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**Thomas De Quincey—His  
Life and Works.**

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)

Such a man frequently forms special attachments. In his "Autobiographic Sketches" and "Opium Confessions" we have evidence conclusive of his strong and deep affection for both living and departed friends. In writing of the latter, he pours out the wealth of love for them without any reserve; but in speaking of the former, he usually conceals his tenderness and restrains his affectionate utterances. He deprecates the loss of his friends with impassioned sorrow.

Many charges have been made against De Quincey, perhaps, in the majority of cases, without proper foundation. He has been accused of vanity, arrogance, jealousy and egotism. As regards the first, it has been affirmed that he has exercised his imagination on himself too favorably. Perhaps, it is not for the writer to utter any decided pronouncements on this point, as his age or experience, or knowledge, or judgment—or all combined—may not be of such a character as would warrant him in so doing. Nevertheless, it may be hazarded that De Quincey must have been conscious of his own excellence, and that he was too little of a humbug to pretend that he was not. He who made such a study of human nature, and speculated so much upon it, must certainly have studied himself, and have found himself to be a good subject for narrative or discussion. But he never writes of himself as a hero, challenging our admiration, but often does he take us into his confidence and appeal to our sympathies. He frequently speaks of himself humorously, but scarcely ever boastfully or ostentatiously. True, he does repeatedly refer to his ancestry and his aristocratic connections. Well, was not Mr. De Quincey justified in so doing, since it is universally acknowledged "that there is power in a name!" The immortal Shakespeare has written some soul-stirring words on the value and power of a name:—

"Who steals my purse, steals trash;  
'Twas something; nothing;  
'Twas mine; 'tis his; and has been slave  
to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good  
name,  
Rubs me of that which not enriches him,  
But makes me poor indeed."

De Quincey was called arrogant on account of his dogmatic criticisms of Plato, Cicero, Dr. Johnson, and other eminent authors. His political and national prejudices, strongly and vehemently expressed, are said to have savored of arrogance and domination. But why should such things be construed into faults, when that which men most admire in other men, whether friends or foes, is the courageous utterance of one's convictions. A man so encased in his own opinions as to refuse new light thereon, might be justly accused of arrogance, but the biographers of De Quincey—notably Mr. Hill Burton, a personal acquaintance of his—speak of him as being of a "gentle and kindly spirit," and that "few men of equal power have been more unaffectedly open to reasonable conviction."

Auent the accusation that he possessed a *jealous mind*, we may say that his unappreciative critics have been also mistaken, at least, such is the consensus of opinion. In their extravagant admiration for Wordsworth and Coleridge, they seem to have no love or relish for the productions of other equally eminent and master minds. No one will dispute the fact that Wordsworth is one of the great, if not the greatest, interpreters of nature. Forsooth, has he not been legitimately denominated "the Poet of Nature?" But De Quincey's "Recollections" of both Wordsworth and Coleridge are incontrovertible evidence of his sincere admiration for the extraordinary qualities of these men; at the same time he was not scrupulous in pointing out their imperfections or exposing their faults. And for such impartiality, partial and one-sided men have hurled at him the charges of jealousy and arrogance. In passing, we may say that such accusations might be cast into the very teeth of Wordsworth's admirers, for notwithstanding the great and towering characteristics of nature's greatest poet, it has been universally attested that he possessed an arrogant and contemptuous manner.

It seems to us that instead of arrogance, or dogmatism, or egotism, or jealousy being the prevailing emotions of the man's mind and writings, the two ruling emotions may be described as *humor* and *sublimity*. Though naturally unfitted for rough merriment, De Quincey had a keen sense of the ridiculous. In fact some of his works are superfluously humorous, and in all of them are many pleasant strokes of humor. But there is no trace of malice in his laughter. It is, as he describes it himself, merely "humorous extravagance." One of his critics says that "he often speaks of mean occupations with mock dignity, and that one unique vein of his humor consists in

speaking with affection or admiration, or with a dry business tone, concerning objects usually regarded with horror or indignation; as, for example, 'Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts.'"

His genius for the sublime is unquestioned. As in his humor, so in his susceptibility to sublimity and grandeur, it may be difficult for us, who live on the plains, to scale the vast heights and take up our abode on the mountain tops of the magnificent and the sublime! Is there not a striking resemblance between Carlyle in his so-called hero-worship and De Quincey in his genius for the sublime? If the former require an attitude reverential prostration and adoring contemplation—the very ideas embodied in worship—may not all these same qualities and conditions be demanded even with greater propriety, in the latter—that is, in genius for the sublime? Peradventure, the great incubus of his life may have been directly or indirectly or partially the cause of this! Unquestionably it was connected with it in some way, mysterious or otherwise:—we refer to his *opium habit*. In his "Confessions" he says, "Clouds of gloomy grandeur overhung his dreams at all stages of opium, and, in the last, grew into the darkest of miseries."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**Our Ottawa Letter.**

This is election day in Jacques Cartier, where, in 1891, the government candidate had a majority of 276 votes. It is impossible to predict the result, as, driven to desperation over the loss of Montreal Centre, where in 1891 the government candidate had a majority of 1214, and Cardwell, where in 1891 their majority was nearly 300, the government have thrown thousands of dollars into Jacques Cartier to win at all hazards, as the loss of this constituency means their death-blow. In face of the great odds against the liberal candidate it seems impossible he should win. However, there is a chance that the better judgment of the people should prevail over the government's "gold pieces," and that the liberal candidate will be endorsed. But what a victory it would be!

