

**THE WANDERINGS OF THE
BODY AND
MIND OF SIMON
LACKLUSTRE, ESQ.**

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The wanderings of the body and mind of Simon Lacklustre, esq. by Simon Lacklustre

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T H E W A N D E R I N G S

O F T H E B O D Y A N D M I N D

O F

S I M O N L A C K L U S T R E , E S Q .

B E I N G T H E

N O T E S

O F

A T R I P F R O M L O N D O N T O R O M E ,

**W I T H S O M E A C C O U N T O F T H E T H I N G S T O B E S E E N O N T H E
W A Y , A N D T H E T H O U G H T S S U G G E S T E D B Y T H E J O U R N E Y .**

L O N D O N :

" P R I N T E D F O R P R I V A T E C I R C U L A T I O N . "

1848.

P R E F A C E.

In submitting this crude work to the Press, I do not conceal from myself that it may occasionally fall into the hands of strangers. The possibility of this, suggests the propriety of devoting the first page to a few words of explanation; for I would wish all such readers to know at once that they will find here neither statistical information, nor criticisms upon art, neither "striking incident," nor "interesting adventure." I have no "story" to tell, and travelled neither as Savant nor Connoisseur, but as a mere idler, who, in noting down whatever fell under his observation, had no other intention than that of giving a little longer life to the shadowy impressions of the passing panorama.

I do not even aim at the humble utility of affording the smaller statistics as to the hotels and the routes, or the heights, breadths, and depths of wonderful things: these essential particulars are so excellently set forth in "Murray's" and "Coghlan's," (where all who run may read,) that had I busied myself upon such matters, 'twould have ended in the compilation of a bad edition of my own Guide Book.

I may further add that these rough "notes" were taken in the hurry of travel, and very frequently when the head and the hand were alike weary with long journeying; and that for the revision and arrangement of them I have had but little leisure, with even that "little," much interrupted by other and more urgent claims. Thus collected, and thus imperfectly prepared, they are full of

faults — faults which none but friends know how to overlook: therefore, gentle stranger, I tell you frankly, these lucubrations are not likely to please you; and in proof of the sincerity of this opinion, let me remind you, that had I thought otherwise, they should have been offered for public instead of being (as now) confined to private circulation. If, notwithstanding this fair warning, you will still venture "on," I must pray you to go with me in a kindly, uncriticising spirit, judging neither hastily nor harshly, but bearing with me to the end.

To the esteemed friends and pleasant acquaintances, for whom this little pamphlet is intended, I offer it with some compunction for its many imperfections. Those who have visited the same places, and those who may hereafter determine upon a similar route may perhaps derive amusement from the comparison of notes; but 'tis only amongst the widely scattered members of "our once home," that I can fairly hope for it to find favour and acceptance. To you, then, whose absent but well-remembered faces used on Christmas-days aforetime to gather round and gladden one social board, a brother would fain describe his summer-wanderings, and inviting you All to the humble entertainment he has endeavoured to provide for you within, meets you now upon his threshold with the good old word of "Welcome."

London, Christmas Eve, 1847.

NOTES.

In sitting down to transcribe the letters and rough journal of my two months' travel, I perceive that my task will be mainly one of omission. For (stimulated doubtless by that especial vanity that makes every man eloquent about himself) I was led to enlarge much upon the reasons, time, and circumstance, of my setting forth; to show (for example) "the how, being a bachelor, with a broken-up establishment, and a future of settled unsettlement—with the shadows of overcare from business, and ennui from pleasure, beginning to deepen upon and darken my seven-and-twentieth summer, I did one evening incontinently determine to shake off these clouds by a rapid and toilsome journey; and having thus determined, did forthwith bestir myself about languages, and letters of introduction, friends, maps, guide-books, and a companion; as to how, in this last particular, I was lulled into security, and ultimately lured by the enterprising despondency of a theoretic traveller, but had his defection pleasantly though partially supplied by a young relative who bore me company as far as Paris. As to how, after some days of a gradually thickening press of preparation, we were at last fairly "off," and then, sitting back silently in the carriage, gathering in review before me the thoughts and events that had crowded my life of late, the hurry and excitement of departure subsided, and gave place to a sudden blank and heaviness—the mental interregnum between the death of the reigning thought, and the enthronement of its successor; for Hope soon reminded me, that I was wandering forth to visit places whose names alone were worth the pilgrimage, and that in this pursuit I might escape from many cares for many days. Thus as the gates of the Past closed heavily behind me, the horizon of the Future rose upon my path, and gradually awakening from the despondency of Inaction, Expectation stood before me. This process of a few hours is possibly analogous to that which a man passes through in a life. There is the same hurry and excitement of worldly pursuits, which at some turning point in his career sinks down and leaves a great void, and this is haphazardly filled again, (even as my lesser vacuum

