

## Account of an Early Business Journey of John Hill Lovell,<sup>1</sup> 1822

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3/26th 1822.—Left BRISTOL on a new route and alth' with a tolerably cheerful face with a very heavy heart—Slept that night at WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, and as usual far from comfortable there—Ostler worse than ever if possible.

27th.—DURSLEY & GLO'STER.—The latter town new to me as a place of business yet I found several on whom I called friendly and agreeable.

28th.—ROSS & MONMOUTH.—The drive from Glo'ster to Ross tedious and uninteresting—from Ross to Monmouth delightful and surpasses any stage I have ever driven—The scenery fine in the extreme. The Wye gently gliding its circuitous way amongst hills covered with wood and enlivened by occasional buildings, gentlemen's seats, etc. Nor must the ruins of Goodrich Castel be forgotten, increasing as they do, the interest of the landscape.—I almost envied the apparent happy indolence of several I saw fishing on the banks and of others in small boats paddling down this tranquil stream —“ We will not be Welch,” exclaimed a lady at Monmouth with whom I was conversing on the beauties of their country—“ You shall be English,” I answered with equal warmth, “ we will not part with your county to the Welch.”

I omitted visiting the jail at Monmouth not having leisure for such a visit.

29th.—Breakfasted at RAGLAND and then visited the ruins of its castle—Cromwell did much for the lovers of the picture[sque]. They must thank him when contemplating some of our interesting ruins—From the size of the hall, the dining-room, and the kitchen, we may conclude the inmates were once numerous, and not wholly

<sup>1</sup> John Hill Lovell (1790-1855), served his apprenticeship to John and Olive Dymond, of Exeter, linendrapers. He travelled for the firm of George Crosfield & Co., of Liverpool, from 1819 until his death. He married Sarah, widow of Edward B. Frank, in 1825, by whom he had three sons.

inattentive to the pleasures of the table. Nor were they deficient in courage, if we may judge from its being one of the last garrisons that held out for King Charles under that old veteran the Earl of Worcester at that time 83 years of age.

Here as at some other ruins great quantity of ivy has been destroyed, "that the architecture may appear to more advantage," but surely these Goths are mistaken in supposing that the walls are more interesting stripped of nature's drapery—From the "Tower Melin-y-Gwent" I had an extensive view of the surrounding country and returned to my inn much gratified by my excursion and bearing as relics a piece of the pavement and the fringe of a curtain—That the latter should be in such perfection or indeed preserved at all is I think surprizing—.

ABERGAVERNENY as a town dull and but from its walks and views of the adjoining hills not worth visiting.

PONTYPOOL.—I must now fancy myself in Wales, every thing about me Welch, from the stable to the bedroom.—The very candles must be Welch for they give a very small portion of light and are moreover not with wax wicks on the discoverer of which I always secretly and often openly pronounce no blessing—In this land of poultry Syntax<sup>2</sup> has been repeatedly alarmed by the Turkey Cock in full strutt, the first appearance greatly affected his nervous system and from him reached the nerves of his master, but from another cause—his personal safety—.

Thus far the weather has been unusually fine, and this has added much to the pleasure of my rambles, but I am alone, and if I derive pleasure from the beauties of nature I have none to whom I can impart it, not one who cares whether I am in Wales or in Scotland, whether I am travelling in sunshine or shivering with the cold.

30th.—USK. The ruins of its castle the only thing worth notice—I had only time to visit its exterior. Not particularly striking.

CAERLEON.—A miserable hole.

NEWPORT.—From the Church yard I had a fine view of the Channel and the Somerset Coast, except its Coal trade, a poor dull town.

<sup>2</sup> "Syntax" was evidently the name of his horse.

From this town to CARDIFF a pleasant drive, commanding a view of the water, etc. I enjoyed it, wished myself at home, and thought the hills of Somerset never looked so charming. I viewed them as old acquaintances whose appearance delights you amongst strangers.

31st.—Altho' to-day is Sunday, I have been exploring the beauties of this town (Cardiff). In walking on the banks of its Canal you are struck with the vast quantity of Iron ready to be exported and the number of vessels waiting to convey it to its various destination.

About 8,000 tons weight of this metal is supposed now to be collected belonging to one firm. The walks round the Castle (by the liberality of the Marquis of Bute thrown open to the public) are pleasant and afford a delightful promenade to the belles of this town, who sans doute avail themselves of this—as well as all other advantages for a little bit of display.

Attended a Wesleyan Meeting this evening and heard I think gospel truths from their pulpit—The sermon is to me the only thing that is worth hearing in the various places of worship I attend (except my own) the singing generally bad and the prayers formal. I cannot but think it is mocking the Majesty of Heaven to approach him with such set forms on the lips—Words only never can avail us or be accepted of him—'Tis said Quakerism is suited only to an intellectual people—It may be so and that in the present state of Society Methodism may be best calculated for the lower orders—The former certainly is better suited to educated minds.

4th Mh. 1st.—Was this day at the City of LLANDAFF and viewed the remains of its Cathedral and thought of its late Bishop.—The City like its Cathedral is in ruins—dined at COWBRIDGE and slept at PYLE.

