

**TALES, POEMS AND  
MASONIC PAPERS;  
WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL  
SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

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Tales, poems and Masonic papers; with a biographical sketch of the author by Emra Holmes & George Markham Tweddell

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**EMRA HOLMES & GEORGE MARKHAM TWEDDELL**

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#### NOTICE

Any pecuniary profits that may be derived from the publication of the present volume, or of a contemplated Second Series of *TALKS, POEMS, AND MASONIC PAPERS, BY EZRA HOLMES*, will be presented to a Brother Freemason, who has been unexpectedly plunged in poverty in the declining years of his life.

Editors of Magazines or Newspapers who may notice the present volume, whether favourably or otherwise, will much oblige by sending a copy of their Review to the Publishers.

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TO

**The Right Honourable Arthur Philip,  
Earl Stanhope,**

Viscount Stanhope of Mahon and Baron Stanhope of  
Elboston,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS DEDICATED,

AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE FOR MANY COURTESIES  
RECEIVED AT HIS HANDS, BY

HIS LOYALTY'S

VERY OBEIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

FOWEY, CORNWALL,  
1877.

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# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

MR. EMMA HOLMES.

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DURING the summer of 1839, among the visitors to the pleasant village of Old Cleeve, in Somersetshire (where William de Romara founded a Cistercian monastery, in 1188, in honour of the Virgin Mary, some small portion of which yet remains, part having been turned into a private residence—where green fields, and orchards, and woodlands, supply numerous pretty pastoral pictures—and where the craggy cliffs and wild waves of the Bristol Channel, with every description of vessel bound for, or returning from, all parts of the globe, afford plentiful scope for marine views), an artist and his wife might have been observed—both, apparently, in the full flush of life—enjoying alike the pure air and the beauty of the surrounding scenery. They were a happy and a loving pair, full of high tastes and virtuous aspirations; at peace with God and all His creatures; and delighting most in each other's society. Humble as they were good and gifted (and that lady's pen was known as far, at least, as her husband's pencil), they made sunshine wherever they went; for every one felt better for having known them. Their creed might, or might not, be our creed, gentle reader; their politics might, or might not, be our party politics; but their living, practical piety was such as would recommend them to all with whom true devotion is more than their own narrow notions of theology; and their noble love of country, and strong sympathies with the poor under every possible affliction, could not but endear them to all true patriots, under whatever banner they might range themselves in the body politic. Instead of inviting rich neighbours to a wedding-feast, they gave bread to the poor. Unable to carry out the now too-little-headed religious injunction of feeding the poor on the same large scale as good Bernard Gilpin, "the Apostle of the North," was accustomed to do in his hallowed manse at Houghton-le-



Spring,\* in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, they did their little well every week, in their small cottage-kitchen at home, both to old people and to young children; reminding me forcibly of that fine passage in *Steuve's Tristram Shandy* (a book, I suppose, I should be ashamed of quoting after Thackeray's cutting criticism of the author in his *English Humourists*):—"Prithee, Trim," quoth my father, turning round to him, "What dost thou mean by honouring thy father and mother?"—"Allowing them, an' please your honour, three halfpence a day out of my pay, when they grow old."—"And didst thou do that, Trim?" said Yorick.—"He did, indeed," replied my uncle Toby.—"Then, Trim," said Yorick, springing out of his chair, and taking the corporal by the hand, "thou art the best commentator upon that part of the Decalogue; and I honour thee more for it, Corporal Trim, than if thou hadst had a hand in the Tabard itself."

The artist, Marcus H. Holmes, was then some thirty-six years of age; having been born at Bristol in 1806, and named after the Beresford family, one of whom, Lady Arminia Monk, was his godmother. His mother, an Irish lady, died when he was very young, and he was educated at the Bristol Grammar School, and afterwards became a student at the Royal Academy, under Fuseli, where he won the silver medal for Still Life. Returning to Bristol, he settled down there as an artist, as his father had done before him, contributing occasional pictures to the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and to those of the Old Society of Water-colour Painters, of which both his father and himself were members; and teaching drawing in the vicinage. One of his pupils was Eugénie, the late Empress of the French, who at one time pursued her studies at Clifton. On the 12th of July, 1833, he married Miss Elizabeth Emra, one of the daughters of the Rev. John Emra, vicar of St. George's, Bristol, since which their residence had been in a pleasant little cottage, called Homefield, under the very shadow of the trees of her father's vicarage, as we shall see anon.

