

# The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Vol. VI.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1856.

No. 14.

MOON'S PHASES.—OCTOBER, 1856.

First Quarter 7th day, 0h. 58m. morning.	W.
Full Moon 13th day, 6h. 20m. evening.	E.
Last Quarter 20th day, 1h. 27m. evening.	W.
New Moon 28th day, 5h. 15m. evening.	W.

## Literature.

IS IT COME?

[The following poem attracted the attention of the Marquis of Lansdowne, and induced him to make a present of £100 to the authoress, Miss Frances Brown.]

Is it come? they said on the banks of Nile  
Who look'd for the world's long promised day,  
And saw but the strife of Egypt's soil  
With the desert sands and granite gray.  
From the pyramids, temple and treasure dead,  
We vainly ask for her wisdom's plan;  
They tell of the slave and tyrant's dream,  
Yet there was hope when that day began.

The Chaldee came with his starry lore,  
That built up Babylon's crown and creed;  
And bricks were stamped on the Tigris' shore  
With signs which our senses scarce can read.  
From Ninus' temple and Nimrod's Tower  
The rule of the old East's empire spread  
Unreasoning faith and unquestioned power—  
But still, is it come? the Watcher said.

The light of the Persian's worshipped flame,  
The ancient bondage its splendor threw;  
And once on the West a sunrise came,  
When Greece to her freedom's trust was true.  
With dreams to the utmost ages dear,  
With human gods and godlike men,  
No marvel the far-off day seemed near,  
To eyes that looked through her laurels then.

The Romans conquered and revelled too,  
Till honour and faith and power were gone,  
And deeper old Europe's darkness grew  
As wave after wave the Goth came on,  
The gown was learning, the sword was law,  
The people served in the oxen's stead,  
But ever some gleam the watcher saw,  
And ever more, is it come? they said.

Poet and Seer that question caught  
Above the din of life's fears and frets;  
It marched with letters—it toiled with thought  
Through schools and creeds which the earth forgets:  
And statesmen trifle, and priests deceive,  
And traders barter our world away;  
Yet hearts to that golden promise cleave,  
And still at times, is it come? they say.

The days of the nation bear no trace  
Of all the sunshine so far foretold;  
The cannon speaks in the teacher's place—  
The age is weary with work and gold;  
And higher hopes wither and memories wane—  
On hearth and altar the fires are dead;  
But that brave faith hath not lived in vain:  
And this is all that our Watcher said.

(From the North British Review for August, 1856.)

## SAMUEL ROGERS AND HIS TIMES.

Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers. Second Edition. London, Moxon, 1856.

(Continued.)

