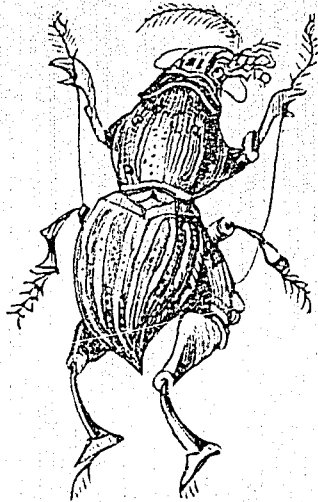


## OUR NATURAL HISTORY SERIES.

No. 2.

## THE SCARABÆUS.



The Scarabæus is a relative of the *Melolontha Vulgaris*, just arrived from Egypt, where it was regarded with veneration as the emblem of fertility. In the above cut, he is represented in the attitude in which he appears to most advantage, when performing the favourite operatic dance of the Pasha of Egypt.

TO MASTER JAMES LOVEBOOK,

SWISHTAIL ACADEMY.

MY DEAR JAMES,

As it is always right for you to study the ceremonials observed in the more advanced seats of learning, I have sent you a report of the proceedings of the Builders' Feast of McMutchkin's College.

McMutchkin's College has produced many learned men, each of whom has a number of letters after his name. This is a sure indication of the deep draughts of learning they have imbibed. It is true that the chief employment of the young gentlemen, particularly those who attend the medical course, is to indulge freely in the use of their lungs, and to sing choruses composed for them by the bard of the University, who, being only a collateral descendant of the Builder, is styled the Half Mutchkin. He is full of spirit, and his works are of a very original cast. Osteology is a favourite study. Not being well acquainted myself with the subject, (as how can a woman be), I made enquiry of a young gentleman, and was informed that it meant the investigation into the nature of bones; that they must be broiled, and that the anatomical examination of a Welsh rabbit usually accompanied it. How this should be I do not profess to understand; but I have learned, accidentally, that so great is the elation of spirits produced by these studies that the students burst forth into a flood of song, which so carries them away that they are sometimes most unjustly accused of being under the influence of strong drink, and have not unfrequently been arrested and fined. I am sure this is a malicious report. One of the students whom I met one morning, almost speechless from his intense and close attention to study throughout the previous night, whose eyes were bloodshot from the glare of the midnight oil, his lips almost powerless, and his tongue nearly paralysed from reading the dead languages, assured me that they were much maligned. His hand shook so that he said nothing would steady him but a visit to a dear friend of his—whom he familiarly designated as Old Tom. Poor fellow! he was much affected at the slanders to which they had been subjected. I advised him to take more muscular exercise, but he assured me that he and some of the others had entered for the prize in the Gymnasium, but that a ton of iron,—he said, playfully, poor fellow, an iron ton,—had fallen on him and hurt him severely.

The young gentlemen who study the laws of the country, are not, as might be expected, so simple in their tastes. They all wear white neck-cloths, and have an air of profound wisdom that is highly delightful.

To return to our sheep, as the French say. On the night of the Builder's Feast, the Halls of Learning were brilliantly lighted up. It would require a Homer to describe the dungeons of knowledge who walked about like common mortals; the lovely and "sweet girl graduates" who were adepts in the delightful task of bending the bean; the learned ladies, in long trains, low-necked dresses and spectacles; the ingenuous youth with hair split down the centre, like calves' heads dressed; the beautiful but illegible inscriptions on the walls; the eloquent speeches; the crash of music, and the truly noble poetry. At last, to the tune of "Jolly Dogs,"—the University Anthem,—entered His Serene Excellency,

surrounded by a blaze of learning. He was addressed in one of the most eloquent speeches I ever heard, containing only two sentences; but, oh! James, so full of beauty that, as I saw the head ruler, Simon Scarletroad, Esq., (I could not hear him) address His Serenity, I could almost have expired with joy and delight. How sweet it was to see him go through the motions, and to know that at that moment he was rolling the long drawn periods like a sweet morsel under his tongue. I was disappointed in His Serenity. We could hear every word he said. To my mind it showed (if such a thing dare be said) a touch of vulgarity; for here I must pause to note, as that truly sweet paper the *Willis* did, that he read distinctly showing that his education was not neglected! What have men of high position to do with education? The Ode composed for the occasion was so beautiful that I must transcribe it for you, my dear James. It was a delightful composition, full of true classical feeling, and must have delighted Rev. Mr. Blunderbore, the Cornish professor. The Ode was modelled on the "Tune the Old Cow died of."

## UNIVERSITY ODE.

Oh! here we go up, up, boys,  
And here we go down, down;  
We take a turn about the streets,  
And rouse up all the town.  
Justinian's works we read, boys,  
And Galen's jargon spell;  
For we're the boys for knockers,  
And eke the area bell.

So welcome to your Highness,—  
Stand nobly to your letters;  
We'll all rejoice to see your Grace,  
Serenity, etceterers.

*Oh tempora mutantur*  
Pray take your change of that;  
*Litera Scripta manet*,  
So please pass round the hat.  
Our M.A.'s, B.C. I. s. Oh!  
In white ties and kid gloves,  
Are by "sweet girl graduates,"  
Vowed to to be perfect loves.

So welcome, royal welcome,  
A hornpipe dance in fetters;  
We're glad to know your Royal Grace,  
P. C. O. Brigade etceterers.

When the applause with which this truly classical production was received (especially the Latin) had subsided, so had His Serenity, who appeared overcome, and was led almost fainting to the Museum, there to examine one of those little lively insects which Sir Joseph Banks asserted, in very strong language, were not lobsters. There were also exhibited to His Serenity some fine specimens of the *Scabies* (very taking); a fossil *Asphyxia*; a magnificent *Elephantiasis* from the lower red sand-stone; and a very rare specimen of the *Gastro enteritis* from the post pliocene strata. The *Chorea*, taken from the Taglionic formation, still bloomed as if enjoying a perpetual spring; and *Meningitis*, frequently to be met with in the vicinity of the College. These were all examined with great interest; but a neat operation in anatomy, when the body of a fowl was dissected in the supper room, was watched with much curiosity, the senses of touch and taste being brought to bear to test the result. His Serenity shortly after retired, and so pleased was he with his visit that he immediately entered on the chemical investigation of the principles of nicotine, making use of the blow-pipe, and inhaling the fumes with great relish, on purely scientific grounds. The fair votaries of science also left soon after, but the arduous duties of the Committee prevented them from returning to their homes till an early hour in the morning; and some of those ill-natured persons who walk the streets all night—usually called policemen,—threatened to lock up in the dreadful, dreadful cells, some of the ardent followers of Galen whom they accused of being also ardent lovers of ardent spirits. Oh! my dear James, such is the wickedness of man. These virtuous and good young men, with white ties and neatly parted hair, to be so accused! Never, my dear James, let such awful thoughts enter your mind. It is true they did mistake other houses for their own, and ring the door-bells. But it is ever thus in the playful hours of youthful genius.

Ever, my dear James,  
Your affectionate Aunt,

SAMUELINA JOHNSON SCRAGGS.

P.S.—Desire Dr. Ableboddy, with my kind love, to have your foot-bath ordered for you at least three times a week, and pray, pray, put a handful of salt into it.

How was it the Egyptians dyed? By getting into the Red Sea.