I have said that Marcus Holmes was also the son of an artist. His father, George Holmes, was a native of Ireland, being born at Dublin, about the year 1776; and at his father's house the ill-fated Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Theobald Wolfe Tone, the Emmetts, and other Irish patriots, who loved their country "not wisely, but too well," used to meet. He was educated at White's Grammar School, with the Duke of Wellington, Curran, Sheridan, and Tom Moore. When the chivalry of Ireland, peasant

\* See "The Bards and Authors of Cleveland and South Durham."

and peer, formed that famous army of Volunteers, which is at least the most gorgeous pageant that passes in view before us as we unroll the long scroll of her sorrowful annals, and which (could they only, Freemason-like, have elevated their mental vision above the low and blinding mists of sectarian jealousies) might have regenerated old Erin a century ago—George Holmes had the honour of being one of the units which made up that noble hundred thousand. About the year 1796, he married a young lady from Kilkenny. It was during one of those periods of bloodshed which have blazoned gales the very shield of the Emerald Isle, that a body was borne past the door of their house, during the absence of George Holmes on duty, which his young wife feared was that of her husband, who was uninjured; but the shock so alarmed her that her nervous system suffered in consequence, and the doctors advised her removal to England, in the then perturbed state of the country, as absolutely necessary to save her life. George Holmes, therefore, bade adieu to his loved native land, and went to Bristol about 1802, where his son Marcus was born in the following year. His wife dying soon after, he removed for a few years to London, where he had published, in 1801, a delightful octavo volume, entitled *Sketches in some of the Southern Counties of Ireland, collected during a Tour in the Autumn, 1797, in a Series of Letters*. The work is illustrated with beautiful views of the interior of the Abbey of Holy Cross, the cathedral-crowned Rock of Cashel, Cormac's Chapel on the south side of the said cathedral, Ross Castle, Mucruss Lake, and Lismore Castle, etc., from his own pencil; and the sixteen Letters of which the volume is composed are not only most pleasant reading, but are full of historical and archaeological information, both his father and himself being well versed in antiquities. The book was dedicated to the Duchess of Devonshire, and was the means of procuring for him the patronage of the Dukes of Leinster and of Devonshire, Viscount de Vesci, and others of the nobility.

MACAULAY has well remarked, that "it is not easy for a modern Englishman, who can pass in a day from his club in Saint James's Street to his shooting box among the Grampians, and who finds in his shooting box all the comforts and luxuries of his club, to believe that, in the time of his great-grandfather, Saint James's Street had as little connection with the Grampians as with the Andes. Yet so it was. In the south of our island scarcely anything was known about the Celtic part of Scotland; and what was known excited no feeling but contempt and loathing." Well then might George Holmes write seventy-six years ago, in the Preface

to his valuable work:—"At this period of universal information, while the historic and descriptive pages of the most distant climes are unfolded to our view, are we not naturally to suppose those parts nearest the heart of the empire, through which a great portion of its life blood flows, should be intimately known? Yet, strange to say, Ireland, which, for a space of six hundred years and more, has been politically connected with, and continues to be a powerful and valuable gem, in the crown of Great Britain, is less known to the people of England, in general, than the most remote regions." It was, I believe, the first work ever published on the picturesque scenery of Ireland, and I am only sorry that my space is too limited here to favour my readers with a few extracts.

Returning to Bristol he ultimately settled there in 1808, and married a Miss Anstey, of Devizes, who bore him three children,—George, afterwards a physician, who died in Canada—Annie, married to the Rev. John Curran, a Canadian clergyman, who was great nephew of the celebrated John Philip Curran, and cousin of the late Right Reverend Doctor Cronyn, Lord Bishop of Huron—and Mary Holmes, a lady who is still living, whose performances on the piano were very much admired at the great Exhibition of 1851, and the composer of numerous pieces of music which have been highly commended.

George Holmes claimed a "collateral descent" from Sir Robert Holmes, Charles the Second's buccaneering admiral, whom Hume terms "the cursed beginner of two Dutch wars," and to belong to a branch of the family of the Barons Holmes, of Kilmallock, in the peerage of Ireland, whose title became extinct in 1804. But as Napoleon, when offered a pedigree tracing his descent from one of the princely families of Italy, proudly exclaimed,—"Bah! I date my patent of nobility from Montenotte," the scene of his first victory as commander of an army; so may the Holmeses and the Emras safely ground their claims to the respect of their fellow-creatures on their own contributions to the civilisation of the nineteenth century, though the estates of their ancestors would be very valuable possessions.

George Holmes was the intimate friend of Bird, Danby, and Eagles (the art-critic of *Blackwood's Magazine*); was one of the leaders of the old School of Water-colour Painters; and, in conjunction with J. D. Harding, brought out lithography as applied to free-hand drawing. He died in Canada, about the year 1852, whither he had emigrated some few years before.

Such were the father and paternal grandfather of our author. Let us now briefly glance at his mother.