

**SKETCHES FROM THE
DAIRY OF A
COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER**

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Sketches from the dairy of a commercial traveller by Throne Crick

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THRONE CRICK

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OF A

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

BY

THRONE CRICK.

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P R E F A C E.

It has long been matter of surprise, that although every other class of individuals in the community, and I may say every subject, have, at one time or other, had their special historians or illustrators, till classes and subjects have become almost exhausted, not a single attempt should have been made to render justice to the large, important, and influential body of Commercial Travellers.

This may perhaps be accounted for—in part at least—from the almost exclusive character of the Commercial Room, which but rarely admits the entrée of professional writers, or indeed of any strangers, within its circle. The locomotive representatives of our great manufactories and mercantile establishments

are thus, in a measure, secluded from public observation; and their distinguishing characteristics, habits, manners, &c.—many of them sufficiently remarkable and peculiar—have not been brought before the world.

Indeed, it could be only through a long, rambling, discursive association with them in their journeys, and at their hotels, that the requisite information and knowledge could be acquired to enable any author, whatever might be his genius or his talent, his powers of perception or of description, to pourtray them fully and justly in all their countless phases.

I have, therefore, though with reluctance, and only on the solicitations of a number of commercial friends, who were aware of my daily cogitations on the subject, consented, however inadequately, to supply the desideratum from my *DIARY*.

Few engagements offer so many advantageous opportunities for observation,

and for collecting materials for book-making, if time would permit, as that of a Commercial Traveller. In the body of representatives, talent has never been wanting. They who know them best can most strongly attest the truth of this assertion; but the all-absorbing claims of business have not, up to the present day, allowed any man, competent to the task, to appropriate a sufficient portion of time for conveying an accurate idea of the varieties, peculiarities, and long-established usages of the Commercial Corps.

Travelling, as I consequently do, over untrodden and, in some instances, very tender ground — creating a journey — marking out a line never before attempted — endeavouring to raise a superstructure with materials of a novel description — I am aware that I have imposed upon myself no ordinary labour. This is the more apparent when I reflect that the majority of my readers are, each and all of them, more or less interested

in some one or other of the sketches introduced in the following pages.

I am fully conscious of the difficulty and delicacy of touching upon the eccentricities of our contemporaries, even in the most harmless manner; and that, with men of tender skins, it is often as hazardous to "damn with faint praise," as to "hint a fault, or hesitate dislike." But a faithful delineation of commercial life must necessarily involve the peculiarities of its individual members; and individuals are the types of classes. Thus, from a single graphic resemblance, some few unhappy adopters of coverings for other people's heads may wince and smart, under the erroneous impression that they themselves had been sketched by the artist, though nothing might have been farther from his thought. For this I am prepared.

Critics, too, may complain of a deviation from all established rules; and they may rail at a want of incident, and a want of everything that can render

a book acceptable ; but I hope to be judged by a public which, in the exercise of its critical faculties, has no private end to serve, no sinister motive to which it can be called upon to pander. Into the hands, and upon the kind-heartedness, of that public—principally my own fraternity—I willingly entrust myself, confident that, since my primary objects in publishing are to perpetuate what remains of old and valuable commercial usages — assist, by my experience, the young and uninitiated—correct, in some measure, the delinquencies of the erring, more advanced in life — furnish agreeable amusement for the mass—convey a more correct idea of the habits, characters, and position of Commercial Travellers than has ever yet been presented to the world — I shall be judged in charity and candour.

Earnestly soliciting indulgence for any scholastic deficiency which the eye of the more highly educated may too readily discover, I venture to offer in ex-