

will be disappointed, for I have not the least notion how to set about writing a Review, and one from me would only serve as a foil to the brilliant productions of those gentlemen you have mentioned; besides, I should tremble in submitting my crude observations to the scrutinizing eye of such a critic as Mr. Gifford." "He will be overjoyed to have you, and will tell you that he who could write 'Travels in Southern Africa,' and the 'British Embassy to the Emperor of China,' can never find himself at a loss to review the work of any writer, provided he understands the subject." "There is one thing," he added, "I must mention to you. It is intended, and, indeed, the editor has been instructed, that every writer in the Review, without any distinction, is to be paid for whatever he produces; that is a point about which no difficulty is to be made. I can assure you I myself have received pay for a short article I have already contributed, merely to set the example. Gifford will tell you the rest to-morrow."

We met, and Gifford told me all that Mr. Canning had said, and a great deal more, and would not listen to any objection I offered on the score of novelty and my inexperience of reviewing; he repeated Canning's observation that the writer of books can have no difficulty in reviewing books, which I, on the contrary, urged to be a *non sequitur*. He begged me to name any book to make choice of, which he would take care to send to me. Finding there was no getting rid of Gifford, I mentioned one I had just been reading, De Guignes' 'History of the Dutch Embassy to China,' which immediately followed ours. "Bravo! by all

means, let me have De Guignes and the Dutch Ambassador to the Court of the Emperor of China: it is a subject of all others I should wish for; it is one at your fingers' ends, and one that few know anything about; pray, let me have it for the forthcoming number—three only have yet appeared, and I am gasping for something new; pray, my good fellow, do indulge me.”

At this moment when we were just about (as a German lady would say) “to swear eternal friendship,” dinner was announced; and this afforded at least the opportunity of thinking about sealing the intended vow, which, after a glass of wine, was supposed to be concluded. I believe our friendship, thus begun, was most sincere on both sides, and closed only with the death of Gifford, on the last day of December, 1826.

I had a visit from him the next morning after the aforesaid meeting at Gloucester Lodge, and told him that ‘Voyage à Peking’ was already laid down on the stocks, and should be ready for launching when required. He was very thankful, and professed his obligations in warm terms. “But,” he added, “the *Quarterly* has a most voracious maw, and requires to have her food very regularly served up at fixed times; would you, now, think me unreasonable if I were to suggest a second article for No. 5?” I laughed, and said, “It would be as well, perhaps, for both of us to wait the reception of the one just commenced.” However, he subsequently carried his point, and I not only gave him ‘Voyages d’Entrecasteaux’ for No. 5, but *Ta-tsing-leu-lee*, or ‘The Laws of China;’* and I may

* Translated by Sir George Staunton.

add, once for all, that what with Gifford's eager and urgent demands, and the exercise becoming habitual and not disagreeable, I did not cease writing for the 'Quarterly Review' till I had supplied no less, rather more, than 190 articles, as appears from the numbers ticked by me, as they came out, in the blank pages of vol. I.

Nor was I spared applications from Mr. Murray. The following is a sample:—

"Albemarle Street, January 10, 1840.

"My dear Sir,

"I enclose a note just delivered to me by Mr. Lockhart in reply to yours of yesterday, which I thought best to send to him.

"I assure you that the prospect of the continuation of your valuable contributions to the 'Quarterly Review' affords me the greatest satisfaction. I have always considered you as one of the pillars of the Review, and it is not the same thing in my mind when your hand is not in it.

"Your last paper on *Life Assurance* was one of the most popular interest and practical value that has ever appeared, and I am now reading again with renewed gratification your paper on '*Free Trade with China*,' in which, from Lord Napier's obstinacy down to the present crisis, everything was completely seen and foretold.

"Be so good as to point out any pamphlets on the opium trade or modern works on China that you would like to have sent to you.

"I remain, &c.,

"JOHN MURRAY."

Mr. Lockhart writes—

“ Dear Murray,

“ I am sincerely gratified with the prospect of having Sir J. B. back into our corps, to which few, if any, have done better service ; and I agree with you that his last paper (on ‘ Life Assurance ’) was one of his very best.

