

yellow hair, which hung about his neck like the mane of a lion. Strongly suggestive of an eagle's beak was the curved nose of the unknown, and there was a restless energy in his blue, Scandinavian-looking eyes, which seemed to be familiar with no repose.

"Who can this strange man be?" we inwardly queried; and the response which we at once returned was, that he could be none other than the chief of the North British Thugs, revealing to Justice the bloody secrets of his tribe!

Far-fetched as this hypothesis may appear, it at once assumed all the force of an established fact, and the more we observed the more we were confirmed in our belief. Tho' we could not hear the words which the yellow-haired one poured forth, his pantomime was indicative that something wild and savage furnished the themes of discourse, and ever and anon he grasped the Advocate's silken robe with his long-nailed fingers, as if he had been describing the process of manufacturing pabulum for anatomical demonstrations!

After a season, however, the soundness of our faith sustained a severe shock. At the close of a long sentence, the supposed Thug stopped short, administered a far from gentle clap to the shoulder of the legal magnate, and broke forth into a merry laugh, which made the oaken roof of the Parliament House ring again. What seemed stranger than all, the minister of justice took this *outré* familiarity in non-irate part, and heartily joined in the cachination.

"In the name of wonder," we exclaimed to our guide, "what is the meaning of all this? Does the Lord Advocate thus publicly consort with murderers, and, in the glare of noon-day, greet them with a 'hail, fellows, well met?'"

"What puts murders in your head, silly gawk that you are?" was the rejoinder. "No homicide did that genius ever perpetrate, except, perchance, extinguishing some scores of Cockney poetasters! That's the Professor, man! John Wilson, ye ken! The immortal Kit North of *Blackwood's Magazine*!"

Such was our primary vision of one of the most gigantic of the literary Anaks of the current century. The incident may be

"written down" as trivial, and perchance some may blame us for thus recording the day-dreams of boyhood. In exculpation, we must plead the extreme vividness of the impression then and there engraven upon the tablets of our memory. Perchance we will be permitted to add, that the narrative of that impression may give to many, a more definite idea of the subject of this paper, than could be communicated by an ambitious and elaborated portraiture.

Paisley was the natal place of John Wilson. He there enunciated the wailing prologue to life's chequered drama on the 19th of May, 1785.

Touching his father, who died whilst our author was still a boy, we may simply state that he was a manufacturer in the above-mentioned town, and that by shrewdness and energetic habits he managed to realize a considerable fortune. His mother (after whom he took in many respects) was a woman of more than ordinary mark. Possessing natural abilities of no mean calibre, she had cultivated them by extensive and somewhat out-of-the-way reading, and was in the habit of expressing herself after a fashion which in these latter days would be termed "strong-minded." Let it not, however, be inferred that she had the slightest tincture of the abominable and unfeminine Stone heresy. In everything that becomes a woman she was all that a lady and a matron ought to be.

Mrs. Wilson belonged to a family which produced, at least one member whose name is familiar in the Republic of Letters. We have reference to Robert Sym, a writer to the Signet, or Solicitor, John's maternal uncle, and the Timothy Tickler of Blackwood. He contributed several able papers to *Maga*, chiefly relating to questions bearing upon politics, and the legal profession, and, generally speaking, answered to the pictures given of him in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. More than once we had the good fortune to meet with the redoubtable Timothy, and can testify that nothing could be more characteristic than the following off-hand sketch of the senior, which his nephew puts in the mouth of James Hogg, at the table of Ambrose's *Snuggery*. North, we may premise, has just