

The Examiner.

AND SEMI-WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREE."—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

New Series.

CHARLOTTETOWN, JANUARY 8, 1851.

Vol. 1: No. 97

The Haunted House in Charnwood Forest.

From Howill's Country Year Book.

One fine, blustering, autumn day, a quiet and venerable looking old gentleman might be seen, with stick in hand, taking his way through the streets of Leicester. If any one had followed him, they would have found him directing his steps toward that side of the town which leads to Charnwood. The old gentleman, who was a Quaker, took his way leisurely, but thoughtfully, stopping every now and then to see what the farmers' men were about, who were ploughing up the stubbles to prepare for another year's crop. He paused, also at this and that farm-house, evidently having a pleasure in the sight of good fat cattle, and in the flocks of poultry—fowls, ducks, geese, and turkeys, busy about the barn door, where the sound of the flail, of the swipple, as they there term it, was already heard busily working out the corn of the last bountiful harvest. Our old friend, for though you dear reader, do not know him, he was both at the time we speak of—our old friend was trudging on, would pause on the brow of a hill, at a stile, or on some rustic bridge, casting its little obliging arch over a brooklet and inhaling the fresh autumnal air; and after looking around him, nod to himself, as if to say, 'Ay, all good, all beautiful! and so he went on again. But it would not be long before he would be arrested again by clusters of rich, jolly black berries, hanging from some old hawthorn hedge; or by clusters of nuts, hanging by the wayside through the copse. In all these natural beauties our old wayfarer seemed to have the enjoyment of a child. Blackberries went into his mouth, and nuts into his pockets; and so, with a quiet, inquiring and thoughtful, yet thoughtfully cheerful look, the good old man went on.

He seemed bound for a long walk, and yet to be in no hurry. In one place he stopped to talk to a very old labourer, who was cleaning out a ditch, and if you had been near, you would have heard that their discourse was of the past days, and the changes in that part of the country, which the old labourer thought were very much for the worse. And worse they were for him, for formerly he was young and full of life, now he was old and nearly empty of life. Then he was buoyant, sang songs, made love, went to wakes and merry makings. Now his wooing days, and his marrying days and his married days were over. His good old dame, who in these young, buxom days was a round faced, rosy, plump, and light-hearted damsel, was dead, and his children were married, and enough to do. In those days, the poor fellow was strong and lusty, had no fear and no care; in these he was weak and tottering; had been pulled and harassed a thousand ways; and was left as he said, like an old dry box—i. e. a hemlock or cowparsnip stalk, hollow and dry, to be knocked down and trodden into the dust some day.

Yes, sure enough, those days were much better days than these days were to him. No comparison. But Mr. John Basford, our old wanderer, was taking a more cheerful view of things, and telling the nearly worn-out labourer that when the night came there followed morning, and that the next would be a heavenly morning, shining on hills of glory, on waters of life, on cities of the blest, where no sun rose, and no sun set; and where every joyful creature of joyful youth, who had been dear to him, and true to him and God, would again meet him, and make times such as would cause songs of

praise to spring out of his heart, just as flowers spring out of a vernal tree in the re-kindled warmth of the sun.

The old labourer leaned reverently on his spade as the worthy man talked to him. His grey locks, uncovered at his labour by any hat, were tossed in the autumn wind. His dim eyes were fixed on the distant sky, that rolled its dark masses of clouds on the gale, and the deep wrinkles of his pale and feeble temples seemed to grow deeper at the thoughts passing within him. He was listening as to a sermon, which brought together his youth and his age; his past and his future; and there were verified on that spot words which Jesus Christ spoke nearly two thousand years ago—'Where two or three are together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'

He was in the midst of the two only. There was a temple there in those open fields, sanctified by two pious hearts, which no ringing of bells, no sound of solemn organ, nor voice of congregated prayers, nor any preacher but the ever-present and invisible One, who there and then fulfilled His promise and was gracious, could have made more holy.

Our old friend again turned to set forward; he shook the old labourer kindly by the hand, and there was a gaze of astonishment in the old man's face—the stranger had not only cheered him by his words, but left something to cheer him when he was gone.

The friend now went on with a more determined step. He skirted the memorable park of Bradgate, famous for the abode of Lady Jane Grey, and the visit of her schoolmaster, Roger Ascham. He went on into a region of woods and hills. At some seven or eight miles from Leicester, he drew near a solitary farm-house, within the ancient limits of the forest of Charnwood. It was certainly a lonely place amid the woodlands and the wild autumn fields. Evening was fast dropping down; and as the shade of night fell on the scene, the wind tossed more rustlingly the boughs of the thick trees, and roared down the rocky valley. John Basford went up to the farm house, however, as if that was the object of his journey, and a woman opening it at his knock he soon disappeared within.

Now our old friend was a perfect stranger here; had never been here before; had no acquaintance nor actual business with the inhabitants, though any one watching his progress hither would have been quite satisfied that he was not wandering without an object. But he merely stated that he was somewhat fatigued with his walk from the town, and requested leave to rest awhile. In such a place, such a request is readily, and even gladly granted.