“ I wish you would, however, ascertain what in general is the view he would wish to take of the Opium question, for I have not in my recollection that this particular subject was ever handled by him in the ‘ Quarterly Review.’ ”

The following letter came to me just at this time, in corroboration of Lockhart’s and Murray’s opinion :—

“ National Endowment and Assurance Society,
Arthur Street West, London Bridge.

“ Sir,

“ In common with every respectable person interested, either through pecuniary or moral considerations, in the prosperous popularity of life assurance, I feel obliged by your effective manner of exhibiting some features of that important subject in the new number of the ‘ Quarterly Review.’

“ Allow me to request your acceptance of a Pocket Diary first issued about three months ago for 1839, and now forthcoming for 1840.

“ The last sentence of your note at page 300 describes, with curious exactness, one of the provisions in the deed of this society.

“ I am glad to hear that a general law is in contemplation to regulate all Life-offices. Although probably the youngest actuary in England, I am old enough even in official existence to see that the ‘ master’s eye ’ of Parliament is required in some of the dark and dirty holes.

“ It would afford me a particular satisfaction to be acquainted with you, unless you are resolved to stand ‘nominis umbra.’

“ Yours very respectfully,

“ A. A. FRY.

“ 28th October, 1839.”

One evening, on returning home, I found a parcel from Mr. Murray, enclosing eleven thick octavo volumes, neatly bound in red Russia, and containing the whole of the articles I had supplied up to that time. The number as above stated must appear enormously large, and yet they were written off hand as an amusement, many of them in the busiest periods of official duties; but my evenings were generally spent at home with my family, and writing was to me a relaxation, after dinner, and a relief from the dry labours of the day. I may add that every article written for the *Quarterly* was sure to be followed by a long letter from Gifford, pointing out what would be a desirable subject for the next number, or asking me to name one. Mr. Murray also frequently suggested a new work for my consideration, and certainly showed himself quite satisfied with my performances. In all my critical labours I avoided touching upon politics as much as possible, almost, I might say, altogether. Mine were, for the most part, confined to the examination of voyages and travels; discoveries and descriptions of countries and their inhabitants little or not at all known; discoveries in natural history and the arts; in naval improvements and other professional subjects; many as regards China, an inexhaustible subject; Africa and America the same; the British fisheries; ship-building and naval timber, dry-rot doctors, and quackery in general; inventions,

history of; steam-engine, canals, and railroads. But the great mass of articles embrace the geography and history of the various nations of the globe, and the present condition of their inhabitants; and I believe there are very few that have not been treated of, scarcely a corner of the world unscrutinised.

I had a letter from Murray to say that, in consequence of a certain article, the sale of the Review had very much increased. This article was published in the year 1817-18, the subject of which was an inquiry into the nature and extent of the Polar Sea, and the proofs of a communication through it between the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Except the mere passage through Behring's Strait by the ships of Captain Cook, and a view of the Polar Sea from the shore of America by Hearne and Mackenzie, no entrance whatever had been made or known from the waters of the Atlantic into the Polar Sea; and when it was described and delineated as a large and nearly circular basin, it was treated in another Review as a joke. That article, however,* and the extraordinary facts therein stated, not only produced Murray's avowal of its successful results, but gave rise also to the recent Arctic voyages, by sea and land, that have added so largely to the geography and scientific discoveries, made in those regions by a class of officers whose names will ever be remembered in the annals of the British Navy. I had the curiosity to ask Mr. Murray what was really the increase of the number of copies sold in consequence, as he said, of the above-mentioned article; and it appears, by the register which is kept, that the sale of each of the

* Quarterly Review, Vol. XVIII., No. XXXV.

numbers 33, 34, and 35 was 12,000; No. 36 (next after that containing the *article* in question) was 13,000, and this number was continued to No. 41, when it fell back to something less than it had been: in consequence, it was pretty well ascertained, of two or three new reviews having started up. An old note of Gifford to me has led to some additional information:—

“ Ryde, 19th ———, 1812.

