

SKETCHES OF CANTABS

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Sketches of Cantabs by John Smith

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JOHN SMITH

**SKETCHES
OF CANTABS**

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BY

JOHN SMITH, (OF SMITH-HALL)

GENT.

LONDON:

GEORGE EARLE, 67, CASTLE STREET EAST,

BERNERS STREET, OXFORD STREET

1849.

ADDRESS TO THE READER.

- It may seem almost ridiculous to prefix any observations to a work of so trifling a character as the one which now lies before you.
- There is a circumstance, however, connected with its production to which I cannot help calling your attention, as it is one which will disarm criticism, though it may not altogether secure your approval.

These sketches, then,—originally intended for private circulation only—were written at a time when the author was labouring under severe mental and bodily affliction. The first part, (down to the end of the “Married Cantab”) was composed whilst I was living in

the strictest seclusion on the Surrey side of the water; the remainder at Boulogne-sur-Mer, where I am still residing. It is needless to dwell upon the tyrannical Debtor and Creditor regulations of a country, which I am glad to hear from several French gentlemen of this city, is fast going to the dogs. It will be sufficient to beg the reader, in case he perceive any incongruity between the parts, or any glaring error,—grammatical or otherwise,—in the body of the work, to set it down as the result of that anxiety and restlessness which is naturally produced by a constant change of abode.

J. S.

257, *Rue Robert Macaire,*
Boulogne-sur-Mer.
Oct. 1st, 1849.

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THE READING CANTAB.

THOUGH I have known some individuals who have grown positively fat upon Pindar, and come up hale and hearty after a week in the country with Lucretius, still I think I am right in setting down the reading man as pale and thin. Study, though it may make a full man, is certainly a non-conductor of health and corpulence.

The reading man rises at six in the morning. His sleep has been feverish and distempered. The inhabitant of the next room has heard frightful and Aristophanic sounds coming through the partition in the dead of night. He has been involved in a terrible dance with all sorts of mathematical figures, and received a personal insult from a triangle. Examiners in caps and gowns have been

sitting upon his chest, and he wakes with a start from a personal contest with an ancient Athenian.

The first act of the reading man, after saying his prayers, will be to take down the book on which he is engaged, Aristophanes for example. He nods over the first page, and looking up at the window sees icicles hanging to it. At length he is roused by a joke which he makes out by the help of his lexicon, and rubs his hands, and feels half inclined to think it amusing. Engaged in this occupation he hears the ringing of the chapel bell, and huddling on his surplice walks across the court at the rate of five miles an hour. When he rises from his knees he is ashamed to find that he has been repeating the same line from the *Ranzæ* over and over again, and catches himself in the middle of the Litany dreaming of Porson.

Coming out of the ante-chapel he falls in with another reading friend, whom he taps on the shoulder, asking him how he gets on with his conics. Finally he invites him to breakfast, where jam is produced to an unlimited extent. (For I lay it down as a general rule that all hard-reading