A GUIDE

TO

THE MUSEUM

OF THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

HULL.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

HAMLET.

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PREFACE.

A few words on Museums in general, and more particularly on the History and Progress of the Museum of the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society, will perhaps be acceptable to those who may visit the growing and already valuable collection, to which this little volume serves as a Guide or Hand-book.

Every large collection of interesting objects, whether of nature or art, brought together for the instruction of the student, or the satisfaction of the curious, is now generally called a *Museum*, a Greek word, which originally signified a place devoted to the Arts and Sciences, and which was first given to that part of the Royal Palace at Alexandria, which Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second Greek king of Egypt, assigned for his famous public library. After the Greeks, whose chief collections were works of art, for the most part connected with their temples, the Romans, as their power grew, accumulated the spoils of many lands, which were kept to be exhibited in their triumphal processions. Captured statues, and other foreign treasures, were thus brought to Rome, and kept there; and among the Roman Emperors there was more than one imitator of Nero, who ordered 500 statues to be sent from Delphi to ornament his "Golden House." The practice of removing works of art from their original localities had therefore already begun; and though Museums, in our modern sense of the word, as places of public instruction and amusement, did not exist in ancient Rome, there were numerous private collections, even in the time of Augustus, in which, mingled with pieces of Egyptian

and Grecian sculpture, specimens of armour and other articles were preserved, which had been brought as spoils of war from Gaul, Spain, Africa, Syria, or Britain.

In modern times the earliest collections entitled to the name of Museums were made in Italy. There the Gothic invasion had poured in as a flood, burying unnumbered works of art in indiscriminate destruction. During this period the noblest statues were burnt for lime, and the finest marbles were destroyed and used to build hovels. Hardly a single gem of art escaped, except those which were buried in the ruins, and so preserved to later generations. But when a new civilization dawned on Europe, these relics of the past were carefully sought for and collected. In the 15th century the Medici family laid the foundation of the famous Florentine Museum. Other princes of Italy soon followed the example; Museums became more and more common; until now scarce a city or town of note in Europe but has one or more of such collections.

In England the Oxford Museum is the oldest. It was founded in 1679, and owes a great part of its treasures to Elias Ashmole, whose name it yet bears. The British Museum dates from about the middle of the last century. Its present extent may be inferred from the fact that during the last few years its expenditure has been upwards of £40,000 per annum.

The year 1822 saw the formation of the present Hull Literary and Philosophical Society. Several donations of books, shells, and other articles, destined to form the nucleus of the present collection, were then presented to the Society. The Museum dates from the following year, 1823, when the Council engaged two rooms at the Exchange, above the News-room, at a rent of £15 per annum; and these were arranged and opened as a Museum on the 15th July, 1823, when an address was delivered by the President, Dr. Alderson, and Mr. W. H. Dykes was

chosen first curator. These rooms being found too small for the growing collection, in the winter of 1831 it was removed to the building known as the Public Rooms, in Jarratt-street, part of which had been erected for the special convenience of the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society. The room here used for the Museum was 121 feet long, and 23 in width, and here the collection remained till June 1855, when, the members of the society having again increased so much as to require still further accommodation, the present building in Albion-street was erected, at the cost of about £7,000, Charles Frost, Esq., being then President.

It only remains here to say, that, while the following Notes have been chiefly and primarily drawn up to enable visitors better to profit by the Museum, they serve also another end, viz: to shew in what departments the present collection is defective. And it is hoped that some, who have the means, will feel a pleasure in adding something to the completeness of an Institution, which seeks only the public good, and exists for the instruction and amusement of the community.

A GUIDE.

Visitors to Museums often fail in deriving the instruction and pleasure which such collections are calculated to afford them, from a sense of confusion, which is the result of suddenly finding themselves in the midst of so vast a number of unknown and miscellaneous articles. Not knowing what the collection contains, perhaps without any definite purpose in looking through its treasures, ignorant of the distinct character and arrangement of its different parts, they overlook not a few of the things, which, if understood, would most interest them. For this reason, as this volume aims to be a *Guide*, it will proceed to direct the visitor to the different departments of interest in the Museum. These may be comprehended generally under the two following heads :—

I.—Miscellaneous Antiquities and Curiosities, illustrating the manners and customs of ancient and foreign peoples, constituting what may be called the Ethnographical Department; and

II.—Objects of Natural History, namely, Minerals and Fossils, Plants and Animals, constituting the Natural History Department.

