

Ballarat Courier

Saturday, 22nd February 1890

CORNERISMS

BY "TOM TOUCHSTONE"

Still hold to truth, abound in love.

Refusing every base compliance;

And live and die in self-reliance.

THOMAS DAVIS

ROUND THE WORLD.

From time to time many persons have suggested to me that I ought, like so many others, take a trip to Europe, returning, perhaps, via America and Japan; and sometimes, when I was not too busy and was in the humor for yarning, I agreed with my friends that it might not be a bad thing if I could take a trip round the world in a hundred and eighty day, and thus

Let observation, with extensive view,

Survey mankind from China to Peru.

I was willing to admit that it might be a good thing to see for myself the scenes and persons I had been in the habit of reading about. I was quite agreed that it would be nice to have a ramble in Ceylon, and then to meander through Egypt and Palestine, to sojourn a few days in Rome and in the principal Italian cities; to surmount the Alps and gaze down on Switzerland, the home of William Tell and of Liberty; and to have a pleasant run through France, calling at Paris, ere I crossed the "silver streak," and found myself (after an absence of more than two-thirds of my life) in England, of which, as Cardinal Manny said the other day, "such unlimited wealth and such extreme poverty is nowhere else to be found." I was ever fond of companion pictures, and so I have thought how I would like to plunge into the very blackest of the London back slums, and then, with the aid of some Asmodeus, suddenly get myself conveyed to the gorgeous palace of the landlord where he and his menials wallow in unearned, injurious luxury. After taking a bird's eye view of the immensities of the modern Babylon, I had a notion that it would be pleasant to wander over the green country of England and Wales, and that it would be instructive, if not so pleasant, to stroll around in the "black country," to see the female nail makers had at work, naked to the waist, for much less than 1s per day. Then. I have thought how much I would have liked to visit the land of Burns, of Tannahill, of Scott, and hundreds more whose memory and genius is near to me;

and if Mr Winans, the present proprietor, would allow me, to wander over “the bonnie hills of Scotland,” I would have liked to have a look at the homes of the poor crofters, which homes the Crofter Commissioners declared “implied the moral and physical degradation of the inhabitants.” Then, of course, I considered it would be fine to cross over to Ireland, and have a few sights of the different phases of the land war going on there, such as the extraordinary evacuation of the town of Tipperary, or to get a good look at the battering ram in full work at and eviction in Donegal. Then I was quite agreed with my friends that it would be enormously pleasant to return by America and Japan, and take notes of everything to be sent regularly to *The Courier*, and to be afterwards republished in book form; but yet – ah, that “but yet.” Well says Walter Scott –

“But yet” is like the goaler who lets forth some monstrous malefactor.

Yes; but yet there were many “but yet” to ever make such a tour, however desirable it might appear to myself and a few partial friends, simply only a ting to talk about, just as we talk about the millennium for which Christ told us to ask about every time we prayed. However, during the past few days a number of people seem to rather bent on my making such a tour; and I was surprised, when I came to *The Courier* on Tuesday evening (after writing my “Notes and Quotes” for the following morning), to find that a deputation had waiting on *The Courier* management, and that it was as good as settled that I had to go whether of no.

A lesson I was taught before I grew old, that he is a good boy who does what he’s told.

As I would like to do it if I possibly can, well, then, I must only try to do it, But, as Sancho Panza says, “the fool knows more in his own house than the wise man out of it,” and so I fancy I know a little more about my own personal affairs than other people, and so I can see some little difficulties which others may not, but which I think it not quite impossible to remove, so that the “par” in Wednesday’s *Courier* (which was written without my knowledge) is fairly correct when it stated that – “Among other Ballarat passengers to London by the Ormuz, on the 28th March, will probably by our contributor ‘Tom Touchstone.’ Who will accompany about a dozen other Innocents Abroad.” The word “probably” exactly suites the case, for that does not convey the idea that my not going is impossible. But why speak of “about a dozen other innocents abroad?” I grant that I may be a bit of an innocent, but is Councillor Cooke? Is Mr Curthoys? Is Mr Jago, and all the other Ballaraters who are going by the Ormuz? No; when they are abroad they won’t be so innocent as they may look.

“T.T. AND ANOTHER”

In the paragraph in Wednesday’s *Courier* referring to my probable tour to England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and all the other parts of the globe, it is stated that I will be associated in my journey with a well-known artist to take interesting sketches

en route. I may say that this is one of the chief inducements I have in attempting such a very long, costly, and laborious tour. My opinion of young Mr Luke, the artist in question, is that his all-round talent, and more than ordinary skill, is only to be equalled by his energy and enterprise. The same scenes that I lay myself out for seeing and investigating, he would much like to see, and with his camera, and his skill with the flash, he will be able to photograph not only the lights, but the very darkest shades of human life, should we meet them, and thus we will be better able to do something to let one-half of the world know how the other half lives. I might draw a pen picture true to the letter, and many people would probably say it was only a fancy sketch, but when it is accompanied by the photograph, we can say "the apparatus cannot lie." If we go on this journey, I think it very likely that we will have interviews with, or be in the company of eminent men or women, and then, without any breach of confidence or good taste, we expect to get interesting results with the detective camera, which results I would hope to see afterwards reproduced by the Suttontype process in a well got up book, which I think I might entitle "Oil-spots and Maelstroms," for as on the ocean there are "oil-spots" where the waves are ever calm, and maelstroms which drag down and dash to atoms everything within reach, so it is on the land as I would take it be my duty to show. That book would be a totally different thing to the folio to be entitled "The world through the camera", which Mr Luke proposes to supply at £2 2s per copy to 100 subscribers. This is to be a nicely bound folio, containing a large number of photographs which would be specially interesting to the subscribers, and with appropriate text and descriptive matter, for which I am set down. Certainly, I think that if this trip becomes an accomplished fact the subscribers of Mr Luke's folio will think, in the end, that they have got the worth of their money. As to myself, Mr Luke's companionship will give me greater confidence, but I still I feel I am not as young as I was when three dozen years ago, when I left the old country with the proprietor of The Courier as a shipmate. It will be a great change to leave my library, my young and old friends, and Ballarat, which has become a part of me. I will miss Ballarat more than Ballarat will miss me, for with perhaps the break of a week I expect to be writing as regularly as usual, and even if I did not- even if I become food for the fishes I would not be missed for very long, and then only by a comparative few. But well I know that when I go away, even in my birthplace, I will be longing to be home again in Ballarat, to have a good rest running about at this thing, that thing, and the other, for this body and that one, and yarning, or reading, or writing, or fooling away the time somehow, and making believe that I am of some sort of use in the world. Already I begin to think what I will lose by going away. I will lose Henry George, with whom I hoped to have a yarn amongst my books. I will miss seeing Toole, the comedian. In fact, it seems to me that almost everyone worth hearing and seeing will be in Ballarat during the five or six months that I will be away, if I go, and go I must- if nothing stops me.