In the industrial order of facts, at all events, Rogers, in the course of his ninety-three years of life, saw an immensely changed world. The very earth of Great Britain did not bear the same herbs, the same grasses, the same fruits in the last years of his life as it had borne when, as a boy, he first became acquainted with its surface. Where he had once known patches of forests, he at last found level pasture; where he had once known furze and morasses, he at last found ploughed land and waving corn-fields. In some districts, not only the colours of the vegetation, but the very features of the scenery had been changed by the labours of the surveyor and the miner. During the first ten years of his life, the illiterate Brindley was astonishing England with his canals, and people were exulting in what seemed then the *ne plus ultra* in the art of land-carriage and locomotion. With mail-coaches England was already tolerably familiar; but Rogers was twenty-two years of age, and had his first volume of poems ready for the press, before any mail-coach ran on the road between London and Edinburgh. The steam-engine and all its applications came into being while Rogers was alive. It was in the very year of his birth that the Glasgow mechanic Watt set about making his first improved model of Newcomen's clumsy contrivance; he had reached manhood before Watt and Boulton sent forth their perfected engines from their works at Soho; he was fifty years of age before steam-boats began to paddle in the rivers or along the coasts of Britain or America; the miracle of sending a steamer across the Atlantic, in spite of Dr. Lardner, was performed after Rogers was seventy-five; and it was during the last five-and-twenty years of his life that Britain was netted with railways. The first balloon rose in the air when Rogers was a youth of twenty; he had passed the prime of his life before gas began to supersede oil-lamps and linkboys in the streets of our cities; and he was almost a nonagenarian, when the electric telegraph began to flash its messages from spot to spot, making the thoughts and sensations of every part of our island simultaneous, and promising to reduce the globe itself, for all purposes of intercommunication, within the compass of a walk of sixty minutes. And then, when we think of the expansion in his time of our various manufactures! He was in his fifth year when Hargreaves had his house torn down about him by the Lancashire spinners for inventing his spinning-jenny; he was but two years older when Arkwright left his barber's shop in Preston to set up his roller-machinery in a mill of his own; he was known as a poet before Crompton was heard of; and Heathcote's invention did not come into use till he was an elderly man. Add to these inventions for textile fabrication, the endless later modifications of them to adapt them to steampower, and the myriads of machines devised to bring all the other processes of universal manufacture in whatever material within the reach of the same docile agency; and there is less difficulty in understanding how it was that, whereas, at the time of Rogers's birth, the entire population of the three British islands did not exceed ten or eleven millions—before he died, it was approaching thirty millions, and feeding colonies with the surplus. Not to speak of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, and other large towns—all of them creations of the industrial movement which had been going

on since his birth—London alone had more than tripled itself within the same period. When he was born, the population of London was about 700,000; before he died, the houses had crept over the green fields all round, so as to afford accommodation for between two and three millions.

With all this progressive medley of facts, too, Rogers had been connected almost solely by the one accidental circumstance that he had lived through it. Brindley would have constructed his canals; Arkwright would have developed the cotton-manufacture; Watt would have invented his steam-engine; gas would have come in, and railways would have been made, all the same had there been no Rogers. Even the reminiscences of the bard of Memory do not associate him much with this portion of the history of his times. He remembered that cocked-hats used to be worn in his boyhood, and that he had himself, when grown up, walked in St. Paul's churchyard wearing a cocked-hat; he remembered the time when umbrellas were rarities; he remembered being present at Lunardi's first balloon-ascend in England, when Fox had his pocket picked; and he doubtless remembered, as he went to evening parties in his youth, seeing the sedan-chairs emit their dowagers, and the boys extinguishing their smoking links in those queer conical iron tubes which still form part of the door-railings of the older houses in our street-squares. But, on the whole, his *Table-talk* does not seem to have abounded with reminiscences of this kind. Such mechanical and industrial improvements as came in his time, he seems to have taken for granted, not asking many questions about their origin, but enjoying them as a matter of course. The change, indeed, had been so gradual, that the old man of ninety, travelling in a first class railway carriage, was probably quite as tochy, in case the speed was under thirty miles an hour, as if that had been his accustomed rate of locomotion from his earliest infancy. Possibly, however, as a banker, Rogers may have had connexion with the industrial and commercial development of his time, which do not appear in memoirs of him as a poet.