These various objects in their position in the Museum will perhaps be found somewhat intermingled, being in some instances arranged more according to their size than their nature; this, however, has been unavoidable, and it is hoped that no real inconvenience will result from it. Visitors can of course begin where they will, but as the collection is arranged according to a certain order, it may be well to follow that order. In the following pages the Miscellaneous Curiosities, constituting the Ethnographical Department, will be first described, and then the various departments of Natural History, very much in the order of their arrangement in the Museum. The annexed *Plan* of the Museum, or the *Index* at the end, will always direct a visitor to any special subject.

NORTH AMERICA

We now pass to specimens of the work of some of the tribes of North America.

Let us first hear Mr. Catlin's general description of these tribes. "The Indians of North America," he says, "are copper-coloured, with black hair and eyes, well-formed, and now less than 2,000,000 in number. Some years ago, they were far more numerous, but 14,000,000 of red men are known to have perished since this country was entered by the white man, 6,000,000 of whom they reckon to have died of small pox, and the remainder by the sword, the bayonet, and whisky. Of the 2,000,000 now remaining alive, 1,400,000 are more or less the victims or dupes of the white man's cupidity, degraded by the use of whisky and its concomitant vices; while the remainder still cling to their wild woods and prairies, through fear of the love or hatred of the white man." These tribes were very thinly spread over the continent: only toward the south, where it narrows round the Gulf of Mexico, was the population at all dense. Here sprang up a civilization of no mean order, that of the Aztecs or Mexicans. To the north of these were the wild tribes who lived by the produce of the chase; while still further north were the Esquimaux, who still remain perhaps as numerous as ever, their country holding out but few temptations to the cupidity of the white races.

The curiosities connected with these tribes may be divided into three classes:—first, those which illustrate the manners of the present *Esquimaux;* secondly, those which bring before us some peculiarities of the *North American Indians*, properly so called; and lastly, those which illustrate something of the past civilization of the extinct *Aztecs* or Mexicans.

Of *Esquimaux specimens* there is a large collection, articles of *dress made of skin, harpoons, and darts*, and other *weapons, some of which are made or pointed with bone; fishing lines* made of strips of skin, and *hooks* of bone; Esquimaux *boots, snow shoes, and snow spectacles;* their *knives*, and *models of their boats*, and *sledges* drawn by dogs, manufactured by themselves; their *toys* also, which are very curious, some of them being cut from the tooth of the walrus or sea-horse. All these may be found on the round table to the right of the entrance, in the case affixed to Pilaster VI, or suspended from the wall between Pilasters II. and III. Besides these,under the skeleton of the whale, in the right wing of the museum, are *two Esquimaux canoes*, with models of the natives in their own dresses, which were

presented to this Museum by Captain, afterwards Sir John, Ross. The Esquimaux, who was owner of one of these canoes, having come to Hull in a whale ship, belonging, we believe, to Mr. Collinson, used to amuse the people of this town, by shewing the way in which he could jump in and out of his canoe, and even dive under it, to escape the attack of any sea-monster which might attack it. This he did several times in the Garrison Moat, till one day, in diving under his canoe, he got entangled in the weeds, and was drowned before assistance could be rendered him. His canoe remains here a memento of him and his people.

Close to this canoe is *part of a boat, which once belonged to Capt., afterwards Sir Edward Parry's ship, the Fury*, in which Capt. Ross was picked up at sea, when in a state of utter exhaustion, by Capt. Humphrey, of the *Isabella*, of Hull, in 1833. The *snow-knife* and *furnace*, which Capt. Ross had with him in the boat when he was picked up, are laid by the side of the piece of the boat which is preserved here. Here is also a *canister of the preserved meat*, which, having been left with other stores by Capt. Parry on Fury Beach, in 1825, was found there by Capt. Ross in 1831, and brought away by him. This canister was with him in the boat when he was picked up.