was) with thoughts and hopes of an eternal city. But whatever interest these and such-like particulars may have for my own re-perusal, I could not expect even my nearest and dearest friend to listen to, or read them without the smile of commiseration, or the yawn of weariness; so without any more of these moralizing digressions, let us go railing through England, and rolling across the Channel into France.

With Boulogne we had little to do, and of it therefore I have little to say. Our evening walk was as long and as dull as the town itself; small beggars hovered about our path, and were earnest and impudent in their demands for "quelque chose" (pronounced "kick shows;" *mem.* bestow the first syllable, according to their own pronunciation, upon any one of the fraternity—it has an excellent effect). Length and dulness met us in-doors as well as out, for it was the characteristic alike of the coffee-room and the garçon; the evening was however, somewhat enlivened by a conversation more animated than intelligible, that arose at supper-time, the discourses being severally, an Indian, a Portuguese, a Chinaman, and ourselves; and thus, with the assistance of French waiters, we got up a respectable representation of the Tower of Babel, in which every body misunderstood every body else very delightfully. Next morning and a diligence took us through a number of old fortified towns, many of them sufficiently uncomfortable to the inhabitants to be peculiarly interesting to the tourist: and by afternoon, the diligence, with all that it contained, was delivered over to its arch-enemy the Rail, and carried bound to its chariot wheels, into Paris.

Every body knows that Paris is more particularly Paris on the Sunday; that if there is anything good to eat, to drink, or to see, it is sure to be eaten, drank, or shown, on that day: thus it happens that the Palais Royal (the *palace* itself, not the *place* so called) is strictly closed all the week, but always opened to the public on the Sunday, and as it interested us much to see the pictures that were in the Palace, illustrating the history of the Palace—events recorded in well mimicked life—on the spot where they really happened, I take pleasure in singling out this sight as the first and most favourable illustration of my proposition. On the other hand, I am bound to mention the established fights betwixt dogs and beasts of various kinds, which are also standard Sunday exhibitions, and the horse-racing, which is Sundaical, but only occasional, and truly, if the Parisians have any regard for their reputation as sportsmen, they will be wise to make these cocknified "Dandy" shows still more occasional; but on this subject, a letter helps my memory and saves my pen.

LETTER I.

PARIS.

MY DEAR ———, I remember me that I am now far from our native Hills, through and over which, and *by* whom one can persecute a friend 300 miles off, for the small investment of one penny; and therefore have I began at the very top of this flimsy sheet of paper, and therefore do I intend to go into every nook and corner of the