The march of science in Rogers's time was as wonderful as the march of industrial enterprise; but Rogers's connection with it was quite as slight. In mathematics, the differential and integral calculus, and the full development of the doctrine of probabilities, may be considered—though he was innocent enough, we believe, of all concern with them—as among the achievements of his time. In astronomy, the planets, Uranus and Neptune, with no end of planetoids, comets, &c., came into sensible being while he was alive to hear the news; and, what with Herschel's, what with Lord Rosse's telescopes, the azure sphere of star-filled space brought within the ken of our earth before Rogers died, was a million times more vast, and a million times better searched, than that which our keenest observatories could sweep when Rogers was born. What had been done in his time in General Physics, will be suggested if we remember such names as those of D'Alembert, Lagrange, Laplace, Hutton, Leslie, Biot, Wollaston, Fresnel, Young, Fourier, Arago, Humboldt, Galvani, and Volta, all of them his earlier or later contemporaries. The science of electricity in any thing like its present extent of application and ramification, is a later thing on the earth than Rogers's poetry; and modern chemistry was absolutely created while he was passing through boyhood and manhood to his extreme old age. Black, Cavendish and Priestly were tearing the solids and fluids of our earth into their elementary fumes when Rogers was learning his letters; Lavoisier, all his analyses and delicate weighings over, perished by the guillotine when Rogers was receiving praises for his *Pleasures of Memory*; Davy was his junior by fifteen years, and closed his career while Rogers had twenty-six years longer to live; Dalton and his Atomic Theory were wholly contained within Rogers's existence; and he lived into the midst of the discoveries of Daguerre, and Liebig, and Dumas, and Faraday. Passing into the sciences of organic matter, we may next note, as a sufficient indication of what had been accomplished in them, such facts as that Linnæus did not die till Rogers was in his sixteenth year; that Jussieu's system and Goethe's botanical speculations came later; that Buffon and Hunter ended, and Blumenbach, and Cuvier, and St. Hilaire, and Oken, both began and ended their zoological and physiological researches while he was alive; and that Owen and others, still living, had made their fame before his decease. During his lifetime, too, the mixed science of Geology, with all its wonders, took its place in the system of our knowledge; Gall and Spurzheim taught us to look at heads, and to connect character with brain and nerve; and, continuing the experiments of Mesmer, another set of inquirers knocked a whole through the wall of the sensible and substantial world in which we had hitherto been dwelling, and revealed the phenomena, or the supposed phenomena of animal magnetism, somnambulism, and clairvoyance.

What little relation, whether in the way of observation, or of thought, Rogers had to the current of scientific discovery and investigation which thus rushed past him, and bore him on during his ninety-three years of life, will be best illustrated by one or two extracts from his *Table-talk*—almost the only scraps of this kind of allusion which the volume contains:—  
*Recollection of Priestly.*—"I was intimately acquainted with Dr. Priestly; and a more amiable man never lived; he was all gentleness, kindness and humility. He was once dining with me, when some one asked him (rather rudely) 'how many books he had published?' He replied, 'Many more, sir, than I should like to read.' Before going to America, he paid me a visit, passing a night at my house. He left England chiefly in compliance with the wishes of his wife."

*A physiological (?) notion of John Hunter's.*—"John Hunter believed that when there was only one daughter and several sons in a family, the daughter was always of a masculine disposition; and that when a family consisted of several daughters and only one son, the son was always effeminate. Payne Knight used to say that Homer seems to have entertained the same idea; for in the *Iliad* we find that Dolon, who proves to be such a coward, was an only son, and had several sisters."

*Clairvoyance.*—"When I was at Paris, I went to Alexis and desired him to describe to me my house in St. James's Place. On my word, he astonished me! He described most exactly the peculiarities of the stair-case,—and that not far from the window in the drawing-room there was a picture of a man in armour, (the painting by Giorgione) &c. &c. Col. Gurwood, shortly before his death, assured me that he was reminded by Alexis of some circumstances which had happened to him in Spain, and which he could not conceive how any human being, except himself, should know. Still I cannot believe in clairvoyance,—because the thing is impossible."

Evidently, the science of his time had little interest for Rogers, when, from a volume of his *Table-talk*, all that can be selected bearing the slightest reference to scientific topics, consists of one or two bits of gossip such as the above.