The articles illustrative of the life of the *North American Indians*, properly so called, are for the most part suspended on the wall between Pilasters II. and III. Here we see that the *snow-shoes* used by the Esquimaux, and without which they would be lost in the deep snow-drifts, are also in common use among the tribes of Indians, who live much further to the southward. Among the most interesting articles are the *moccasins* or native leggings, the *Indian flute*, the *medicine men's bags*, and the *calumet* or pipe of peace, with the uses of which all readers of Cooper's novels must be familiar. These *pipes of peace*, which are smoked only on solemn occasions, are made of one peculiar stone, of a reddish colour, brought from a quarry on the frontiers of the Wisconsin territory, regarding which the Indians have a tradition that it consists of the flesh of an army of red men, whom the Great Spirit suddenly turned into stone. This stone they scoop out very carefully, fitting the bowl into a shaft of wood, usually the young ash, which is highly ornamented with hair, beads &c. Besides these are *models of their birchen canoes*, made by themselves, and an *Indian harp*, with several other articles. It is painful to think of the fate of this people, step by step driven westward before

the progress of the white man, gradually diminishing in numbers, and corrupted rather than improved by their contact with the pioneers of civilization.

Of *Aztec or Mexican curiosities* this Museum has but two or three specimens. The *grotesque figures*, (on table B 1,) were found in one of the ancient graves which have of late been opened in Mexico. They are silent witnesses of the by-gone civilization of a great people, of whom nothing now remains except a few ruined monuments. To see fully what these Aztecs were, we must read the accounts handed down of them by the Spanish Conquistadores. Two modern works, *Stephen's Travels in Yucatan*, and *Catlin's Indians*, give many interesting particulars respecting this people.

AFRICA

We now turn to those articles in the Museum which are specimens of the work of some of the savage tribes of AFRICA. Here we are introduced to that great Negro race which overspreads nearly the whole of this continent, divided indeed into distinct tribes, with various degrees of culture, but nowhere advanced beyond that savage state which is indicated by fetish-worship and the total absence of all literature. Most of the articles contained in the Museum are from the tribes which occupy the southern extremity of the continent. Here are *Caffre weapons and bracelets*, (against Pilaster III,) a Caffre *quiver*, (ditto,) a *bag ornamented with beads and shells*, used by Caffre women for carrying their children, (Pil. II,) their *baskets*, ornamented with shells, (Pil. III,) and *spoons*, formed from the wood of the acacia tree, (table between Pil IV. and V,) which are the work of the same people. Besides these are several specimens of the work of the *Bushmen* or *Bechuanas*, a people less warlike than the Caffres, but who surpass them in the arts of life. Many particulars respecting these Bushmen or Bechuanas have lately been made known to us through the travels of Moffat and Livingstone. They differ a good deal in colour from the Caffres, the skin of the Caffres being very black and shining, while the Bechuanas are of a browner tint. Here is a *belt worn by a Bechuana chief*, (Pil. II,) *a tube for containing poison*, carried by the Bushman, and used in hunting, (Pil. III,) *a stone hammer used for the execution of criminals* by the Zulus, (ditto,) and other smaller articles. Close by these is one article of *Hottentot* manufacture, a *Hottentot pipe*, (case Pil. VI,) the sole specimen which the Museum contains of the works of this people. Far less warlike than the Caffres, these

Hottentots have of late ... considerably in the scale of civilization. Whe... covered by the European colonists their filth and ... were excessive; but they have improved by conta... Dutch and English, and have shewn ... industry and ingenuity in the works carried on in ... Cape colony. Their colour is lighter than that of any other Africans, being yellow rather than black or brown.

Of the tribes on the Western Coast of Africa, (Sierra Leone, Ashantee &c.,) this Museum as yet contains nothing.

