

# **PAGES FROM THE PAST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649286850

Pages from the past by John Ayscough

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JOHN AYSCOUGH**

**PAGES  
FROM THE PAST**



PAGES FROM THE PAST



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LEVIA-PONDERA. An Essay-  
Book. With Portrait. Crown  
8vo, 7s. 6d. net.

GRACECHURCH. A Novel.  
Crown 8vo, 6s. 6d. net.

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
LONDON NEW YORK BOMBAY  
CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

# PAGES FROM THE PAST

BY

JOHN AYSCOUGH

*[pseud. of Monsignor (1885-1917)]*

*F. BICKERSTAFFE-DA  
FRANCIS BROWNING*

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1922

All rights reserved

To  
MRS. WILLIAM ARKWRIGHT  
Sutton Scarsdale, Chesterfield

*Dear Mrs. Arkwright*

*It is very kind of you to allow me to dedicate this little book to you.*

*In asking you to stand godmother to it, I had no better reason to give than that you liked the book. I only hope that many other people may like it as well, so that you may not be ashamed of your godchild.*

*It is a pity that some of the chapters could not be told so fully, in print, as they were told vivâ voce to you. But the heirs and assigns of people who have acted oddly are apt to like keeping to themselves the legacies of queerness to which they stand heirs.*

*Yours very sincerely*  
*John Ayscough*



# PAGES FROM THE PAST

## CHAPTER I

I TAKE it that any man of my age can, by the aid of personal Memory and Experience, contrast two worlds as different as any that ever existed.

I can, it is true, remember neither Crimean War nor Indian Mutiny, but the latter was barely ended when I was born—in a snow-storm, on the day when Bernadotte saw for the first time the Blessed Virgin among the rocks of the scarp down by the Gave hard by Lourdes. Both Mutiny and Crimean War were still matters of current talk, as affairs of yesterday or the day before. In, or rather just outside, the Welsh village where we lived, lodged a gentle, moody, half-sane officer who had had the appalling task of giving the order on parade for blowing certain native mutineers from the guns. He had given the order, but his reason had given way. When we knew him, but a year or two later, he was only partly recovered; and I remember him very well—remember especially how unwilling he was to offer any

stranger his hand *lest they should shrink from the blood upon it.*

At that time and in the same place we knew also the wife of Smith O'Brien, and that acquaintance served to bring nearer to oneself the events of that single-minded enthusiast's rebellion, which also had, of course, occurred before my own birth. Talk of Smith O'Brien naturally would lead our Irish mother to tell us about the 'cholera-year,' about the famine, and the terrible miseries and sufferings that accompanied and followed it: all of which she had seen, for she did not marry and leave Ireland till three years after the famine.

She and my father were both born in George IV.'s reign: born, of course, before Catholic Emancipation, or the passing of the great Reform Bill, while the agitation for both was in full blast.

Both of my grandfathers were born in the reign of George III., but my father's father was born, 142 years ago, in 1780, three years before England lost her American Colonies, nine before the French Revolution, and twenty-one before the Legislative Union between England and Ireland. The planet Uranus was still undiscovered, and Napoleon was undiscovered too, a little boy of eleven years old.

My English grandsire's father lived under George II., and saw the Partition of Poland.

One of my Irish great-grandmothers lived to

the age of 109 years, after having brought her husband twenty-six children, of whom only two lived to grow up, and only one married. She must have been born far back in the reign of George II.

At this moment I have, alive and well in France,<sup>1</sup> though, alas, blind, a great friend whose first husband's first wife was born in 1727! Her second husband, whom I knew and loved well, was nephew to two Queens of the Napoleonic era: Désirée Clary, wife of Charles XIV., King of Sweden and Norway, of the Goths and of the Wends; and Julie Clary, wife of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, elder brother of Napoleon I. My friend remembered these four sovereigns very well, and had been Aide-de-Camp to Bernadotte, Charles XIV. of Sweden.

Another old friend of mine well remembered the widow of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, grandson of James II., called by eighteenth-century Whigs the Young Pretender, and by Jacobites His Majesty King Charles III. This friend of mine, as a little girl, used to attend the receptions given by the royal widow once a week while she resided in Florence. The Queen sat upon a dais, and the general company made curtsseys or bows and passed on, but the little girl was made to come on the dais, and receive the royal lady's embrace,

<sup>1</sup> Alive and well when the words above were written: but now, alas, gone to her long-desired rest.