In the fine arts Rogers was more in his element; for all his life long he felt something more than the interest of an ordinary dilettante in music, painting, sculpture and architecture. In each of these arts, too, his time had produced much that was remarkable. In music, the world had, at the date of Rogers's birth, but recently lost Handel; but Piccini, Cimarosa, Gluck, Haydn and Mozart, were at the height of their fame during his youth and manhood; and they were succeeded by Beethoven, Weber, Bellini, Rossini, Mendelssohn, Chopin and Meyerbeer. Among British painters, after Hogarth, who died in 1764, Rogers could remember, as contemporaries, together or in succession, who had all died before him, such men as Sir Joshua Reynolds, Romney, West, Barry, Opie, Morland, Wilson, Gainsborough, Northcote, Stothard, Lawrence, Wilkie, Etty, Collins and Turner; while, as painters of a still larger generation, he left behind him many celebrated men, including the bold young pre-Raphaelites. Sculptors in his day of British birth were Flaxman, who was born eight years before him, and who died when he had already passed his sixty-second year, and Chantrey, who, coming later, pre-deceased him by fourteen years; while, in the same art, the Continent had boasted in the same age of a Canova, Thorwaldsen, and a Dannecke. In architecture, Rogers had lived to hear of name after name, each name mentioned in connexion with some monument or building, the construction of which he could see going on, and also to hear most of these names sentenced to oblivion, and Greek architecture run down and Gothic architecture exalted, in the criticism of Ruskin. Now, in all these arts, Rogers was himself a competent and cultured critic. To his latest day, he attended concerts and oratorios, and found, like the Duke of Wellington, when he was nearly as old, a real pleasure in listening evening after evening to the Grisi and Lindis and Albion, whose divine voices thrilled in the same halls where he had in earlier days listened to voices equally divine, and long since dumb in death; and to his latest day, in walking along the streets of the metropolis, he would look at new buildings with the eye of a connoisseur. But it was in painting and sculpture, as all know, that he most signalled his love of art. From his youth upwards he attended picture sales and attended art-exhibitions; and his own collection of paintings and specimens of sculpture was as choice and various as any small private collection in Britain. Accordingly, his *table-talk* was peculiarly rich not only in reminiscences relating to the history of these two arts in his time, but also in remarks conveying judgments of his own respecting eminent painters and sculptors and their styles. Here are a few specimens:—

*Reminiscences of Sir Joshua Reynolds.*—"I was present when Sir Joshua Reynolds delivered his last lecture at the Royal Academy. On entering the room I found that a semicircle of chairs immediately in front of the pulpit was reserved for persons of distinction, being labelled, 'Mr. Burke,' 'Mr. Boswell,' &c., &c.; and I, with other young men, was forced to station myself a good way off. During the lecture a great crash was heard; and the company, fearing that the building was about to come down, rushed towards the door. Presently, however, it appeared that there was no cause for alarm; [the editor says in a footnote that there was cause for alarm, a beam having given way;] "and they endeavoured to resume their places; but, in consequence of the confusion, the reserved seats were now occupied by those who could first get them; and I, pressing forward, secured one of them. Sir Joshua concluded the lecture by saying, with great emotion—"And I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy and from this place might be the name of—Michael Angelo." As he descended from the rostrum, Burke went up to him, took his hand, and said—

"The angel ended, and in Adam's ear,  
So charming left his voice, that he a while  
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear."

—What a quantity of snuff Sir Joshua took! I once saw him at an academy-dinner, when his waistcoat was absolutely powdered with it. . . . I can hardly believe what was told me long ago by a gentleman living in the Temple, who, however, assured me that it was a fact. He happened to be passing by Joshua's house in Leicester Square, when he saw a poor girl seated on the steps and crying bitterly. He asked what was the matter; and she replied that she was crying because the one stilling which she had received from Sir Joshua for sitting to him at a model, had proved to be a bad one, and he would not give her another."

*English Art-Collections.*—"We have in England the finest series of pictures and the finest of sculptures in the world.—I mean the cartoons of Raphael and the Elgin marbles. Our national gallery is superior to any private collection of pictures in Italy,—superior, for instance, to the Doria and Borghese collections, which contain several very indifferent things. Perhaps the choicest private collection in this country is that of Panzanger, (Earl Cowper's); it is small, but admirable; what Raphaels, what Andrea del Sartes, what Claudes!"