“ I am glad to see you so warm on the good that we *might* do, because I hope that you will one day impress your sentiments on those, who ought to be ashamed of looking to you and me for them. You ask whether it is indolence or indifference? I answer that it is both, with the addition of the most scandalous ignorance. I was once in the confidence of the Government, and the impression will never be worn out of my mind, of the alarm which took possession of Pitt when he discovered that he had nearly lost the world, by his contempt of the press. A few weeks more, and no human means could have saved us. Then, to be sure, all was expense and activity, and something was effected. His example and his terrors are lost upon us. Yet we have advantages which Mr. Pitt had not. He had the *vehicles* of information to create; they are now at hand. He would have thought twenty thousand pounds a slight sacrifice to secure such a medium of conveying the most interesting political views, as the ‘Quarterly’ offers to Government without any expense whatever. We are read by at least 50,000 people, of that class whose opinions it is most important to render favourable, and whose judgments it is most expedient to set right. Our sale is at least 6000, and I know of no

pamphlet that would sell 100 ; besides, pamphlets are thrown aside, Reviews are permanent, and the variety of their contents attracts those, who never dream of opening a pamphlet. I could say much more on this head, but *cui bono?* You know it all, and whom besides could I convince? Not one of the present Government.

“In what you say of the secrecy which is affected to the friends of Government, while everything that can do mischief steals into the world through the channels of hostile papers, it is a folly that wants a name. If I looked only to respect and advantage from the Government, I would write against them. But *basta!*”

“Ever, my kind friend,

“Affectionately yours,

“W. GIFFORD.”

But the grumbling against the Government, a malady so natural to Gifford, may pass—6000 copies in the *third* year might satisfy any reasonable man ; and the more so as, in five years after this, the number had swollen to 12,000 copies, or doubled itself. The Government, too, was composed of his own friends—Lords Liverpool, Sidmouth, Londonderry, Bathurst, and Melville—but, as Gifford said, the ‘Quarterly’ has a *voracious maw*.

Mr. Gifford as an author is well known, and as an accomplished scholar, a poet, and a wit, wielding sometimes a severe and sarcastic pen, especially against writings of which he disapproved, and more particularly against those whose tendency was to irreligion, immorality, and disloyalty. His general knowledge of men

and books was extensive, his talents varied, his judgment correct, his principles steady and sound; his strong national feeling and policy are apparent throughout his management of the popular Review for fifteen or sixteen years. He was a pleasant companion, feeble as he was in health, and dreadfully afflicted with asthma, which kept him mostly at home, where I was one of his constant visitors; yet, exhausted as he frequently appeared to be, he never passed an occasion of telling one of his droll stories, of which he had an inexhaustible supply, and told them in his own peculiar manner.

Lord Byron was anxious for and obtained his friendship. Gifford had a high opinion of his talent and his power of versification, and to him the poet was but too happy to submit his productions; many of which I had occasion to see after they had been chastened and had received that gentle castigation, without which some of them would have gone forth into the world in a much more exceptionable shape than that in which we see them.

My eldest son George, having translated some of the 'Odes' of Anacreon, sent his production to Gifford for his opinion or correction, doubting how far he should pursue the task; regarding which Gifford, in a letter to me on a different subject, says—

“Tell George not to be discouraged at the pencil-marks. Let him try and try again, and he will catch something of Anacreon's manner, which is that of picturesque alacrity; unless when the thoughts of dying come over him, and then he is simply pathetic. There must be no languid epithets; but every word should be made, as it were, to tell. I never read Moore's translation; but he, I should think, offends on the side of

simplicity. Anacreon has no prettinesses; Cowley has done some of his Odes well; and old Ben has imitated him with taste and spirit."