BRITISH ANTIQUITIES

From specimens like the above, which illustrate the barbarism and semi-civilized life of some of the tribes of Asia, Africa, Polynesia, and America, we may now pass on to what is of deeper interest to us, viz. the BRITISH and MEDIÆVAL ANTIQUITIES, illustrative of the barbarism of our own European ancestors.

These antiquities belong to *three distinct periods*. The *first* and earliest, illustrating the state of Britain under Druidism, extends from immemorial time down to the era when this island was conquered by the Romans. During this period, Britain was inhabited by a number of tribes, chiefly Celtic. The following is the account which Cæsar has left us of the condition in which he found them. "The inland part of Britain," he says, "is inhabited by those who, according to existing tradition, were the aborigines of the island, Celts; the sea-coast by those who, for the sake of plunder, or to make war, had crossed over from among the Belgæ, a Germanic people occupying the north-east corner of Gaul, and having settled there had begun to till the land. The population is very great, and the buildings very numerous, resembling those of the Gauls. The Druids are the ministers of sacred things. Of all the natives, those who inhabit Cantium (now Kent) are the most civilized. They do not differ much in their customs from the Gauls. All the Britons, however, stain themselves with a dye, which makes them of a blue colour, and gives them a fearful appearance in battle. They also wear their hair long, and shave every part of their body, except the head and upper lip. Brothers commonly have their wives in common. They believe that after death the soul passes into other bodies. The whole nation is much addicted to religious observances." Such was Britain, when Cæsar visited it, B.C. 55. A few of the antiquities in the Museum belong to this Druidic period. The *second*, the Romano-British period, extends from

Of a much more modern date, yet taking us back at least through some centuries, are the *pieces of ancient wood*, from various English cathedrals, which may be seen on table B 2; *part of a will*, dated A.D. 1309, (on table B 1, case 1,) *an ancient bell*, also, (on table B 3,) which belonged to one of the monasteries of Hull; *a lock of the 16th century*, from Burton Agnes Hall, (B table 3,) *part of a walking stick which belonged to Queen Elizabeth*, (table B 1, case 3,) *ancient cannon balls*, probably of the time of Charles I, found in the neighbourhood of Hull, (table B 2,) and *a pair of cavalier's boots*, (opposite the end of table B 3, against the wall,) which were worn by Sir E. Varney, who bore the royal standard of Charles I., at the battle of Edgehill. Sir E. Varney was slain in this battle, and the standard seized. This was one of the first serious reverses of the Royalists. The battle was fought 23rd October, 1642. Close by these is some ancient armour of about the same period.

Various other objects of historic interest will be found in different parts of the Museum. Close on the right of the entrance is *some of the long corn, among which the English Guards stood upon the field of Waterloo*, June 18, 1815. So high was this corn in some parts of the field that our troops were almost hid in it. Before the evening of that ever-memorable day, it was trodden down and stained with blood along the whole line of our position. These ears are an interesting memorial of that day. So, too, is *the brass eagle*, (case Pil. VI,) taken from *the helmet of a cuirassier*, who fell on the same field. In the same case is *a piece of the rock against which General Wolfe leaned*, when mortally wounded at the taking of Quebec, Sept. 13, 1759. In the very moment of victory he received a bullet in the wrist, and another in the body. Roused from apparent insensibility by the shouts on the field, he asked, "Who runs?" and being told the French were beaten everywhere, he exclaimed, "Thank God, I die contented," and immediately expired in his 34th year. *The old chair*, (at the foot of Pilaster III,) is a memorial of another victory. This chair was made of the lower-deck of the Spanish first-rate S. Isadora, which was taken by Admiral Jervis, afterwards Lord St. Vincent, at the battle of Cape St. Vincent, Feb. 14, 1779. Close by this, (on table B 2,) are *some bar-shot fired by Paul Jones*, in his engagement with the Serapis frigate, Sept. 25, 1779; and *some Russian pistols* found in the Redan at Sebastopol, after the capture of that place in 1855. Other *Russian arms* from the field of Inkermann, a witness of that bloody day, Nov. 5, 1854, will be found in the central hall of the Museum. On the