There was a cheerful fire burning on a bright, clean hearth. The kettle was singing on the hob for tea, and the contrast of the in-door comfort was sensibly heightened by the wild gloom without.—The farmer's wife, who had admitted the stranger, soon went out, and called her husband from the fold yard. He was a plain, hearty sort of man; gave our friend a hearty shake of the hand, sat down, and began to converse. A little time seemed to establish a friendly interest between the stranger and the farmer and his wife. John Basford asked them whether they would allow him to smoke a pipe, which was not only readily accorded, but the farmer joined him. They smoked and talked alternately of the country and the town—Leicester being the farmer's market, and as familiar to him as his own neighbourhood. He soon came to know, too, who his guest was, and expressed much pleasure in the visit. Tea was carried into the parlor, and thither they

all adjourned, (for now the farming men were coming into the kitchen,) where they sat for the evening.

Tea over, the two gentlemen again had a pipe, and the conversation wandered over a multitude of things and people known to both.

But the night was come down pitch dark, wild and windy, and old John Basford had to return to Leicester.

'To Leicester?' exclaimed at once man and wife; 'to Leicester.' No such thing. He must stay where he was—where could he be better?

John Basford confessed that that was true, he had great pleasure in conversing with them; but then, was it not an unwarrantable liberty to come to a stranger's house, and make thus free?

'Not in the least,' the farmer replied; 'the freer the better!'

The matter thus was settled, and the evening wore on; but in the course of the evening, the guest, whose simple manner, strong sense, and deeply pious feeling, had made a most favorable impression on his entertainers, hinted that he had heard some strange rumors regarding this house, and that, in truth, had been the cause which had attracted him thither. He had heard, in fact, that a particular chamber in this house was haunted; and he had for a long time felt a growing desire to pass a night in it. He now begged this favor might be granted him.

As he had opened this subject, an evident cloud, and something of an unpleasant surprise, had fallen on the countenances of both man and wife.—It deepened as he proceeded; the farmer had withdrawn his pipe from his mouth, and laid it on the table; and the woman had arisen, and looked uneasily at their guest. The moment that he uttered the wish to sleep in the haunted room, both exclaimed in the same instant against it. 'No, never!' they exclaimed; never, on any consideration! They had made a firm resolve on that point, which nothing would induce them to break through!

The guest expressed himself disappointed, but did not press the matter further at the moment.—He contented himself with turning the conversation quietly upon this subject, and after a while found the farmer and his wife confirm to him every thing that he had heard. Once more, then, and as incidentally, he expressed his regret that he could not gratify the curiosity which had brought him so far; and, before the time for retiring arrived, again ventured to express how much which he had now heard had increased his previous desire to pass a night in that room. He did not profess to believe himself invulnerable to fears of such a kind, but was curious to convince himself of the actual existence of spiritual agency of this character.

The farmer and his wife steadily refused. They declared that others who had come with the same wish, and had been allowed to gratify it, had suffered such terrors as had made their after lives miserable. The last of these guests was a clergyman, who received such a fright that he sprang from his bed at midnight, had descended, gone into the stable, and saddling his horse, had ridden away at full speed. Those things had caused them to refuse, and that firmly, any fresh experiment of the kind.

The spirit visitation was described to be generally this: At midnight, the stranger sleeping in that room would hear the latch of the door raised, and would in the dark perceive a light step enter, and as with a stealthy tread cross the room, and approach the foot of the bed. The curtains would be agitated, and something would be perceived mounted on the

bed, and proceeding up it, just upon the body of the person in it. The supernatural visitant would then stretch itself full length on the person of the agitated guest, and the next moment he would feel an oppression at his chest, as of a night-mare, and something extremely cold would touch his face.

[To be concluded in our next.]

THE EXAMINER.

Wednesday, January 8, 1851.

Arrival of the English Mail.

About twelve o'clock on Monday night the Courier arrived with the English, Colonial and American Mails. The English Mail reached Halifax on Friday morning last in the steamship Niagara, making the passage from Liverpool in a little more than twelve and a half days. We give below a summary of the most interesting news.

LIVERPOOL, December 21.

The Papal excitement is wearing out from sheer exhaustion, to be renewed when Parliament meets on the 4th of February. The ides of March, when the culminating point will probably be attained, may prove as fatal to the Premier as to Caesar. He cannot approach the session without uneasiness; and he will assuredly miss the aid of the great spirit who winged his way so unexpectedly to another world towards the close of the last session. It will be interesting to witness the change which the Papal aggression will have on the state of parties, for assuredly a great effect will be produced by it.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S MANIFESTO.—It is reported that the feeling of the whole body of Bishops of the Established Church has been sounded as to what course it might be deemed advisable that the Irish clergy should take in reference to the present movement in England against the aggressions of Rome, and that, so far, the spirit of the answers, with one exception, had been in accordance with the advice alleged to have been given by his Grace the Lord Primate, namely, that in the present stage of the agitation it would be undesirable that the Irish Church should interpose in a question not, directly at least, affecting the interests of the Irish branch of the Established Church. The Bishop of Cashel (Dr. Daly) is reputed to be the prelate who holds a different opinion from that entertained by the rest of the episcopal bench.

Vice Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm, K. C.B., it is positively stated, relieves Vice Admiral the Earl of Dundonald, G.C.B., as Commander-in-Chief of the North American and West India Station.

Every thing connected with the Great Industrial Exhibition, is going forward swimmingly. Immense preparations are being made to ensure the most unbounded success.

The governorship of St. Helena has been offered to Sir James Emerson Tennent, late colonial secretary at Ceylon.

It is confidently stated that, within the last few weeks, Mr. Hudson has cleared from £40,000 to £50,000 by speculation in the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Mrs. Jermy, whose husband was assassinated by Rush, was married a few days