Mr. Pitt, Lord Liverpool, Lord Wellesley, and Mr. Canning in particular, commenced a friendship with Gifford, from the days of the Anti-Jacobin, which he conducted, and the last-mentioned gentleman continued a steady friend until his death. Sir Robert Peel, I know, had also a high opinion of Gifford's talents, but I believe he never wrote a complete article in the 'Quarterly.' At a former period, however, in the year 1815, there appeared some clever papers in the 'Courier,' which were reprinted in a small volume under the name of the 'Whig Guide;' exceedingly droll, and full of point and humour, fit to be placed by the side of the 'Rolliad.' The three known contributors were Palmerston, Peel, and Croker—then all young men. One of the articles, said to be written by Mr. Peel, called 'The Trial of Brougham for calling Mr. Ponsonby an Old Woman,' is exceedingly humorous. Croker has five or six; one 'On the Choice of a Leader,' full of biting sarcasm; and a series of English melodies equally good. The following, called the *Black Broom*, is marked P. in ink; but whether the production of Palmerston or Peel I know not:—

" *On a Motion made by Brougham relative to Excise Penalties.*

" The Broom came capering doon to the Hoose,
 Wi' a *mission* aboot an Exciseman;
 It sims the Exchequer can loosen a noose
 Witch the law too cruelly ties, mon;
 So Looshington cried, 'Ye've foond a mare's nest,
 We weesh ye much joy of the prize, mon;
 Tes a vera new grievance, but ane o' the best,
 Whan the Trashury snubs an Exciseman.'"

When Sir Robert Peel had advanced to the highest offices of state, his mind was necessarily too much employed to indulge a taste for light and trifling literature; but no man lent himself more readily to encourage and reward the labours of art and of science, or to afford speedy consolation and relief to the afflicted. Witness the prompt and unsolicited manner in which he fled to the relief of the poor widow and family of the unhappy and distracted Haydon. In several instances I had occasion to experience the ready manner in which his humanity responded to cases of distress. I will mention one. It was represented to me that a couple of octogenarians, the Chevalier and Madame de la Garde—the former late Chamberlain to the King Stanislaus, and the latter the daughter of the Governor of Kamschatka, who afforded such relief to the squadron of Captain Cook that, without it, he could not have prosecuted his voyage—a fact authenticated by Cook's own narrative—that this aged couple were living in a state of deep distress, in a miserable lodging in the neighbourhood of Clare Market.

To ascertain their situation I sent an intelligent gentleman from the Admiralty: he saw the lady, who was plainly but neatly dressed; the apartment humble but clean; and with evident reluctance she told her tale of distress. I laid the case before Lord Haddington, and, moreover, Captain Cook's own story, and said, I felt sure if he would bring the tale of these poor old people's distress before Sir Robert Peel, he would afford them instant relief. His Lordship did so: and, in return, received a note, of which the following is a copy:—

“Whitehall, March 18th.

“My dear Haddington,

“I will with pleasure make a grant from the Royal Bounty for the relief of Monsieur and Madame de la Garde. I have no power to grant a *pension*, but I will place one hundred pounds in the hands of Sir John Barrow, to be advanced by him, from time to time, during the life of the parties, in such mode as he may deem most conducive to their welfare.

“Ever faithfully yours,

“ROBERT PEEL.”

“My Secretary will call on Barrow, and settle the details.”

I obtained an application to Baron Brunow, the Russian Ambassador, and received from him one hundred pounds on the account of his Imperial Majesty. I placed the money in the hands of Messrs. Coutts and Co.; requesting it to be given out in such small sums as M. de la Garde might require. Madame died within the twelvemonth, and the husband the following year, just about the time that the money was drawn out.

Nor was Sir Robert Peel less mindful in granting the few pensions, of which a Minister has the disposal, to proper objects. From personal knowledge I am acquainted with three or four, granted purely on account of scientific pursuits conducted with humble means.

I had frequently heard Gifford speak of the kindness he had received from Dr. Ireland, the Dean of Westminster; and a bishopric becoming vacant when Mr. Canning was Prime Minister, he, the Minister, sent one day to say he wished to see me, which was to tell me

what had fallen to his gift; and that he was desirous of offering it to Dr. Ireland, as the friend of Gifford; but believing the Doctor to be rather an odd man, and not wishing to receive a refusal, he asked me if I would sound Gifford as to what he thought the result would be, if such an offer were made. On putting the question to Gifford, he said at once he was quite sure his friend was so well contented with Westminster, and the addition of the good living of Islip, in Oxfordshire, to which he was much attached, that he would at once say—and say honestly—*Nolo episcopari*. This opinion he ascertained to be correct.