4/2.—TYBACH, NEATH & SWANSEA.—At the first place whilst waiting for a customer I rambled to the entrance of a coal mine (a pit I must not call it) for it was merely a passage cut in the hill of more than a mile in length thro' which the coal is conveyed in small wagons and from thence by a rail-road to the Copper Works.—

I had a delightful walk in the neighbourhood of Neath, the scenery is certainly fine—Was shewn by E.W. some peculiarly constructed flues, where a successful experi-

ment had been made to deprive the smoke from the copper furnace of its properties which are so injurious to vegetation—After my walk, drank tea with F.W. and left his house regretting that business required my leaving so early—Of Swansea perhaps I did not see the beauties. I certainly was disappointed in this town—There were some good houses building by the water-side, and there the view is certainly very pleasing.

3rd.—In CARMARTHEN I was most sadly disappointed. I expected to have seen some parts in some degree modern. But age is imprinted on every part except the jail—I blessed myself that this was the extent of my journey and on that the morrow my face wd be turned towards England.

5th.—Good Friday—LLANDILO and LLANDOVEY.

The drive from Carmarthen to the former is said to be one of the finest in Wales: I did not much enjoy it. It was before breakfast and the morning was cold—Both towns miserable enough—I often feel thankful I was not born and condemned to live in these country towns.

6th.—TRECASTLE & BRECON.—The country fine but neither town worth visiting.

7th.—Sunday.—I have enjoyed two rambles round this town to-day more than I usually do. There is a delightful walk thro' a wood, the river running beneath your feet, and from the summit of the hill a fine view of the beacon and other distant hills.—

No place of worship was visited to-day yet in one of my walks I was interested and instructed by reading Young's "Night Thoughts" to my companion.

8th.—TALGARTH, HAY, HEREFORD.—It was too cold to enjoy my ride to Talgarth or from the scenery it might be enjoyed—"Alps on Alps" in this country.—

Hay a town of little consequence, famous I understand for shoemakers.

Hereford appeared very dull—there are some good buildings and the new Shire-hall is a spacious room and very simply finished—I saw it filled more agreeably than it usually is. An annual bible association meeting was held there, the greater part of the company were of the lower orders, very decent and very attentive—Some

of the various speeches I thought very much to the purpose and cannot but think they will prove of use.

The Quaker doctrine of the insufficiency of the bible only to save the soul was ably and clearly preached by a Calvinistic Minister—and the necessity, when reading it, of craving the aid of His spirit who inspired the writers of the sacred volume was forcibly urged on the audience.

I was much struck with the countenance of a boy during the greater part of the meeting and his close attention to the different speakers, nor less pleased when on our leaving, he expressed great earnestness to give “sixpence to the plate” and his regret he had no money with him—This was an appeal I could not resist and I enabled him to fulfil his wish.

9th.—LEOMINSTER: Nothing worthy of notice here, the Church and Church yard excepted. Many of the inscriptions on the tombs amused more than instructed.

10th.—LUDLOW, CHURCH STRETTON, and SHREWSBURY. The Castle at Ludlow and its walks in particular are worth the attention of the stranger—The weather prevented my examining these ruins so minutely as I wished to have done—The town much as other country towns, anything but pretty—But I saw it in snow.

11th.—I visited Shrewsbury pretty fully except its manufactories. Its situation is fine, and there are many remains of former greatness.

COALBROOKDALE is no doubt in Summer a delightful spot, but even a Russian would have felt cold the night I rambled there—I was disappointed in the “Infernal appearance” of this place, perhaps in better days of trade, it approaches more nearly to the vulgar idea of the place of future punishment “Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.”

12th.—BROSELEY, BRIDGNORTH and KIDDERMINSTER.

I left the Dale before breakfast, in the midst of wind and rain, enough to damp the courage of any but a veteran in travelling—Had the weather been other I shd have enjoyed the walk round the ruins of the castle at Bridgnorth, as it was I saw enough to convince me of its beauty—In many towns thro’ which I have passed I have been struck with the singular appearance of many old houses,

built of wood and coloured black and white, the black covering the pieces which support the building.—

One in Ludlow was ornamented with figures, which grinned horribly at the storm then falling unheeded in the ebon faces.

In Kidderminster I do not see the town I had fancied only 11000 inhabitants and except the manufactories and a large old church much like other country towns.

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## The Quaker Lady and the Prize-fighter

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From the *Morning Post*, 22 May, 1823, Thursday.

“ From the *Bath & Cheltenham Chronicle*, of Tuesday.

“ We have heard from good authority upon which we can place reliance that the benevolent Mrs. Fry called on Neate at Marlborough on Thursday and made a most powerful appeal to him to prevent his fighting & she offered him £500 to pay his expenses, forfeits, etc., but he replied that he was too deeply pledged to recede, though it is said that he promised her that this should be his last battle.”

Same paper, May 24, 1823, Saturday.

“ The late pugilistic fight.

“ “ Mr. Editor My wife and myself will be much obliged by thy insertion in thy valuable paper of a few words contradicting the absurd story copied from a Bath and Cheltenham Paper, of her having interfered to prevent the late battle between Spring and Neate, the whole of which is without the slightest foundation of truth or probability.

‘ I am respectfully, etc.,

‘ JOSEPH FRY.

‘ 81, Mildreds Court, 22-5-month, 1823.’ ”

Same paper, Monday, May 26, 1823.

“ The late pugilistic fight.

“ It now appears that a Quaker Lady (though not Mrs. Fry) did actually interfere to prevent the late great fight between Spring and