Since my last letter we have witnessed two elections, one in Cardwell and the other in Montreal Centre. Our friends were taught a severe lesson in the North Ontario election, where, by splitting up the vote between the Liberals and Patrons, the return of the government candidate was insured.

The result of the election in Cardwell, and the return of a McCarthyite, furnishes abundant proof that the Manitoba school case is not to be regarded as paramount to all other issues for the Liberals, Protestants and Catholics alike turned in largely and supported McCarthy's man when they saw that to divide forces could but result, as it did in North Ontario, in the election of the government candidate.

As regards their fiscal policy and their general condemnation of corrupt government the Liberal leaders and Dalton McCarthy are in accord. In this respect their policies are almost identical, the desire of both being to rid the country of one of the most extravagant and corrupt combinations of men that ever disgraced the treasury benches. The question was freely discussed among the Liberals of Cardwell as to the certain result of a diversion of the two forces that were opposing the government's candidate. The conclusion reached was that unless Cardwell was to show to the world its endorsement of the government by the election of its candidate, the Liberals and McCarthyites must unite their vote on the broader principles in voicing their general and united condemnation of Tory government, boodling, extravagance and corruption and all that has been associated with Tory government for the past sixteen years.

It was hard for many of the electors of Cardwell to desert Mr. Henry, the liberal candidate, yet when they saw that to stand by him could not possibly result in anything other than the election of a government supporter they decided to join hands with McCarthy that the government candidate might be defeated.

It was only the lesson the liberals learned from the result of splitting forces in North Ontario that caused them to take the stand they did in Cardwell. Had the election been held in Cardwell first the government candidate would in all probability have been returned.

We now come to the recent election in Montreal Centre. That is the worst blow the government has received since 1878. Of all constituencies in the Dominion, the very heart of manufacturing industry, Montreal Centre is the one we would have expected to have returned a supporter of the government. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that the liberals were opposed by one of the strongest men the government could put in the field, and notwithstanding the fact that for weeks the government has been flooding the constituency with the "corrupting fund," promises and pledges and all the

eloquence it was possible to squeeze out of the cabinet in addressing the electors, the government's majority was reduced from 1214 to a minority of 336.

It had been expected that McShane, the liberal candidate, would have drawn his strength from the working or poorer section of the city, the tougher part of the city, for he was popular with the masses, but when we look over the returns we find that it was the business and manufacturing centres that he developed a strength that was surprising to everyone. The fact is that the result of the election in Montreal Centre can only be read as a desire on the part of the business and commercial interests of that city to repudiate the present government.

Another fact was also developed as a result of this election for it was clearly demonstrated that in the Quebec constituencies the Manitoba school case is not to become as important a factor in the election as has been anticipated. Seventy five per cent. of the electors of Montreal Centre are Roman Catholics, yet the fact that the government had pledged themselves to pass a remedial bill restoring Roman Catholic schools in Manitoba does not appear to have impressed itself very forcibly on the electors of that constituency.

The success of the liberal candidate in Montreal Centre is of only secondary importance when we consider the volume it speaks. The Manitoba school case has not proved the important factor that was expected of it and the government have not succeeded in diverting public attention from their own misdeeds by it.

It would certainly be a most disastrous thing for the country if the government's record for the past sixteen years was to be wiped out by some turn of the cards in the Dominion school case. But the lesson in Vercheres, in Antigonish, and now in Montreal Centre says as far as these strongly Roman Catholic constituencies go the Manitoba school case is only secondary, and that the main issue is "shall tory government be kept in power at Ottawa, with its record of extravagance, corruption, and criminal administration of our affairs for another five years." The Liberals in Cardwell said no, and as much as it went against the grain of some of them to vote for McCarthy's candidate they did so in firm belief that the end justifies the means.

Had they not done so their very act, in splitting the vote when knew what the inevitable result must be, would have been to condone the crime and incapacity with which they have been charging the government, by asserting to secure the return of the government candidate in Cardwell.

Ottawa, Dec. 30th, 1895.

**Carrville**

Christmas passed off quietly, and now that its festivities are a thing of the past, our citizens have time to give their attention to the elections. As far as our village is concerned, we think there will be no change in its municipal officers; but we are in favor of a new inspector of roads and bridges. We think that officer has not done his duty in allowing our sidewalks to remain so long in bad repair. Since the muddy season has come it is almost impossible to travel by foot. We would be glad to see either frost or sidewalk.

Wesley, son of George Bone, arrived home from Manitoba on Christmas morning. His visit greatly increased the joy of his parents and brothers, as he had been away for nearly three years. When he left Manitoba the thermometer marked 30 below zero.

Miss Evans, our respected teacher, is spending her holidays with her parents at Tyago.

Mr. Ernest Coombs, principal of the High school at Richmond Hill, is spending his Christmas and New Years with his parents here.

Mr. Geo. Wood visited Mr. Kirke, of Unionville, on Sunday last.

Mr. John Tyndall severely injured his knee while fixing a horse power. He has been laid up for some days, but is now improving.

Mrs. Stamp, of Gravenhurst, is visiting at her father's, Mr. Jas. Coombs.

The stumbling of a horse and the breaking of a shaft delayed two ladies for some time on the school house hill on Monday. Messrs. Mellish and Thos. Cook acted the part of the good Samaritan, bound up the shaft and sent the ladies on their way rejoicing.

Mr. and Mrs. Gooch, of Toronto, drove to "The Eims" on Sunday, and made a short visit.

Mr. M. Hoover, of Altona, visited Mr. Thos. Cook on Sunday and Monday.

Miss Wylie, of Orangeville High school, and Miss Archer, of Bradford, made a short visit at Mr. Jno. Coombs' on Monday.

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