

DORCHESTER, ^{July} 10th May, 1863.

MY DEAR SIR:—

I have in an advanced state of preparation, and shall soon publish, a novel work, on which I have been for some years engaged; viz., "An Explanatory and Pronouncing Dictionary of the Names of Noted Fictitious Persons and Places, including Celebrated Pseudonyms, Surnames bestowed upon Eminent Men, and such Analogous Popular Appellations as are often alluded to in Literature and Conversation." The plan of the book is tolerably well indicated by the title, but a more detailed statement of its scope and limits will be found on the next page. There is no work of the same or a similar kind, it is believed, *in any language*; and—while there is an advantage in bringing out a word-book that is entirely unique—the collection of the necessary materials is, for this reason, a task of very great difficulty, involving an amount of general and special reading, and an extent of research in certain directions, that might occupy the best part of a lifetime without insuring absolute completeness. I can only hope, in a first edition, to produce a book which shall be considerably better than none at all,—one which shall be minutely accurate as far as it goes, and go as far as the nature of the undertaking and the means at hand will allow,—trusting that its appearance will call out information and criticisms that may be availed of in subsequent editions.

May I request you, Sir, to assist me, in the first essay, so far as to note down, on the last page, such names as you may happen to think ^{of}, or may meet with in the course of your reading, and deem suitable for insertion, with ^{reference to} brief explanations, if you can readily give them; also, to make any queries, or to offer any suggestions, that may occur to you; and to return this circular to me within two months from the present time?

For special reasons connected with the publication of the work,—which is already arranged for,—it is desired that the fact of its preparation and probable early issue should not become generally known. You will, therefore, please to regard this communication as in some degree a confidential one.

I remain, my dear Sir,

With great respect, very truly yours,

WILLIAM A. WHEELER.

Ms. 2002

GENERAL SCHEME
OF
THE DICTIONARY OF FICTION, ETC.

I. The <i>Important Names</i> in Pure Fiction, including	1. Poetry 2. Prose Romance, &c. 3. Angelology (as, Gabriel, Ithuriel, Sandalphon, &c.). 4. Demonology, Faery Mythology, and Popular Superstitions (as, Mephistophiles, Cluricaune, Titania, Davy Jones, Mother Carey, Flying Dutchman, &c.). 5. Names of Pseudo-Saints, and other Imaginary Ecclesiastical Personages (as, St. Christopher, St. Tammany, Pope Joan, &c.).	{ a. Drama (as, Bobadil, Ague check, Paul Pry, &c.). b. Epic, Romantic, &c. (as, Pallinurus, Admetor, Alcina, &c.). c. Ballads (as, Gil Morrice, Sir Patrick Spens, &c.). a. Legends of the Middle Age (as, Wandering Jew, Prester John, Seven Sleepers, &c.). b. Parables, Allegories, Proverbs, &c. (as, Lazarus, Great-heart, Jack Robinson, &c.). c. Novels, Romances, Tales (as, Pantagruel, Sancho Panza, Uncle Toby, Meg Merrilies, Laputa, Pickwick, &c.).
II. Pseudonyms	{ (Only those in English, French, German, &c., which are of great importance or frequent occurrence; such as, Martin Mar prolate, Janius, Peter Pindar, Box, Dietrich Knickerbocker, Georges Sand, Novalls, &c.)	
III. Surnames and Sobriquets	1. Personal Appellations (as, Philosopher of Malmesbury, Man of Ross, Iron Mask, Bomba, Ettrick Shepherd, &c.). 2. Familiar Names of Parties, Sects, Laws, Battles, &c. (as, Young Italy, Della Crusicans, Lakers, Blue Laws, Battle of Spurs, Bloody Assizes, &c.). 3. Poetical or Popular Names of Countries, States, Cities, Oceans, Seas, &c. (as, Columbia, Coila, Edina, North Britain, Horse Latitudes, Old Dominion, Modern Athens, Spanish Main, &c.). 4. Personifications (as, Jack Frost, King Cotton, Yellow Jack, Don Perlane, &c.).	
IV. Miscellaneous Designations, information about which is not easily obtainable, including	{ 1. Some Ancient Geographical Names bestowed by the early Navigators and Discoverers (as, Acadia, New France, Estotiland, Vermilion Sea, &c.). 2. A few quasi-historical, or real, but obscure, Names of Persons, Places, and Things, often alluded to, and requiring explanation (as, Robin Hood, Darby and Joan, Mother Goose, Vinegar Bible, &c.).	

