

MR SMITH'S LECTURE AT THE AMPHITHEATRE

M Lindsay Lambert of Ottawa has sent us this account of 'Mr Smith's Lecture at the Amphitheatre', which appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury and Lancashire General Advertiser* on Friday 31 August 1838. If we are to believe the reporter, the juvenile audience seem to have been even excessively grateful for Mr Smith's somewhat severe moral homilies:

On Friday last, five to six thousand of the children educated in the different charity schools in this town were indulged, by the kindness of his Worship the Mayor, with a very agreeable treat at the Amphitheatre. In order that the children educated in the different schools might have cause to remember the coronation of our young Queen, the Mayor had arranged with our friend and townsman, Mr John Smith, to deliver to them a lecture on the most interesting portions of geography, illustrated by paintings and drawings calculated at once to please and instruct their youthful minds. Owing to various circumstances, the lecture was necessarily postponed until Friday last, when it was delivered at the Amphitheatre, to a crowded and delighted audience of children and their friends. We had not the pleasure of hearing the lecture ourselves, but we copy the following sketch of it from the *Albion*.

'In the first place, among the beauties of creation, the lecturer explained and exhibited, by an illuminated diagram, the rotundity of the earth, a vessel sailing entirely round it. A view of the ocean, of a beautiful river, a waterfall, a mountain-pass, and a floating iceberg were then successively introduced and observed upon by the lecturer; and the cause of the coldness in the polar regions was explained during the display of one of Pocock's large portable globes.

'In the second place, the operations of the whale

fishery were introduced, followed by notices of the snow villages of the Esquimaux, the wretched huts of the Laplanders, the curious architecture and exemplary industry of the beavers, and the lake they form for the sites of their houses; on all which subjects appropriate remarks on honest industry and forethought were made by the lecturer, who brought into view one of nature's grand lakes in Scotland, and another in Switzerland, remarking upon their difference, and describing an intelligent classification of all lakes in all countries.

'In the third place, some specimens of natural history were given and explained; the tea plant and the various kinds of tea; the sugar plantation, and the great value of that most nutritious article of food therein produced; the splendid eagle of the Andes, the condor, with Temple's account of that largest bird in the world. These were followed by observations of the caverns and mines, during which Fingal's Cave and a silver mine of Potosi were presented to the eye, and a curious invention described, with a working model, of a new plan, of raising and lowering persons in mines.

'In the fourth place, the awful and convulsive operations of nature, so calamitous in particular instances, but so indispensably useful and beneficial to mankind, came under notice; whirlwinds, waterspouts at sea, and sand storms in the deserts, the boiling springs of Iceland, the earthquake at Messina,

the volcanic eruptions of Vesuvius, &c. All these produced a powerful effect, and suitably prepared the mind for the concluding subjects.

'In the fifth place, the deep interest of Scripture lessons was referred to in connexion with the fact of there being one part of the world in which the revelations of God to his creature man were first given, where our forefathers witnessed the mighty workings of his divine will, and where our Saviour sojourned while on earth, carrying forward his labour of mercy and salvation. But for the light of the gospel, England, even at this day, would have been in comparative darkness; but, from that land to which reference had just been made, there had issued, from the fountain head, principles of morals and religion which alone could sufficiently guide us in this world and prepare us for the next. The Holy Land, then, was a region of the greatest interest, and its remarkable beauties were described. The outskirts of Berytus, Mount Lebanon, the forest, the remaining cedars of scriptural celebrity, the Dead Sea, the remains of Jericho, the mountains of Mohab, and lastly, Mount Ararat, and that splendid pledge against future deluge, the rainbow. In conclusion, Mr Smith recommended the children to read, on their return home, the 104th Psalm. It would refresh their minds and do them good.

'The delight of the children was extreme; it burst out frequently into deafening cheers, and when the Mayor, at the conclusion, expressed his hope that the treat he had been enabled to afford them, would increase their diligence under instruction, the grateful acclamations of the juvenile thousands seemed like a decided response in the affirmative.'

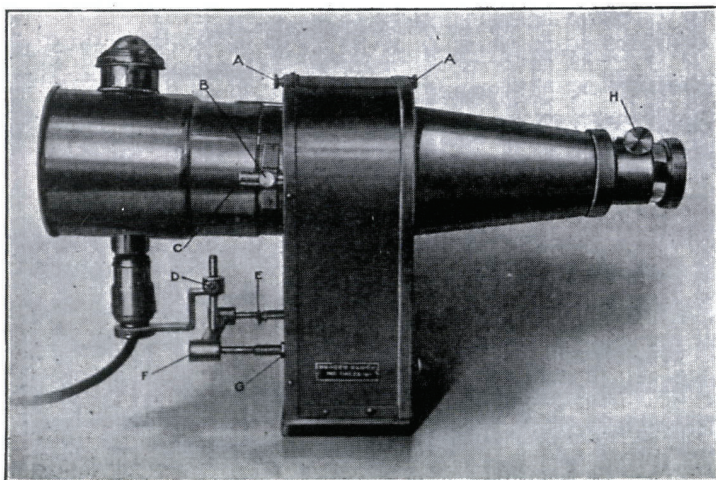
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