page, well knowing that once settled to write to you, mine ancient and frequent correspondent, no lesser powers than Time and Space suffice to check me. (I pray heaven, my paper and my leisure be not more extensive than your patience). Thanks to Railways, the journey to Paris does not take long in performance, and thanks to former experiences and letters thereupon, it will take still less in description. It might be drawn up in a diagram, but that diagrams require a good deal of room, however, if you will imagine the figure, I will supply the words. London, bustle, start—smoke, rattle, shake,—Folkestone, luncheon, imposition,—sea, &c., &c.—Boulogne, supper, imposition (encore)—Babel, Banquette, brandy, and bed, blue blouses, bad horses,—Amiens and appetite,—rail, rail, rail,—Paris. This may be eked out with mention of a large stud of horses that were shipped at Folkestone, the which horses bore a double blessing to the pockets of the steam-boat proprietors; seeing that they completely monopolized the fore-deck, and thus compelled the biped passengers to use and pay for the Saloon. I may strike off too for a moment at the word Boulogne to record how, at the Hotel, (a temple of practical Christianity, where all "strangers" are undeniably "taken in") we seemed a congress of many countries, China, Portugal, India, France, and England, having each their representatives. In our walks through Paris we have again encountered the first three; Portugal and China arm-in-arm, and India lagging behind and looking into all and every the jewellers' shop in the Palais Royal. *We* also look into the jewellers' shops, and in other matters give full way to the custom of the country, indulging in Anti-Sabbatarian rambles in the state chambers of palaces, in the shops of restaurants, hatters, coiffeurs, hook sellers, and money-changers; or if weary of places, we wander far and wide to see the people; and much amusement it is to us, as observers and not actors, as seeing, but not caring to be seen, that all the world could not furnish forth a crowd so anxious to be looked at, as this that throngs the garish streets of gaudy giddy Paris. Amongst other sights, we were present at the Sunday races on the Champ de Mars, where second-rate horses run very badly for very poor stakes. An Englishman seeing the elaborate preparation and arrangements about the Course, the profuse exhibition of soldiers, policemen, and officials—the vast concourse of smart equipages and bedizened horses—the people themselves dressed quite up to concert pitch, and perhaps half a tone above it,—an Englishman, I say, seeing this, and seeing at the same time, a very homoeopathic quantity of real racing, is apt to be reminded of their own proverb, and to doubt whether the "play be worth the candle," not considering (as it behoves one to do) that here, the candle is the best part of the play; for the French are not naturally a sporting people; they have taken to racing (and hunting also) with about the same sham zest that boys take to eating olives and smoking cigars; they overdress and underact their parts egregiously, their notion of the latter sport especially, is wholly comprized in the costuming—their real en-

joyment of it beginning in the tailor's shop, and ending in the first ditch. Did you ever see the Frenchmen ride? if you have, you will doubtless have noticed the fierce air of pride and exultation that cocks their hats, and vibrates in their moustache, whilst their proud animals prance properly, and not too much, and the sudden modification this expression undergoes at an unmannerly curvet or the loss of a stirrup—it is the shadow of Fear passing over the surface of Vanity; and when their horses run away with them, (a consummation tolerably frequent,) the streaming coat-tail and dishevelled whisker, the jeopardized hat, and convulsively clinging boots and trousers, the terrified "whoo-ho-boy"-ism of their whole aspect presents altogether a sad spectacle of fallen greatness: this is to be observed only of the civilians, the soldiers look well upon their horses, with them constant practice has conquered the national inaptitude, and their sense of "Station" almost drowns the Equiphobia.

I would chat to you somewhat of ourselves, could we meet; could I, for example, give you a *viva voce* description, and with the accompaniments of look, speech, and action, do justice to the half-pleased distrustfulness with which our young and now very red-faced friend partakes of the unintelligible dishes, so delightful, yet so suspicious in their novelty. As his cicerone, I have of course done my best to feast him, whether with breakfasts at the Palais Royal, dinners à la carte, or petits soupers at St. Cloud; but when a faint and imperfectly developed horror overspread his face, as the thought dawned within his soul that he might unwittingly have eaten a frog, I felt that I had sufficiently done the honors of the French cuisine, and perplexed him with no more "plats."

I went the other day to the Chamber of Deputies, but the speakers, almost to a man, were so nameless and so prosy, that they were neither worth looking at, nor listening to; in this latter opinion I was confirmed by their co-deputies, who interrupted them without mercy, and at length fairly dinned them down. Guizot, during the whole debate, was either walking restlessly in and out of an ante-chamber, or hovering amongst the Deputies, like a bee in a flower-bed, settling for a little while on each, but bent rather on instilling than extracting; for although discoursing them with eager gesture and energetic *sotto voce*, he would yawn horribly when they turned to talk to him. Thiers was laughing all over his facial expanse, and Lamartine "doing the gloomy:" indeed, these three, if properly grouped, would have made a promising *Posè Plastique*; with Guizot for the central figure to represent Garrick, and the other two as Comedy and Tragedy.

'Tis well I have not ought to describe to you from this morning's occupation, for our two great enemies Time and Space warn me to use what they will yet spare me to good purpose; therefore let me acknowledge and thank you for your last note, let me apologise to the Home Office at C—, as also to J—, for not writing separately to them, and let me desire to these and all friends my hearty and undiminished regards. I leave for Italy to-morrow. M—