COMMENDATORY OPINIONS.

Specimens of the work have been submitted to a number of our leading literary men, who have formed a very favorable estimate of its plan and execution. Mr. Everett says, "I have examined the specimens of your proposed new work with much pleasure. The conception is a happy one, and the execution, as far as I can judge from the specimens, highly successful. I have no doubt the work will attain popularity both here and in England." Mr. Hawthorne writes, "I have found great pleasure and entertainment in looking over the specimens of your Dictionary, and I really have nothing to suggest towards the improvement of your plan. . . . I think it must prove a very curious and interesting work. In fact, I once had a similar idea in my own mind, — a sort of mythological dictionary embracing the principal characters in modern fiction. I hope you will indicate the right pronunciation of the names — a point on which I often find people at variance."

Other testimonials equally favorable have been received from Dr. Holmes, Prof. Longfellow, Mr. Emerson, Prof. Lowell, Mr. George Ticknor, Dr. Worcester, Mr. Wendell Phillips, &c.

SELECTIONS.

A few articles are subjoined for the purpose of illustrating the design of the work, and showing the general style and method of treatment.

Peterloo, Field of. A name popularly given in England to the scene of the somewhat famous attack by the yeoman cavalry upon the great reform meeting held in St. Peter's field at Manchester on the 16th of Aug., 1819, which was attended by 60,000 persons, of whom only 8 were killed, though many were wounded; — a word formed in burlesque imitation of *Waterloo*, and with a sarcastic allusion to the bloody and world-renowned battle on that spot in 1815, in which Wellington completely destroyed the gigantic power of Napoleon. See MANCHESTER MASSACRE.

Figaro rôl'. The hero of Beaumarchais' celebrated comedies, "Le Barbier de Séville," and "Le Mariage de Figaro." The latter play was brought out at Paris in 1784, and met with a success altogether unprecedented, being kept upon the stage for two successive years. The name has passed into common speech, and is used to designate an intriguer, a go-between; in general, any adroit and unscrupulous person. Mozart and Rossini have both made Figaro the hero of operas.

In *Figaro*, Beaumarchais has personified the tiers-état, superior in wit, industry, and activity to birth, rank, or fortune, in whose hand lies the political power; so that the idea of the piece is not only a satirical allegory upon the government and nobility of that epoch, but a living manifesto upon the inequality, just or unjust, of society. Koss.

King-maker, The. A title popularly conferred upon Richard Nevill, Earl of Warwick (d. 1471), who was chiefly instrumental in deposing King Henry VI. and raising the Duke of York to the throne as Edward IV., and who afterwards put Edward to flight, and restored the crown to Henry.

Jourdain (zhôr'â'dân'), **M.** The hero of Molière's comedy, "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme"; — represented as an elderly tradesman, who, having suddenly acquired immense riches, becomes desirous to emulate such as have been educated in the front ranks of society, in those accomplishments, whether mental or personal, which cannot be gracefully acquired after the early part of life is past.

Great Commoner, The. William Pitt (Earl of Chatham), a famous parliamentary orator, and for more than forty years (1735 to 1778) a leader in the House of Commons.

Corwall, Barry. An imperfectly anagrammatic *nom de plume* adopted by Bryan Waller Procter, a distinguished English poet of the present century.

Nÿph'e-lo-coe-cÿg'ia. [Cloud-cuckoo-town.] A town built in the clouds by the cuckoos, in the "Birds" of Aristophanes, a comedy intended as a satire on Athenian frivolity and credulity, on that building of castles in the air, and that dreaming expectation of a life of luxury and ease, in which the great mass of the Athenian people of that day indulged.

The name of this imaginary city occurs also in the "*Vere Historie*" of Lucian, a romance written probably in the age of M. Aurelius Antoninus, and composed with the design of ridiculing the authors of extraordinary tales.