In the latter part of Gifford's life, and two or three years before his death, the University of Oxford made an offer to confer a degree on him; but he declined it, observing that, "Twenty years ago it might have been gratifying, but *now* it would only be written on my coffin." He died on the 31st December, 1826, and was buried in Westminster Abbey: a posthumous honour obtained by his friend the Dean. The bulk of his property, acquired mostly by his literary labours and by the savings of a small office held from Government, he left to the family of the Cookesleys,* who had been kind to him in his youth, when he most required acts of kindness. He kept up his intimacy with them to the last. I have frequently met with the young ladies of the family at his house.

I was requested by some friends of the deceased to wait on Dr. Ireland, for the purpose of asking if he had any objection to give up the letters and papers which were understood to be in his possession, they

* See his Autobiographical Memoir prefixed to his translation of Juvenal.

considering it very desirable that a memoir of his life and writings should be drawn up for publication; but the Dean refused positively at once; alleging that, as his executor, he was desired, by his will, to destroy all confidential letters and papers, especially those relating to the 'Quarterly Review:' and here, of course, the matter ended.

From the very able and judicious manner in which Mr. Gifford had brought out the works of the old dramatists, Ben Jonson, Massinger, and Ford, all of which are prefaced with a variety of information and erudite remarks, it would have been a valuable acquisition to dramatic literature, if he could have been prevailed upon to bring out a new edition of Shakspeare's dramas, accompanied with one of those able disquisitions, which we find in those he has published. For instance: in his advertisement to the second edition of Massinger, he exposes the follies and the absurdities of the critics (the Edinburgh Reviewers among the rest) for venturing each their emendations of Massinger, and finding fault with Gifford's corrections, more especially of the metrical construction of many of the lines. Indeed, he told me when I was urgently pressing him to give to the world an edition of Shakspeare, that the sense of many of the obscure poetical passages in our great poet, which have been productive of such masses of critical acumen (together with critical nonsense), could only be rightly decided by a rigid observance of the regularity of the metre; for if that was defective, we might be quite sure that some wrong word or arrangement of words had crept in, or been left out by the copyers; for that Shakspeare was par-

ticularly correct in the euphony of the verse as well as in the metre.

But Gifford gave me to understand, and I was convinced, that it was too late for him to commence such an undertaking—that there was still room enough to sweep away those heaps of rubbish by which conceit or ignorance, or both, had disfigured some of the brightest effusions of this muse of genius and child of nature; but that his state of health, with old age and disease, were ill adapted for his attempting to engage in such a task; confessing, however, that he should have entered upon it in early life *con amore*. It is to be feared, that his place is not likely to be ever filled in the field of critical literature, or that we shall ever receive an edition of Shakspeare, worthy of the incomparable author.

If, in conclusion, I shall here enumerate the several works I have brought before the public, and which may probably be classed as literary productions, I beg to say that I give them only as a statement of facts, and that I disclaim all pretensions to the literary character. Such as they are, they were undertaken chiefly as amusement, to fill up vacant time; and, in a majority of cases, the subjects have been suggested or desired. At the same time I may admit that they have been more productive of profit than I could have expected, or than they deserved. They may thus be summed up:—

	No. Art.
Articles in the 'Quarterly Review,' on almost every subject (excepting political), mostly asked for by Mr. Gifford	195
In the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' requested by Professor Napier, 10 or 12, say	12

	No. Art.
By the same, particularly desired by my friend Professor Napier, a 'Review of the Life of Admiral Lord St. Vincent,' in the 'Edinburgh Review'	1
	Vols.
The 'Life of Lord Macartney,' in 2 vols. quarto	2
'Travels in South Africa,' 2 vols. quarto	2
'Travels in China,' 1 vol. quarto	1
'Voyage to Cochin-China,' 1 vol. quarto	1
The 'Life of Lord Anson,' 1 vol. octavo	1
The 'Life of Lord Howe,' 1 vol. octavo	1
In the 'Family Library,' the 'Life of Peter the Great,' and the 'Mutiny of the Bounty'	2
'Chronological History of Arctic Voyages,' 1 vol. octavo	1
'Voyages of Discovery and Research within the Arctic Regions,' 1 vol. octavo	1

Of these I may, perhaps, venture to repeat from Martial :—

"Sunt bona, sunt quædam mediocria, sunt mala plura."

