch, round the leg—he must have been of considerable weight and substance in the scale of Leicester society. Although born of comparatively humble parents, on approaching manhood Mr. Lambert began to swell out most prodigiously. Indeed, he was a man of such a large kidney, that, in common parlance, he became quite a sight. He visited the metropolis to display his vast acquirements, and astonished even Piccadilly by his mode of "cutting it fat." Although confessedly a man of good parts, it was as a whole that he figured to the greatest advantage. He died in his fortieth year, somewhat suddenly, at Stamford, just after sending for a party to come and transact business with him, on the ground that, as "the mountain could not wait on Mahomet, Mahomet must come to the mountain."

Joseph Phillips, alias "Tickling Joe," is another of the notabilities in the reminiscences of our town. His docile disposition and eccentric habits—his round-topped hat, long coat and longer apron, have a place in the memory of many individuals. At an advanced age he was capable of enduring great hardships, lifting enormous weights, and carrying considerable portions of Sir John Barleycorn. Acustomed to collect pins, he would tickle the fancy of children by titillating the palms of their hands, and receive in return a species of pin-money. Hence his cognomen—"Tickling Joe."

"Squeaking Jenny"—the original personage bearing that name, who was cruelly turned into the street at midnight, and expired in travail midst the wintry blast, and whose cries of distress were said to be heard in the night time for many years afterwards in Woman's-lane;—and Kitty Dan—"a fine woman broken down by the faithless-