What you do
For bread, will taste of common grain, not grapes,
Although you have a vineyard in Champagne,
Much less in *Nepheleocœgia*,
As mine was, peradventure. E. B. Browning.

Lÿc'i-das. A poetical name under which Milton, in a celebrated monody, bewails the death of his friend Edward King, fellow of Christ College, Cambridge, who was drowned on his passage from Chester to Ireland, Aug. 10th, 1637.

Pecksniff. A hypocrite, in Dickens's novel of "Martin Chuzzlewit," "so thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of falsehood, that he is moral even in drunkenness, and canting even in shame and discovery."

Eagle of Meaux (m5), The. A name popularly given to Bossuet (1627-1704), a French divine celebrated for his extraordinary powers of pulpit eloquence.

L'aveugle d'Albion lui doit son beau délire,
L'aigle de Meaux sa foudre, et le Tasse sa lyre. *Soumet.*

Flowery Kingdom, The. A translation of the words "*Hea Kwo*," a name often given to China by the inhabitants, who consider themselves to be the most polished and civilized of all nations, as the epithet *heia* intimates.

Scâ'pino, or Scappin' (skâ-pân'). [From Ital. *scappino*, a sock, or short stocking.] A mask on the Italian stage; — represented as a cunning and knavish servant of Gratiano, the loquacious and pedantic Bolognese doctor.

Bachmann's story, and in our house, in which Frederick
succeeded in the quest of Elphinstone's treasure to the end of
the world.

Brentford, The Two Kings of. Persons who have been known to hate each other heartily for a long time, and who afterwards profess to have become reconciled and to be warm friends, are often likened to the *Two Kings of Brentford*. These are two characters in "The Rehearsal," a celebrated farce, written by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, with the assistance of Butler, Sprat, and others, in order to correct the public taste by holding up the heroic or rhyming tragedies to ridicule. The two kings are represented as walking hand in hand, as dancing together, as singing in concert, and generally as living on terms of the greatest intimacy and affection. There seems to have been no particular reason for making them kings of Brentford rather than of any other place. Bayes says (Act I. sc. 1), "Look you, sirs, the chief hinge of this play . . . is, that I suppose two kings of the same place, as, for example, at Brentford; for I love to write familiarly." Colonel Henry Howard, son of Thomas, Earl of Berkshire, wrote a play called "The United Kingdoms," which began with a funeral, and had also two kings in it. It has been supposed that this was the occasion of Buckingham's setting up two kings in Brentford, though some are of opinion that he intended them for the two royal brothers, Charles II. and the Duke of York, afterwards James II. Others say that they represent Boabdellin and Abdalls, the contending kings of Granada. But it is altogether more probable that they were designed to burlesque the two contending kings of the same place introduced by Dryden — the Bayes of the piece — into so many of his serious plays.

Keystone State, The. The State of Pennsylvania; — so called from its having been the central State of the Union at the time of the formation of the Constitution.

Mi-cgw'ber, Mr. A prominent and celebrated character in Dickens's novel of "David Copperfield"; — noted for his long speeches, ambitious style, love of letter-writing, alternate elevation and depression of spirits, hearty appetite, reckless impudence, everlasting troubles, and constantly "waiting for something to turn up."

Who does not venerate the chief of that illustrious family, who, being stricken by misfortune, wisely and greatly turned his attention to "cosmology" — the accomplished, the Epicurean, the dirty, the delightful *Scroogery*. Huckle's.

E'lia. A pseudonym under which Charles Lamb wrote a series of celebrated essays, which were begun in the "London Magazine," and were afterwards collected and published by themselves.

He is also the true *Elio*, whose essays are extant in a little volume published a year or two since, and rather better known from that source *without a necessity* than from any thing he has done, or can hope to do, in his own.

Lamb, Autobiographical Sketch, 1827.

Amherst 22nd July 1863

I quite agree with thee
as to the ^{English} pronunciation of

Mama Müller. It wd
have been better on my
part to have called her
Miller.

I like exceedingly the
plan of thy Dictionary as
indicated in the preceding
page.

Thine truly

John Whittier

W a whole E