THE END.

Albemarle Street,

April 1, 1847.

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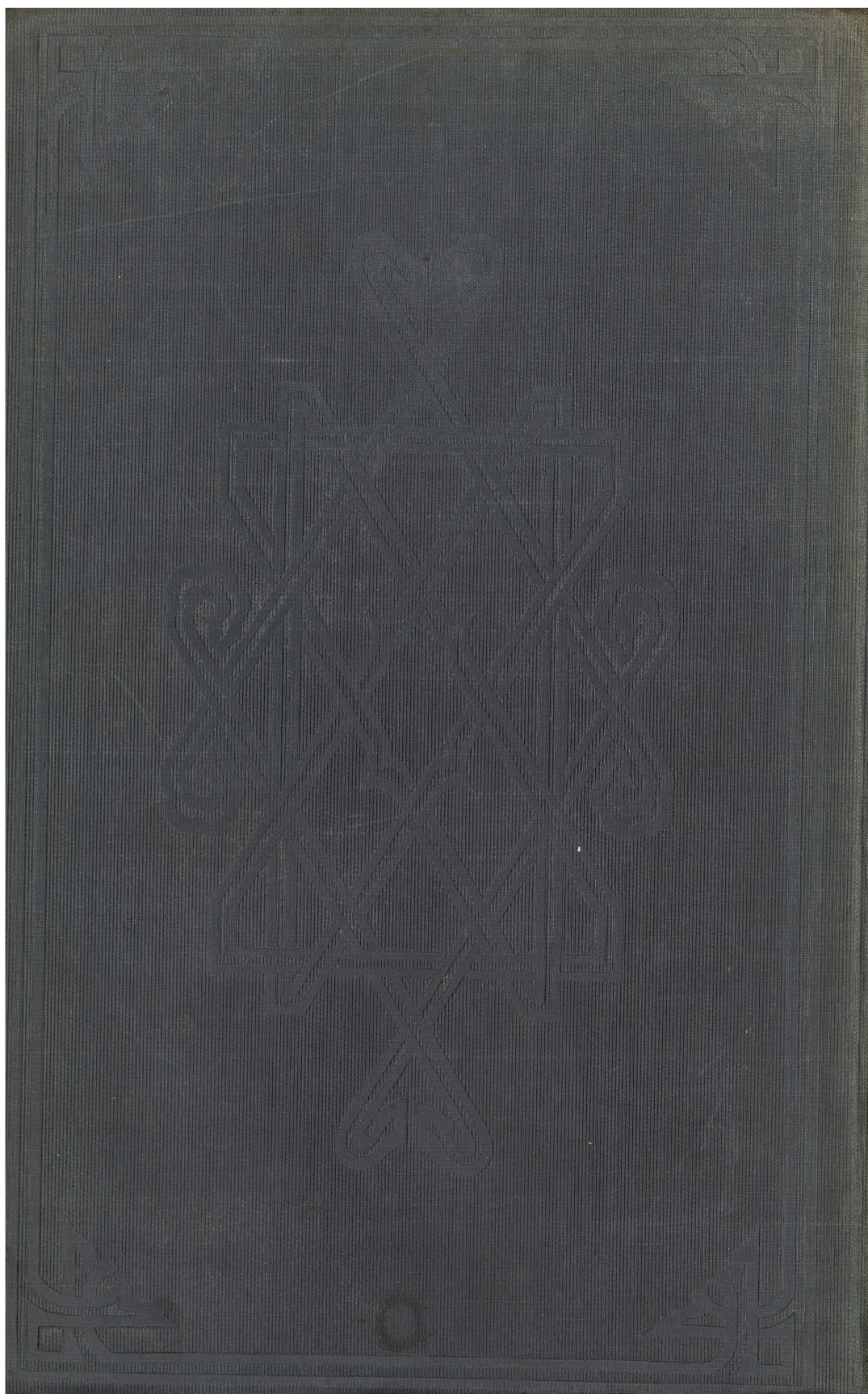
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