*Sir Thomas Lawrence.*—"Sir Thomas Lawrence used to say, that among painters there were three pre-eminent for invention—Giorgione, Rembrandt and Rubens; and perhaps he was right. Sir Thomas Lawrence has painted several very pleasing pictures of children; but, generally, his men are effeminate, and his women meretricious. Of his early portraits Sir Joshua Reynolds said—"That young man has a great deal of talent; but there is an affectation in his style which he will never entirely shake off."

*Recent English Painters.*—"We have now in England a greater number of tolerably good painters than ever existed here together at any former period; but, alas, we have no Hogarth and no Reynolds! I must not, however, forget that we have Turner,—a man of first-rate genius in his line. There is in some of his pictures a grandeur which neither Claude nor Poussin could give to theirs. Turner thinks that Rubens's landscapes are deficient in nature. I differ from him. Indeed, there [i.e., on the wall of Mr. Rogers's dining-room] "is a proof that he is mistaken. Look at that forest-scene by Rubens: the foreground of it is truth itself. The Art-Union is a perfect curse: it buys and engraves very inferior pictures, and consequently encourages mediocrity of talent; it makes young men, who have no genius, abandon the desk and counter, and set up for painters."

*Flaxman and Canova.*—"As to Flaxman, the greatest sculptor of his day,—the neglect which he experienced is something inconceivable. Canova, who was well acquainted with his exquisite illustrations of Dante, etc., could hardly believe that a man of such genius was not an object of admiration among his countrymen; and, in allusion to their insensibility to Flaxman's merits, and to their patronage of inferior artists, he said to some of the English at Rome, 'you see with your ears!'"

*Chantrey.*—"Chantrey began his career by being a carver

in wood. The ornaments on that mahogany sideboard and on that stand, (in Mr. Rogers's dining-room), were carved by him. \* \* \* When he was at Rome in the height of his celebrity, he injured himself not a little by talking with contempt of the finest statues of antiquity. Jackson (the painter) told me that he and Chantrey went into the studio of Dannecke, the sculptor, who happened to be from home. There was an unfinished bust in the room; and Chantrey, taking up a chisel, proceeded to work upon it. One of the assistants immediately rushed forward, in great alarm, to stop him; but no sooner had Chantrey given a blow on the chisel, than the man exclaimed, with a knowing look, 'Ha! ha! ha!'—as much as to say, 'I see you perfectly understand what you are about.' Chantrey practised portrait-painting both at Sheffield and after he came to London. It was in allusion to him that Lawrence said, 'A broken-down painter will make a very good sculptor.'"

After all, whether as reminiscence or as opinion, this is light enough; and, unless Mr. Dyce has failed to give a fair representation of Rogers's talk, even on what were his favourite subjects, we can easily see that, neither in facts relating to the history of art in his day, nor in doctrines and conclusions appertaining to the theory of art, was the conversation of Rogers by any means so rich as might have been expected from his reputation as an art-patron. Throughout the whole volume there is not a gleam of any real principle in art, in which Rogers was in the habit of propounding; not a symptom of any such habit of research and generalization as pervades every page about art written, for example, by Ruskin. And yet, evidently, Rogers's taste for paintings and statues was perfectly genuine. He liked to be surrounded by them; he had a quiet enjoyment of their beauties, which he could at least feel and avow, if he could not explain it; and he had preferences and dislikes, in matters of art, which, simply as the preferences and dislikes of a man of fine perceptions, were entitled to respect. Probably his own lines in his *Epistle to a Friend*, inviting him to pay him a visit, express justly enough (though the kind of mansion pictured in them hardly comes up to the reality of St. James's Place) the nature and extent of Rogers's pleasure in walks of art:

"Here no state-chambers in long line unfold,  
Bright with broad mirrors, rough with fretted gold;  
Yet modest ornament, with use combined,  
Attracts the eye to exercise the mind.  
Small change of scene, small spaces his home requires,  
Who leads a life of satisfied desires.  
What though no marble breathes, no canvas glows,  
From every point a ray of genius flows!  
Be mine to bless the more mechanic skill  
That stamps, renews and multiplies the will;  
And cheaply circulates thro' distant climes,  
The fairest relics of the parent times.  
Here from the mould to conscious being start  
Those finer forms, the miracles of art;  
Here chosen gems, impress on sulphur, shine,  
That slept for ages in a second mine;  
And here the faithful graver dares to trace  
A Michael's grandeur, and a Raphael's grace!  
Thy gallery, Florence, glids my humble walls;  
And my low roof the Vatican recalls!"

There remains yet to be passed in review, in connection with the life of Rogers, that portion or department of the miscellaneous incident and activity of his age, with which his relations were more intimate and peculiar than even with its Art—to wit, its Literature. Here, also much came into being, attained its bloom, and again shed its seed for future growths, during the ninety-three years of Rogers's pilgrimage on earth. Let us feature more exactly what came and went during those ninety-three years in this department also.

And, first, as regards the philosophy of this period, the literature of its highest speculative thought. Here, if we may so speak, there had been a complete circuit of the clock, or even a circuit and a half, in Rogers's lifetime. The latest names of eminence in British metaphysics at the date of his birth in 1763, were those of Bishop Berkeley, Bishop Butler and David Hartley, all of whom had died within the ten preceding years. Then, as the chief representatives of British philosophy during the first thirty years of Rogers's life, there were the Scottish thinkers, Hume and Reid, and Adam Smith, with their less solid compatriots, Kames and Mounbodo; balanced somewhat inadequately in South Britain by such men as Priestley and Paley. Rogers was a boy of thirteen when David Hume died; but all the others here named lived till Rogers had reached manhood, and he was personally acquainted with Adam Smith and Mounbodo, as well as with Priestley. After these men, too, had passed away in their generation, the metaphysical succession was kept up by Dugald Stewart and Jeremy Bentham, and Mackintosh and Coleridge, and Thomas Brown and James Mill, all of whom were his coevals within a few years, and all of whom, after he had been on intimate terms with some of them, he survived twenty years or more. Thus Coleridge and Bentham both died in 1834. Lastly, ere he died, the old poet was breathing an atmosphere charged with the philosophy of Sir William Hamilton and Carlyle, and the younger Mill, and many others with whose names, at least, as powers in the intellectual world, who had made their appearance when his own career was all but finished, he must have been familiar. So much as regards the mere external history of the period of British philosophy which he had lived through. If we take into account the internal history represented in such a series of facts and names, the impression of what he did thus live through, will be much increased. In living through the period marked by such men and names, he had, whether he knew it or not, lived through one of those periods in the history of universal thought, in which the old and ever-recurring battle between the two antagonistic philosophies which have divided men since the beginning of the world, had been fought over afresh—nay, probably fought over twice—with a vigour unparalleled since the middle ages, and in forms of language quite new. The one extreme of his life, for example, rests in that epoch when, out of the Anglo-Irish Idealism of Berkeley, counteracted, as it was, by the English sensationalism and incipient materialism of Hartley, there has already been bred the thorough-going Scottish scepticism of Hume; and when, in order to restore faith, Hume's countryman, Reid, has already rushed, or, rather patiently trudged into the vacuum, to feel for the solid rock and lay down, block by block, his philosophy of common sense. From that day forward, the true opposition in Britain is between the Scottish philosophy of Reid, and the native English sensationalism bequeathed by Locke and Hartley, and working itself out slowly to its final consequences. The two streams flow together, and sometimes cross and intermix. Meanwhile, however, the same great battle has been fighting itself, in other forms, on the Continent. In Germany, Kant, on-e of Reid had been in Scotland, to a defence of the faith in philosophy against