

if you should happen to read it you forget it at once. But when you are specially drawn towards that point you linger upon it and around it and you impress it upon your memory. And no means in the world so useful as coins to attain this very desirable end.

When a person has studied the past by means of those little pieces of metal, he is enabled to build himself a species of world, that exists in his own mind and of which he alone is lord, and to which he can fly for repose and safety when the things of the real world are going amiss and of which he can say, "I am monarch of all I survey."

The history of the world appears to such a person as a vast desert, here and there a beautiful spot, an oasis with its palms and its fountains, here and there a stately monument looming up from the midst of surrounding solitude—more magnificent the greater the desolation at its feet—a pyramid, a sphinx, a kirtchez tomb. Such a person can see and notice and admire the mighty minds that rise and burn and illumine—even as beacon lights before the eyes. Such a person can find a pleasure in comparing one people with another, in contrasting one epoch with the next, in ranking in their proper places those who soared above the littleness of each century and that appear above its hidden splendor, as the remains of the stately pillars, and gorgeous fanes which issue forth from the lava-covered ruins of Pompeii, the sole relics of despoiled magnificence for the traveller's eye to contemplate.

A coin is an index, a guide, a light, a real teacher, a powerful auxiliary to the study of the past. Coins are not to be laughed at, the study of coins is not to be despised, those who took the trouble of collecting and of studying coins are to be admired and thanked by all who have an interest in the past. We cannot live altogether in the present. As for the future we cannot touch upon it—all is uncertain in that direction. Then there remains merely the past into which the mind can wander for relief. The past is certain; it is there and cannot be changed.

We have now seen, in an imperfect and rapid manner, how connected are those links which bind us to the past. The main link, the principal chain

formed by documents; the next built up by monumental piles; the third composed of coins. There yet remains a fourth link, more powerful even than any of those heretofore mentioned. This fourth branch consists of the *ballads* and *songs* of the different countries. There is no country, neither was there ever a country that had not its music, its songs, its ballads, its poems, its bards and its poets. From the minstrel king of Israel to the hoary bards of the Celts, in every age and every land the bard was the historian as well as the poet of the people.

In our next we will refer to the music and songs of the peoples—but before concluding this essay we would beg of all those who desire to study the past to bear in mind that their truest friends and aids are the *coins of the world*.

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WILLIAM HALES HINGSTON,  
M.D., L.R.C.S.E., D.C.L.

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*Pata nascitur* is an old and trite quotation, one that has stood the test of time, yet what has been said of the poet may with equal force be applied to any department of intellectual life. To be a great poet one needs be born with the fire of poetic genius, but to rise to eminence in any profession to soar above common place mediocrity, to achieve those flights that make the name of the individual identical with the part he enacts, nature must have bestowed the special gift, and as in the case of the gentleman whose biography we are about to give, labor that conquers everything untiring, unremitting study must be the handmaids of talents or even genius, for every art and science is a jealous mistress. Our youthful readers who, we trust, are following these brief sketches in the hope of emulating the noble characters we so imperfectly depict, will have observed that for so far we have chosen representatives in each department of life, and that in all, the Irish Canadian is no degenerate son of the good old stock, whether in the walks of statesmanship, as the eloquent pleader at the bar of justice, or as the successful merchant and philanthropist. In the present issue we offer them a sketch from the pen of the